

**ETERNAL LIFE
CHECK IT OUT
By John W. White**

SALVATION

We should establish at the beginning that salvation is based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and not on the basis of our own good works. Salvation has been provided by God and man either accepts or rejects His plan of salvation. **Romans 5:8** "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us.**" In **Acts 16:30, 31** is the only place in the Bible where **saved** is in the question and **saved** is in the answer. "... Sirs, what must I do to be **saved**? And they said, **Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be **saved**, and thy house." Paul used the aorist tense of the verb '**believe**' and not the present tense. The aorist tense is graphed by using a dot (•), an event. The present tense is graphed by using a line (—), which expresses continuous action. You believe one time and you are saved and you do not have to continue to believe to stay saved, as would be the case if the present tense of the verb '**believe**' were used.

THE STUDY OF WORDS

Jeremiah 15:16 "Thy **words were found**, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts." Words caused the heart of Jeremiah to rejoice, and that can happen to us if we would take the time to examine words. **Psalms 12:6** "The words of the LORD **are pure words**: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. "The Holy Spirit purified each word seven times which is an indication that each word is of tremendous importance and not to be taken lightly. Maybe it would be profitable for us to look at each word seventy times seven. The study of words will help us to rightly divide the Word of God.

When you study words of the Bible you find out that those who translated those Hebrew and Greek words did not do it with consistency. In many cases, you can not tell from one passage of scripture to the next if you are looking at the same Greek or Hebrew word by the way it was translated. If there had been more consistency in the translation of words, then there would be less confusion as to the meaning and interpretation of the Bible.

For example the word *cariv* which is the Greek word for **grace**, has been translated twelve different ways: acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace, gracious, joy, liberality, pleasure, thank, thanks, and thankworthy. It is very difficult for you to know when you are reading the word *cariv* when it translated so many different ways. Those who know the Greek language know when they are reading the word *cariv* but those who depend upon the translated word can not tell by the translation.

THE WORD ETERNAL

The words *aiwn* and *aiwvion* is another example of the confusion caused by the way they have been translated. The word *aiwn*, a noun, has been translated **twelve** different ways: **ages, course, eternal, ever, for ever, evermore, never, world, world began, beginning of the world, while the world standeth, and world without end.** The word *aiwvion*, an adjective, has been translated **five** different ways: **eternal, for ever, everlasting, world, and world**

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began. The translations of these words can be confirmed in the Greek dictionary of the Strong's Concordance under the numbers 165 - aijwn, and 166 - aijwnion

What is the meaning of the words aijwn and aijwnion? According to Lexical Aids For Students of New Testament Greek, by Bruce M. Metzger, page 11, the root meaning of the word aijwn is "an age (aeon)". This is not eternity, but an undefined period of time. The word aijwn is used in **Matthew 28:20** "... lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the **end** [suntel eia] of the **world** [aijwn] Amen." The use of aijwn in this context indicates that **there is an end to this age**. In **Hebrews 9:26** "... since the foundation of the **world** [kosmo]: but now once in the **end** of the **world** [aijwn which is plural, ages] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." From Genesis 1:1 until John 19:30 there has been more than one age. Translating aijwn as **world** is interpretation and not translation which causes error.

The root Greek word for aijwnion is the noun aijwn. Taking a noun and translating it as an adjective can become a little awkward. In The Emphasized Bible by Joseph B. Rotherham, Kregel Pub.; the word aijwnion is translated "ageabiding", and others have translated it "agelasting". How ever you translate the word aijwnion, being an adjective, it must describe the noun which it modifies.

The koine Greek does not have a word for eternity. The only possible exception might be the word ajdio which is only used two times. In Romans 1:20, and Jude 6. In Romans it is translated eternal and in Jude is translated everlasting. The expression for eternity in the New Testament, as we normally think of eternity, is: eijtouaijwnavt\aijwnwn, and literally translated it would be "**unto the ages of the ages**". An example of this is in **Galatians 1:5** "**To whom** *be* glory **for ever and ever**. Amen." As you can see the word aijwn has been translated "**ever**" and even then the plural of the word has not been indicated. The Greek language expressed eternity with the phrase "**the ages of the ages**" and not by just one word for eternity.

ETERNAL LIFE

Having a better understanding of the words aijwn and aijwnion it will help us to comprehend what is meant by **eternal life**. Most people associate "eternal life" with salvation. In the following verses we will be able to see that works are necessary when it comes to having eternal life or better, agelasting life. DON'T STOP READING now. Many hard passages will be explained when you understand the meaning of the words aijwn and aijwnion.

The **first** example is in **Romans 2:6,7** "Who will **render** to every man **according** to his **deeds**: **To them** who by patient continuance **in well doing** seek for glory and honour and immortality [ajfqarsia, incorruption], **eternal** [aijwnion = agelasting] **life**:" This is obviously not salvation, because those who continue "**in well doing**" are seeking "for glory, honor, and incorruption" and they will be rewarded agelasting life according to his **deeds**, as stated in verse 6, and not salvation.

The **second** example is in **Galatians 6:7 - 9** "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man **soweth** [works], that shall he also **reap**. For he that **soweth to his flesh** shall of the flesh **reap corruption** [fqoraythe opposite of incorruption]; but he that **soweth to the Spirit** shall of the Spirit **reap life everlasting**. And let us not be weary in **well doing**: for in due season **we shall reap, if we faint not**." The sowing in verses seven and eight is the "**well doing**" in verse nine. **If we faint in well doing** we will **not** reap agelasting life. Our salvation is

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not dependent upon our performance but upon Christ's finished work on the cross. Treasures in heaven and rewards are dependent upon our performance.

The **third** example is in **1 Timothy 6:17 - 19** "Charge **them that are rich** in this world,... **That they do good**, that they be **rich in good works**, ready **to distribute**, willing **to communicate**; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against **the time to come**, that **they may lay hold on eternal life**." The rich are instructed to take their riches and use it for ministry. Giving generously as they are led of the Lord. By doing good works they may lay hold on age-lasting life. The man of God is also instructed to lay hold on age-lasting life in **1 Timothy 6:11, 12** "... O **man of God**, ..follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, **lay hold on eternal life**,..." If age-lasting life is salvation, why would a man of God have to lay hold upon something that he already has?

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

In **Matthew 19:16-21** We see how the Lord responded to a rich man who wanted to know how to have eternal life or **life for the age**. The Lord told him two basic things he had to do if he expected to have treasure in heaven. **First**, to be **just** and **second**, to live by **faith**. **Galatians 3:11** "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is evident*: for, **The just shall live by faith**."

Matthew 19:16, 17 "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, **what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?** And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God*: but if thou wilt **enter** into life, **keep the commandments**." **Matthew 19:20** "The young man saith unto him, **All these things have I kept from my youth up**: what lack I yet?" This man was just because he was obedient to the commandments of the Lord. Being **just** will not provide you with treasure in heaven. This man, being just, was not willing to live by faith and trust the Lord for his needs, then to follow the Lord. **Matthew 19:21** "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect (complete, and "wanting nothing", **James 1:4**), go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor,..." This is not what one must do to be saved. Salvation is not in the context. Treasure in heaven is in the context and the Lord told him what he had to do to have treasure in heaven.

Paul gave this council to the rich in **1 Timothy 6:18**. If you sell all that you have and give to the poor, then you have to trust the Lord for your needs. This is living by faith. If we are just and are living by faith, then we will be diligently seeking him and then we will have treasure in heaven. **Heb. 11:6** "...he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The Lord told him that if he would give what he had to the poor and follow Him that "...Thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me." in the last part of **Matthew 19:21**. To have life for the age is to have treasure in heaven. Treasure in heaven is rewards.

The Lord amplified upon the rich man's request for age-lasting life in **Matthew 19:23, 24** "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That **a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven....**" The Lord was talking about **entering into** the kingdom of heaven and **not seeing** the Kingdom of Heaven. There is a difference. For one to **see** the kingdom of heaven he must be born from above. **John 3:3** "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot **SEE** the kingdom of God." (The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are used interchangeably.) To have age-lasting life is to qualify to **enter**; that is to participate as a Lord or a King, in the coming kingdom of heaven. **2 Peter 1:10, 11** "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and

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election sure: for **if ye do these things**, ye shall never fall: For so **an entrance** shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the **everlasting kingdom** (Christ will reign for 1,000 years after the tribulation.) of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Peter, understanding that he and the rest of the apostles were doing what the rich man would not do, asked the Lord; **Matthew 19:27** "...Behold, **we have forsaken all**, and **followed** thee; **what shall we have** therefore?" The Lord told Peter and the rest of the apostles what they would have and when they would receive it. **Matthew 19:28** "And Jesus said unto them, ..., That **ye which have followed** me, in the regeneration **when** the Son of man **shall sit** in the **throne of his glory**, **ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones**, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." To sit upon thrones is to enter into the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 19:29** "And every one that hath forsaken... shall **inherit everlasting life**." The Lord used words to help us to understand that agelasting life is a family matter when he used the word **inherit**. Before one can be just and follow the Lord he must be in the family. You do not inherit unless you are in the family. Inheritance is also rewards. **Colossians 3:24** "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." Agelasting life is a reward based upon service. That is the reason that one works for agelasting life. The rich man was told to "**come and follow** Him in **Matthew 19:21**. To follow the Lord is to serve Him.

HATH ETERNAL LIFE

Mark 10:30 "But he shall receive.. in the **world to come eternal** [aijw̄nion, agelasting] **life**." Mark's account indicates when life for the age is received and we do not receive this life for the age now. The word "world" is the Greek word aijw̄n and should be translated "age" to be consistent. The phrase "to come" is a present participle and should be translated "the one coming". To make this simple, the apostles will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel during the millennial reign of Christ. The **millennium** is the **age that is coming** and that **is when** agelasting life will be **received**, and not now.

What does the phrase **hath everlasting life** mean? **John 6:47** "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **believeth** on me **hath everlasting life**." This passage is not dealing with salvation. The verb **believeth** [pisteūw] is in the present tense and not aorist tense as in Acts 16:31. The verb **hath** [ēçw] is in the present tense and the meaning could be better expressed in the translating it **esteemeth** or **counteth**. An example of this meaning is found when Herod would have killed John the Baptist in **Matthew 14:5** "...he feared the multitude, because they **counted** [ēçw] him as a prophet." One who holds a life of honor and glory in the coming millennial age in high esteem will be encouraged to be faithful in believing. This is consistent with what Mark 10:30 and the fact that we do not have agelasting life now.

Here are some interesting insights from Pastor S .S. Craig in 1916, **Dualism of Eternal life.**

The Latin Vulgate translated the Greek adjective aiwnion to the Latin **aeternus** in which we get the English word eternal and eternity.

The KJV translators instead of going back to the original Greek and translating the Greek adjective aijw̄nion, went to the Latin Vulgate and translated the Latin **aeternus**. This is why the world eternal has been misunderstood by the English reader. If they would have gone to the Greek they for sure would have translated it as many translators such as Rotherham and Young, namely, age lasting or life for the age (eīs ton aijw̄nion).

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It is equally a fact that the theology of the West was not that of the Greek Church but that of Roman Catholicism. It was Latin theology. And just as it is beyond doubt that the revisers, translators, and lexicographers, were chiefly influenced by the Latin language and Latin translations. It is admitted that the theology of Calvin was derived from Saint Augustine, modernized and extended.

“It was absolutely essential to Augustinian theology with its blighting emphasis on **the doctrine of predestinarianism** to mistranslate the Greek adjective *aijwnion*, and put on it a meaning which the Greek will not for a moment allow in its respective applications to salvation and judgment.

And that was essential to Augustinian theology was equally essential to Latin Christianity from the days of Augustine to those of Calvin and Luther. And the same exists in the Reformed Theology from then till the present.

To say nothing of other words, the Calvinist simply cannot, dare not, face an honest and truthful interpretation of the two frequently occurring words with which we are now dealing with, namely “eternal life.”

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