

Eternal Torment

Aaron Locker

Q: If the smoke of their torment “ascendeth up for ever and ever” and “they have no rest day nor night,” doesn’t this indicate eternal suffering?

A: Revelation 14:10-11; 20:10; 22:5 contain words that have been corrupted and changed by traditional religious dogma. Those words are the Greek “*basanizo/basanismos*” and “*aion*.” By simply opening any Greek-English lexicon, you will see sizeable differences between the definitions of the Greek words I mentioned, and the definitions of the English words that were used to translate those Greek words. However, to be thorough, I will discuss not only the differences between the Greek and English definitions, but I will also use Scripture to define these words.

Basanizo/Basanismos

In Revelation 14:10, the word “*basanizo*” is translated as “*tormented*” (past tense verb).

In Revelation 14:11, the word “*basanismos*” is translated as “*torment*” (noun).

In Revelation 20:10, the word “*basanizo*” is translated as “*tormented*” (past tense verb).

Both of these words come from the root “*basanos*,” which is defined by Strong as “a touchstone.” Webster defines the word “touchstone” as:

1. A stone by which metals are examined; a black, smooth, glossy stone ...
2. Any test or criterion by which the qualities of a thing are tried; as money, the touchstone of common honesty.”

This might strike you as interesting considering that the definition of the Greek word that was translated as “torment,” not only has nothing to do with eternal conscious torment, but it is actually a process that tests purity. So we can see that to be tormented in these verses is compared to being rubbed upon a touchstone.

A good contextual scriptural definition of the word “*basanizo*” can be found in II Peter 2:8:

“(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed [basanizo] his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)”

This passage talks about Lot dwelling in Sodom. In this verse, we see that Lot, even though he is called “*righteous,*” receives the same “*torment*” that those in the “*lake of fire*” receive. Of course, as we can see, Lot’s righteous soul is only being tested, and is not receiving eternal conscious torment.

You might be saying, “Ok, so even if they are being tested and not barbequed, this is still happening ‘*for ever and ever*’” That’s where the other word “*aion*” comes in.

Aion

The concept of “*eternity*” is something that can be expected to be confused by the human mind. There are many theories about what “*eternity*” is. Some theories say eternity is “*never ending time*” while some say the complete opposite; “*timelessness.*”

Regardless of what the theories say, when you find a concept that is so commonly misunderstood by the human mind in a book that was translated by humans, a giant red flag should go up in your head. You should immediately sit down and study this topic, knowing that the translators weren’t superhuman, but that they were humans just like so many others that confuse the topic of eternity.

The word “*ever*” in Revelation 14:11; 20:10; 22:5 was translated from the word “*aion.*” “*Aion*” is defined by Strong as “*an age.*”

Does an age last forever? Let’s check the Scriptures:

*“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world** [aion] **began**” (II Timothy 1:9).*

*“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the **ends of the world** [aion] are come” (I Corinthians 10:11).*

So we see that an age (*aion*) begins and ends. In fact, “*smoke rising up for ever and ever*” begins and ends in just one short chapter in Revelation.

In Revelation 18:10-17, the Great Whore of Babylon is destroyed in just one hour:

“For in one hour so great riches is come to nought ...” (:17).

“And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning ...” (:18).

Now, the smoke of Babylon's burning was visible in :18, however, by Revelation 19:3, we see that the smoke rose in the past tense:

“And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.”

So, we see that unless there was an endless amount of time between Revelation 18:18 and Revelation 19:3, *“for ever and ever”* does not mean eternity.

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