UPDATE: *Hope Beyond Hell* chapter one: AION

In *Hope Beyond Hell* chapter one, I showed why “eternal” in *eternal punishment* (Matthew 25:46) was not forever. I focused mainly on the Greek word *aiōn* to make my case. However, I have since learned that some people insist the adjective *aiōnios* (Strong’s 166) always means eternal in Scripture. That is just not so! In this short paper I submit ample evidence to prove it. An adjective carries the root sense of its parent noun. A *daily* newspaper comes out each day not weekly; same in Greek! Note carefully how the following translations word Matthew 25:46: (A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punishment of the Ages</th>
<th>Punishment of the Last Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age-abiding correction</td>
<td>Will begin to serve a new period of suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punishment age during</td>
<td>Eonian discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chastening eonian</td>
<td>Age-continuing punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eonian correction</td>
<td>Aielasting cutting-off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clementson’s The NT (1938)</td>
<td>The N.T. of our Lord and Savior Jesus Anointed (1958)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aionian cutting-off</td>
<td>Age-long punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long correction</td>
<td>Eonian pruning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenton’s The Holy Bible in Modern Eng. (1903)</td>
<td>Jonathan Mitchell Translation (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An age of chastening</td>
<td>Aeonian punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gospel (1975)</td>
<td>Twentieth Century NT (1900)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-abiding correction</td>
<td>Aeonian chastisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Restoration of Original Sacred Name Bible (1976)</td>
<td>Hanson’s The New Covenant (1884)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age-continuing correction</td>
<td>Aionian punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The People’s New Covenant (N.T.) Arthur Overbury (1925)</td>
<td>The NT Abner Kneeland (1823)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconditional-being correction</td>
<td>Aeonian punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Source NT A. Nyland (2004)</td>
<td>Scarlett’s NT (1792)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The original Greek in which the New Testament was written supports the above translations. The critical word we must look at is *aiōnios*. Does it always mean eternal? Knowing the answer is important because it qualifies punishment (Mt 25:46); hell fire [*Gehenna* fire] (Mt 18:8-9); destruction (2Th 1:9) and judgment (He 6:2). Does it mean “eternal” or “of the ages” or something else? Examine *aiōnios* in the Septuagint and you will find it cannot mean eternal in many cases. The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Old Testament used at the time of Christ! Most Old Testament quotes in the New Testament come from it. Its authority is unrivaled having become itself part of the Scriptures. The following are passages based on the Septuagint and the NT which show that *aiōnios* cannot mean eternal in these contexts. Note that my format *aiōnios... but only until...* is for emphasis.

**Old Testament**

* Circumcision is an *aiōnios* covenant... *Ge* 17:13
  
  * but only until the New Covenant replaces the old. *He* 8:6-13;9:15;*Ch* 7-8-9
* Mountains are *aiōnios...* *Hab* 3:6
  
  * but only until they are scattered and collapse. *Is* 40:4;*Mk* 13:31;*2Pe* 3:10
* Jonah was in the fish for *aiōnios...* *Jon* 2:6,10
  
  * but only until three days later. *Jon* 1:17
* Jeremiah wished he had died in the womb with it remaining *aiōnios* pregnant... *Je* 20:17NAS
  
  * but only until at most, the end of his mother’s life. No physical condition is eternal.
* Every Sabbath Aaron sets frankincense before the Lord by an *aiōnios* covenant... *Le* 24:7-8
  
  * but only until the new covenant. *Lu* 16:16;*He* 8:6-13;9:15;*Ch* 7-9
* The field of the Levites is their *aiōnios* possession... *Le* 25:34
  
  * but only until the New Covenant ends their priesthood. *Lu* 16:16;*He* 8:6-13;9:15;*Ch* 7-9
* Ruins are *aiōnios...* *Is* 58:12a *NIV, NAS, etc*
  
  * but only until they are rebuilt... *Is* 58:12b
  
  **And your cities which were destroyed long ago [aiōnios] will be built again (NLV)**
  **You will rebuild those houses left in ruins for years [aiōnios] (CEV)** ETERNAL is only years.
* Foundations are *aiōnios...* *Is* 58:12b “age-old” foundations *NIV, NAS etc*
but only until they are raised.

* Aaron cares for aiónios lamps... Le 24:3; Ex 27:21

but only until they are no longer needed after “their generations” have passed.

* Hills are aiónios... Ge 49:26

but only until made low and the earth burned up. Is 40:4; Mk 13:31; 2Pe 3:10

* Priests eat tabernacle bread by an aiónios statute... Le 24:9

but only until the end of the law in Christ. Lu 16:16; Ro 10:4; He Ch7-9

* Israel’s law includes foreigners through all their generations for aiónios... Nu 15:15

but only until generations cease or its law is annulled. Lu 16:16; Ro 10:4; He 8:6-13; 9:15

* An aiónios landmark is not to be moved... Pr 22:28

but only until it is lost, destroyed or otherwise disturbed. Most Bibles have ancient not eternal.

* Sinful people walk on an aiónios path or way... Job 22:15 NIRV

but only until they repent. Is 55:7 Jesus is the only eternal “Way.” Jn 14:6

* God gave Phinehas an aiónios priesthood... Nu 25:11, 13

but only until the New Covenant. He 8:7-8, 13, 9:15; Ch 7-9

* Once again, an aiónios landmark is not to be moved... Pr 23:10

but only until something moves it. Nothing is permanently fixed in this world.

* A priest makes atonement as an aiónios statute... Le 16:32-34

but only until Christ atones for all, once for all, and the priesthood is changed. Lu 16:16; He 7:27; 1Jn 2:2

* Asaph considered the years of aiónios times... Ps 77:5b Eternal cannot be pluralized or measured in years.

but only until they passed. The NAS and NIV say of long ago

* Then his people recalled the aiónios days... Is 63:11NIV

but only until “the days of old” came to an end. Most Bibles say “days of old.”

* The heights of Israel are aiónios... Ez 36:1-2

but only until made low and the earth is burned up. Is 40:4; 2 Pe 3:10

The NIRV has for a long time

* God’s people stumbled from the aiónios paths.... Jer 18:15 Most Bibles say ancient paths

but only until those paths ceased or changed with the change in the law. He Ch7-9

* Priests blow trumpets as an aiónios ordinance for generations.... Nu 10:8

but only until Christ brings a new priesthood or generations cease. Lu 16:16; He 8:6-13; 9:15; Ch 7-9

* God gives all Canaan to Abram as an aiónios possession...

but only until at most, the passing of the earth. Ge 17:8; Mk 13:31

How much of Canaan does Israel still possess or lost since its inception?

* The above promise regarding Canaan is repeated three more times: aiónios...

but only until... Ge 48:4; 1Chr 16:17; Ps 105:10

* (Again) Ruins are aiónios... Is 61:4

but only until they are rebuilt...

New Testament

* Jesus warned of hell fire and its punishment (correction) as aiónios...

but said it was “until” the last cent was paid. Mt 5:22-26; 18:8-9

Thus in Jesus’ first mention of hell He clearly affirmed that aiónios punishment is not eternal.

* A mystery is hidden for aiónios...

but only until it is “revealed and made known.” Ro 16:25-26

An eternal secret cannot be revealed. That is why the NIRV states: a very long time

* God’s grace was given us in Christ before aiónios...

but we know eternity has no beginning. It is timeless. 2Ti 1:9

* God promised aiónios life before time aiónios ever began! Tit 1:2

How can something precede what is not supposed to have a beginning?

NRSV, RSV, ESV state before the ages began; NASB: long ages ago; YLT: before times of ages

Note how these respected translations equate aiónios with the word age, which is limited in duration.

* A slave returns for aiónios...

but only until he dies, is released or escapes. Philemon 15-16 Does anyone live forever?

* Sodom experienced aiónios fire... Jude 7

but only until it burned out ages ago. Ezekiel prophesied Sodom’s restoration. Ez 16:53-55
How can what is eternal exist only “until” another event takes place? This is incontestable evidence that *aiōnios* does not always mean eternal. There is no judgment in all Scripture qualified by *aiōnios* or its noun *aion* that must be interpreted to mean unending punishment. The above examples confirm this! Not only am I convinced by these examples, but by numerous other Biblically based arguments and texts presented in *Hope Beyond Hell*, its website and numerous other sources.

(A) My thanks to Gary Amirault of Tentmaker Ministries for most of this translation compilation.