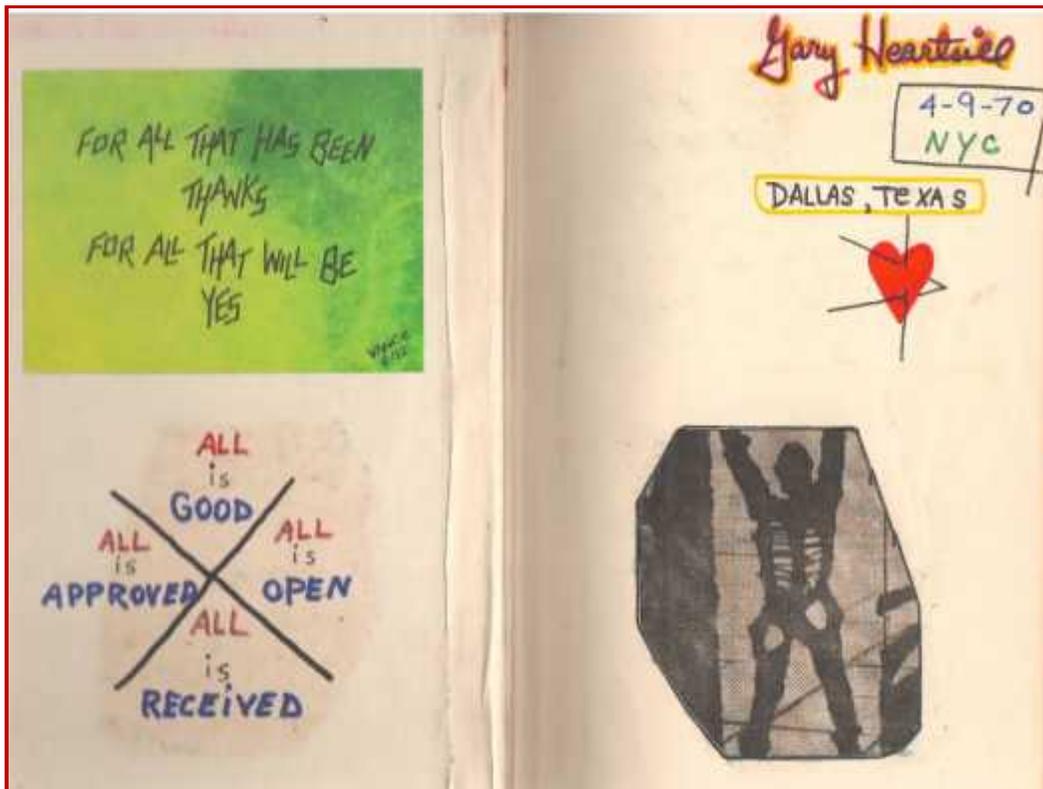


# *The Wedge Blade of Life: Then and Now - Eschatologically*

By

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## Introduction

The title page shows the inside cover to my New English Bible I bought in New York City on April 9, 1970 noting this is the same year as it was first published. Have marked every page with some note, underline, or highlight as this is one of the Bibles I have completely read through – my notes show 3 May 2013 to 21 Sep 2013 and includes the Apocrypha.

Why would I share this mundane and semi-critical little bit of experiential information?

The Word, the Word of God, the Word of the cross, *THE WORD*, has finally been made clear to me and this is the reason for pinning and publishing this proclamation. Actually, I have had the Word all along and just didn't know it. I also knew what the Word was and meant but just didn't know how to 'splain it. And this project may not meet the task of making you jump up and down like me and proclaim "*I have seen the Word!*"

But I am going to try.

You must realize the size of the arena we are dancing in is the size of a small wading pool and we are dabbling our feet into water where the waves don't get too high. If we were to drop a marble in the middle of this pool the ripple would not be very big. But the ripple is there. This means the Word is there. One has to see the ripples before we move into deeper water and see big waves to make judgments of admiring the splendor of **word**, or the splendor of **WORD**.

Over fifty years ago (just before I bought my NEB in NYC) I first really heard the Word. When I heard the Word, I knew I had heard it before. When I heard I knew I had seen, had felt, had witnessed, and believed the Word. The reality of my life changed and I could live now. I had died to my old life and the new came to me through The Word.

That *Word* was an eschatological occurrence for my salvation. The Word said "*All is Good, All is Approved, All is Open, and All is Received.*" The Word said to me to not try and name all of these terms and not even try to define them. The Word said "Just accept them."

The Word was a wedge in my heart and it said: "Not yesterday, Not tomorrow, but **NOW!** Therefore, the eschatological occurrence is "Now" - and it says "*The hour has come.*"

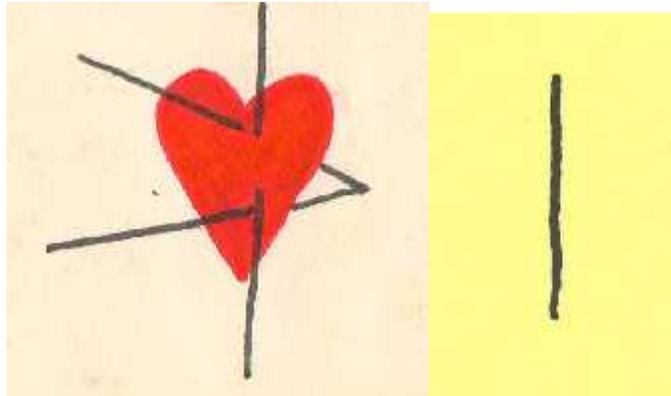
## Poetry

Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: '**Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.**'

'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.' **Come,**' he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

'**You of little faith,**' he said, '**why did you doubt?**'



**No longer**

**Not yet**

This rendering or drawing symbolizes the two issues of time that we have no real control over. What has happened in the past will not be repeated in the future. What will happen in the future is something we do not know about, but we know it is coming.

What is missing?

All that we have is in the middle and is the now.

### **NOW**

This is all we realistically have. We can talk all day about “birth, struggle, and death” or as some of us talk “when we were born and where we are going when we die.”

The time will come, that time is coming; indeed! It is here now! And this is where the paper, Word, and life is.

### **“Forever is composed of Now’s.”**

“The future of God is *salvation* to the man who apprehends the present as God’s present, and as the hour of salvation. The future of God is *judgment* for the man who does not accept the ‘now’ of God but clings to his own present, his own past and also to his own dreams of the future. We might say with Schiller:

***‘What we have denied the moment, eternity will never give back.’***

Only here it applies in a new and fulfilled sense. In this acceptance of the present as the present of God, as we have tried to make clear, pardon and conversion are on the works of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

God’s future is God’s call to the present, and the present is the time of decision in the light of God’s future. This is the direction of Jesus’ message...**‘Take heed, watch’** and **‘take heed to yourselves’**...those very words of Jesus which refer to the future are not meant to be understood as apocalyptic instruction, but rather as eschatological promise” (p. 93).

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<sup>1</sup> Bornkamm, Günther. (1960). *Jesus of Nazareth* (I. & F. McLuskey, Trans.). New York, NY: Harper & Row. Note this quote is listed as book #035 on my Critical List of books.



Kazantzakis: "The Cry" - *After the battle I am shot full of holes - but I am still standing!*

45. Yet these are all lesser concerns, for all hopes and despairs vanish in the voracious, funneling whirlwind of God. God laughs, wails, kills, sets us on fire, and then leaves us in the middle of the way, charred embers.<sup>2</sup>
46. **And I rejoice to feel between my temples**, in the flicker of an eyelid, the beginning and the end of the world.
47. I condense into a lightning moment the seeding, sprouting, blossoming, fructifying, and the disappearance of every tree, animal, man, star, and god.
48. All Earth is a seed planted in the coils of my mind. Whatever struggles for numberless years to unfold and fructify in the dark womb of **matter bursts in my head like a small and silent lightning flash.**
49. Ah! let us gaze intently on this lightning flash, let us hold it for a moment, let us arrange it into human speech.
50. Let us transfix this momentary eternity which encloses everything, past and future, but without losing in the immobility of language any of its gigantic erotic whirling.
51. Every word is an Ark of the Covenant around which we dance and shudder, divining God to be its dreadful inhabitant.
52. You shall never be able to establish in words that you live in ecstasy. But struggle unceasingly to establish it in words. Battle with myths, with comparisons, with allegories, with rare and common words, with exclamations and rhymes, to embody it in flesh, to transfix it!
53. **God, the Great Ecstatic, works in the same way.** He speaks and struggles to speak in every way He can, with seas and with fires, with colors, with wings, with horns, with claws, with constellations and butterflies, that he may establish His ecstasy.
54. Like every other living thing, I also am in the center of the Cosmic whirlpool. I am the eye of monstrous rivers where everything dances about me as the circle continually narrows with greater vehemence till the heavens and earth plunge into the red pit of my heart.
55. Then God confronts me with terror and love - for I am His only hope - and says: "This Ecstatic, who gives birth to all things, who rejoices in them all and yet destroys them, **this Ecstatic is my Son!**"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.angel.net/~nic/askitiki.html#vision>

<sup>3</sup> Kazantzakis, Nikos. (1960). The saviors of God: Spiritual Exercises (K. Friar, Trans). New York, NY: Simon/Schuster.



The **X** is **God** in Greek

**ALL IS GOOD** (creation)

Not value but a decisional faith statement. (Some have said this is the only word there is...) "All that is, is good,' might seem offensive. But look at good, not as in good or bad, but as in affirming the design and function of *all* of life. It's either a 'yes' or a 'no' to embracing life as it is. If it's no, we deny the journey; if yes, the awe and wonder will never cease. Is life as it is, really it? Yes, it is, and it's good!"

**ALL IS APPROVED** (past)

"The past is approved, regardless of its twists and consequences, its heroics and triumphs. Approved, not as in right or wrong, but as in affirmation for the continued unfolding of creation and human experience. Is the past really the past? Yes, it is, and it's significant!"

**ALL IS RECEIVED** (self)

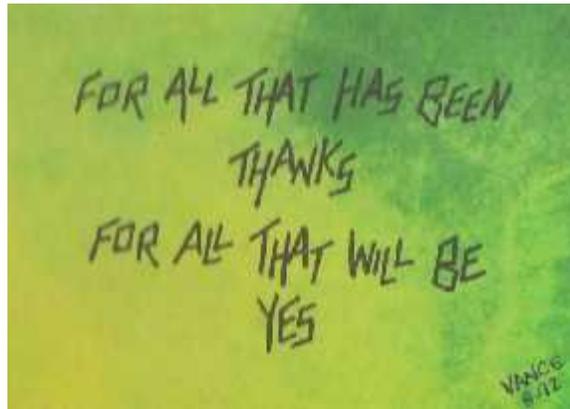
"The more one is awake to the way life is, without illusion, the more one can accept despair, doubt, and darkness as necessary conditions for fulfillment and wholeness...The whole person is open to every consequence of living and dying...Dreams, visions, passions, and concerns are all part of the significance. Dare to claim them all! No corner is too dark to be received. Received, not as in liked or disliked, but as a grateful affirmation for showing up with a full life. Is every life special? Yes, without a doubt, every life is!"

**ALL IS OPEN** (future) [Possible, Accepted]

The future is open even when we are closed...All is possible. It is never too late to risk, to explore the unknown, to live one's life...The future is decided by those who grasp it...'All I have to do is decide.' Open not as in open or closed, but as in dramatic affirmation for a life design that is constantly emerging and in transit. Is the future really open? Yes, it is!"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Engleman, Vance. (2003). *In search of profound humanness: A collection of writings to stir the senses*. New Delhi: Gandhi Media Centre.



Vance Engleman, one of my church colleagues, sent this expression to me noting it combines the wisdom of the four ALLS.

A prayerful affirmation of our faith:

*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> Phil 2:9-11,

## *Then and Now - Eschatologically*<sup>6</sup>

- 33** **Be on guard! Be alert!** You do not know when that time will come.
- 34** It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.
- 35** "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.
- 36** If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.
- 37** What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!' "<sup>7</sup>

This is not apocalyptic instruction, but rather **eschatological** promise...(Bornkamm).

"But it is all too clear that even that enlightened standpoint proves itself, in the light of the message of Jesus, somewhat audacious. It attempts to look out at history as a whole from the higher watchtower of the observer; here, of course, in the opposite sense to apocalypticism, in that it denies any relation whatsoever of history and the present to God's future.

Thus, we are brought back again to the '**Take heed, watch!**'<sup>8</sup>, which noticeably pervades even this 'apocalypse' of the Gospels. Jesus' message demands that we reckon with the future, lay hold on the hour, do not calculate the times. Those who wait in the right way are therefore called to fulfil the will of God now with all their might" (Bornkamm, pp. 94-95).

Did you get the 'intrepidly daring' words?

*recond with the future*  
*lay hold on the hour*  
*do not calculate the times*  
*fulfill the will of God now*

"The present dawn of the kingdom of God is always spoken of so as to show that the present reveals the future as salvation and judgment, and therefore does not anticipate it" (Bornkamm, p. 92).

NOTE: The dots of ALL and NOW are still being connected as we go through to the end with a push on eschatology...really, the hour has come.

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<sup>6</sup> **Eschatology** literally means "discourse about the last things" and part of the Christian doctrine concerned with the final end of man. In this paper the fantastic imagery of "apocalypticism" is not used. Paul and the author of John, with differing emphases, shifted a future hope to present communion with the Holy Spirit. In the Fourth Gospel, this is called "Realized eschatology" and on mainly page eight "eschatological occurrence" is explicated.

<sup>7</sup> Mark 13:33-37, New International Version.

<sup>8</sup> "Take heed, watch!" (RSV), or "Beware, keep alert" (NRSV), or "Be alert, be wakeful" (NEB), or "Take ye heed, watch and pray" (KJV).

## The Salvation-occurrence

“But if it is true that the proclamation of the salvation-occurrence is not a preparatory instruction which precedes the actual demand for faith, but is, in itself, the call for faith or the challenge to give up one’s previous self-understanding or the cry, **‘Be reconciled to God!’** – if that is so, then that means that *the salvation-occurrence is nowhere present except in the proclaiming, accosting, demanding, and promising word of preaching*. A merely ‘reminiscent’ historical account referring to what happened in the past cannot make the salvation-occurrence visible. It means that the salvation-occurrence continues to take place in the proclamation of the word. **The salvation-occurrence is eschatological occurrence just in this fact, that it does not become a fact of the past but constantly takes place anew in the present.** It is present not in the after-effect of a significant fact of world-history but in the proclamation of the word, which, unlike world events, does not get absorbed into the evolution of the human mind.

“Paul expresses this by saying that at the same time that God instituted reconciliation He also instituted the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ which is the ‘message (lit. ‘word,’ KJ) of reconciliation’ (II Cor. 5:18f.)\*. **Consequently, in the proclamation Christ himself, indeed God Himself, encounters the hearer, and the ‘Now’ in which the preached word sounds forth in the ‘Now’ of the eschatological occurrence itself** (II Cor. 6:2)\*\*

“For God made this event the eschatological occurrence, so that , lifted out of all temporal limitation, it continues to take place in any present moment, both in the proclaiming word and in the sacraments” (Bultmann<sup>9</sup>, pp. 302-303). [Highlight/underline/italics added – gh.]

Notes on the above – we are not through with Bultmann - or Jesus, hang with me!

**Reconciled** – harmonize, settle, placate, conciliate – Agreement, accord, unison, adaptation, reconciliation, pacification – Harmony, harmony, settlement, reconciliation,

**\*18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

**19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

**20** We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (II Cor. 5:18f. - NIV)

\*\*“God’s own words are:

In the hour of my favour\* I gave heed to you;

On the day of deliverance I came to your aid.

**The hour of favour has now come; now, I say, has the day of deliverance dawned”** (II Cor. 6:2).

(favor is deliverance, or salvation)

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<sup>9</sup> Bultmann, Rudolf. (1951). *Theology of the New Testament* (K. Grobel, Trans.) New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

## Discussion on the Salvation-occurrence

The learnings of neo-theologians (existentialist theologians – who live in the present) like Bultmann, starting in 1969 and Bornkamm in 1975, have influenced my theology, ontology, and Christology. The Words that have come down, won't go away, but stay in my head, have to do with ALL, NOW, HOUR, - and especially “eschatology.”

Eschatology also means then and now. It means what happened then is happening now. It means the process of occurrence then is an occurrence now. The word is almost cosmic as it transcends time making the Word of Jesus in his life time as clear, pertinent, and as meaningful as it does today. I can hear His words he said, just as if he was saying them now. Surely, you have seen even in this paper enough to make the claim that the Word passes through 2000 years as if it were whispered today in your ear?

Dr. Jaime Clark-Soles professor of the New Testament at Perkins says in her class on the Book of John that the material, specifically the story of the Samaritan lady in Chapter 4, that the ‘meaningfulness’ of the words of this story will hold up in time and will transform time with the meaning. The words of Jesus **“I that speak unto thee, am he”** are eschatologically true today as then. This is a cosmic transition of reality. We can hear these same words today – from Jesus.

Like me with the years it took to hear/see/understand, you may have to reread or wait to get this clarity or to get this ‘eschatological occurrence’ but, as shown here, this is a possibility for us all.

## Now, my punch line

Having covered ALL, NOW, and eschatology, I want to finish with HOUR. This last word was what finally combined and connected the other words. Not many folks, including my hero Bultmann, will spend much time to hermeneutically explicate (or even mention) the connection in the story of the Samaritan Lady at the well with the importance of the word “HOUR.”

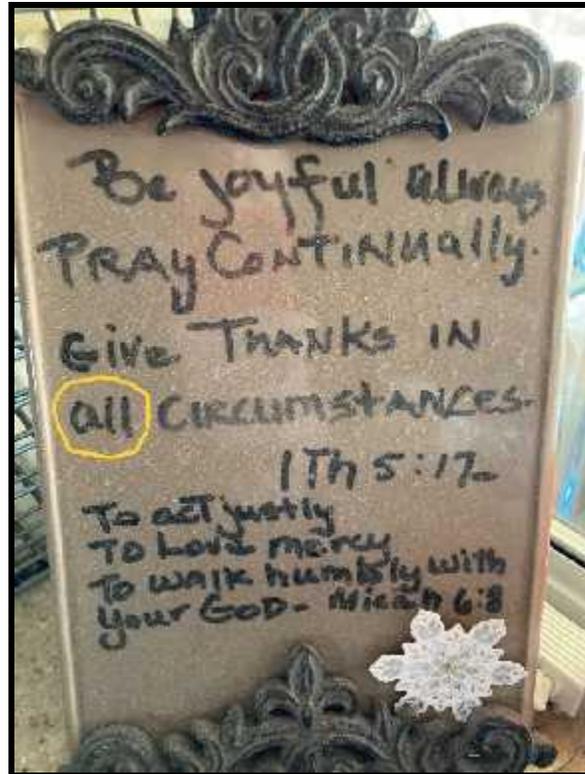
Jesus told her that **“the hour is coming, and is now here”** and then when she remarks “I know that Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us” to which Jesus said **“I am he, the one speaking to you”** (Jn. 4:25-26).

To me the red print **“the hour is coming, and is now here”** means the same thing as “The hour has come.” Course, the Greek is different and the term “The hour has come” is generally associated with ‘His hour’ for his glorification and exaltation when he climbs the cross.

But “the hour has come” combines the Word of God, ALL is Good, NOW, and eschatological occurrence. Jesus announced at the Last Supper that **“The hour has come”** and if you play it back to Chapter 4 at the well, the dots are connected.

God showed up at the well (**“I and my Father are one”**) and announced for the first time that **The HOUR has come**. So, we have ALL, NOW, and HOUR - eschatologically.

Ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὥρα



Jeanne's verse – still in the kitchen.