

Saviour of All Fellowship

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Dear Friends in Faith,

The improper translation of the Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek words *aion* and *aionios* by the words “eternal,” “forever” and “everlasting” has brought with it untold sorrow and misunderstandings. If this translation be true, countless human beings, creatures of God’s hands, are doomed either to unending torment or to irreversible extermination. Even more serious this idea has also cast our loving, merciful God into a mold which gives to Him a grotesqueness worse than that of the heathen gods. For, in not choosing some for eternal life (as the Calvinist see it), God must have brought them into existence for the sole purpose of eternally torturing them in horrendous flames. Or in resting all on some sort of causeless “free will” of human beings, over which He has no control or say (as the Arminian seems to think), God has made it so that the salvation of anyone is highly unlikely, since in the final analysis it really depends on us.

The mistranslation of these Hebrew and Greek words forces unworthy and embarrassing, theological ideas into the many passages of scripture which clearly speak of blessings for all mankind because of what Christ accomplished in His death, burial and resurrection. We are not thinking of isolated “proof texts,” but of carefully developed, scriptural thoughts based on the evangel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom.1:1-4).

For instance, after speaking of God’s love as it is commended in Christ Who died for us while we are still sinners (Rom.5:8), the apostle Paul expounds on the entrance of sin into the world through Adam and its removal through Christ (Rom.5:12-19). His conclusion is that what Christ did is “unto all men to justification of life,” and that it is through His obedience that the same many who are made sinners through the disobedience of Adam will be made righteous through the obedience of Jesus Christ. Similar passages which develop the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ in relation both to the believer and to all are found in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Ephesians 1:3-11; Colossians 1:13-20; Philippians 2:5-11 and 1 Timothy 1:15-2:7.

Carefully examining every use of the words *olam*, *aion* and *aionios* should lead the Bible believer to the conclusion, reached by many others, that they do not denote eternity or everlastingness. Some wonderful results of a concordantly rendered version such as the Concordant Version are that it puts God in the best possible light, gives God the proper glory for what He accomplished in Christ for all, and brings us expectation and peace concerning all our friends and loved ones and even our enemies who may not be chosen for eonian life. If understood properly, the message of God’s love in Christ takes away that smug kind of Pharisaic pride which afflicts so many who would honor Christ but who restrict the results of His obedience to the death of the cross to a few.

We have a number of publications which investigate the meanings of the Greek and Hebrew terms translated eternal, everlasting, etc. For those who do not have a copy, we offer, without charge, the booklet entitled “Eonian,” compiled by Grace Todd and Joseph E. Kirk. We also would be happy to send the book, ALL IN ALL, by A. E. Knoch, which goes into more detail in relating this subject to the gospel.

Yours in God’s grace and peace,
Dean Hough and Tony Nungesser