

## Restoration of the Kingdom of God – 13

Those who have been found faithful at the **judgement seat of Christ** will be made immortal - *“Those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; **36 nor can they die anymore**, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of **the resurrection**” - Luke 20:35.*

- **But what about those who are found unworthy?** Jesus, in his Parable of the Sheep and Goats, said in -

**Matthew 25:31**, *“When the Son of Man comes... **32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another... 41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire...’ 46 And these will go away into everlasting** [Greek, *aionios*] **punishment, but the righteous into eternal** [Greek, *aionios*] **life.**”*

- **Does Jesus here speak of the “eternal” duration of the pains of these “cursed” ones?** Is it valid reasoning that “if God is everlasting, so is punishment in the lake of fire”? Since both the life and the punishment in verse 46 are *aionios* = everlasting and eternal, does this mean that there will be never-ending torture of the ungodly?

Vine’s *Expository Dictionary*, vol.2, p.43 gives the predominant meaning of *aionios* as that which has no end, as in **Romans 16:26** *“the **aionios = eternal God.**”* This includes salvation through Christ - **John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have **aionios = eternal life**”, because “I give them **aionios = eternal life, and they will never perish**” - John 10:28.*

- But Vine also points out that *aionios* sometimes “describes duration, either undefined but **not** endless” as in the following three passages: **Romans 16:25 ESV** *“...the mystery that was kept secret for **aionios = long ages 26** but has now been disclosed.”* The mystery ended after it was disclosed. That secret was the purpose of God to bring salvation to those who would *“know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” - John 17:3*, referred to in -

**2 Timothy 1:9 ESV** *“God... saved us and called us to a holy calling... because of **his own purpose and grace** (which he gave us in Christ Jesus) before **aionios = the ages began.**”* The “purpose” of God is to populate this earth entirely with people who fulfil the words of **John 17:3**.

- **Titus 1:2 ESV** *“in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before **aionios = the ages began.**”* God first gave the promise in the garden of Eden (**Genesis 3:15**) before the ages of mankind developed in the descendants of Adam and Eve.

Vine also points out the use of *aionios* when referring to the **finality** of the punishment of the ungodly - **2 Thessalonians 1:8** *“...those who do not obey... will suffer the punishment of **aionios = eternal destruction.**”* This is a punishment, not designed to bring repentance, but to deliver final retribution. Such can be seen in **Jude 7**, *“Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities... serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of **aionios = eternal fire.**”*

- The destruction of these cities was **final**, never being rebuilt. Similarly, the **aionios = everlasting** punishment in **Matthew 25:46** speaks, not of an unending process, but of the unalterable outcome on the day of judgment - **2 Peter 3:7**. More next time, God willing.