

I. Show 14 (Show 146) Review of “When Forever is not long enough.”

Well Jim, here we are at the closing of a turbulent 13-part series in which we asked the KSLR family of listeners to sit in as a jury on the case we have presented concerning, ultimately, the nature, character and goodness of God. With that being said, we thought it would be useful to give a summary of the prior 13 shows. Very early on in the series we argued that one of our primary purposes in presenting this material was to encourage the audience to read, study, ask and pray about this profoundly significant topic not allowing others do all the talking and thinking for you, as perhaps many have unknowingly allowed concerning this issue in the past. We feel strongly that we have presented the audience with clear evidence to show how the Latin Church's biases calcified over time ultimately dominating Christian thinking without the support of language, logic, or love. We feel strongly that we have provided you, the audience, with sufficient knowledge to challenge your belief in a God who damns forever—to turn away from the God who has ruled Christian thought since the year 430: Augustine's god.

<Jim Responds>

We also understand the difficulty in making such a modification to one's belief system. As normal human beings, our tendency is to resist change especially if questioning the traditions of men demands more of our time and less of our ego. Life's time constraints forces us to choose our battles carefully, and our pride tends to prevent us from challenging our self and each other. But we feel the time invested in this study will ultimately produce an immeasurable amount of peace and comfort for those who are honest with themselves, for those who are willing to confront man's ultimate lack of faith in God, and for those willing to set aside their pride.

In presenting this defense—from the Greek, an *apologeia* if you will—we think that we have presented more than enough evidence for the Christian to cast off the yoke of Augustine's God and to enthrone the God the Bible presents to us instead. In fact, if I may be forgiven for being bold here, we think that if after listening and weighing our case, you still choose to cling to Augustine's god, it will not be because you have no valid alternative. As I said in one of the first shows, “If after hearing our case, you choose to believe as you have always believed, it will be because you have chosen to do so—not because there isn't a credible reason for you to change your mind.” Of course, if you don't think we made the case, we are still more than happy to hear from the audience via email to hear why you believe Augustine and all of his theological descendants such as Luther, Calvin and Arminius got it right.

<Jim Responds>

Honestly, I cannot think of one single good reason to follow the loose language, lack of logic, and limited love found in this Latin lore. I can understand how common lay people have gone along with this commonly held opinion, but I believe it is because they have never heard of the other side of the argument. Furthermore, I do believe that if ministers would teach both sides of the issue, the vast majority would trash the tradition. And lastly, I believe pride and job protection prevents them from doing so. How sad.

Well Jim what we have discovered over time is that which we presented to the audience. Facts are stubborn things. So in making our defense of our beliefs we examined the following facts in great detail:

Fact number one is this: A person's view of God is going to be shaped by the language he or she apprehends. For most of us in America, that means we came to a knowledge of God through English versions of the Bible, most notoriously the King James Bible of 1611.

<Jim Responds>

And we believe the KJV is a good one - but not a perfect one.

Fact number two: The Bible came from God in other languages, none of which included English, Spanish, Latin, French, German or the rest of the languages widely used on Earth today. No, God's original efforts to spread His word came to us in the languages of ancient Hebrew, (Chaldean), Aramaic, Syriac, Coptic and above all Koine Greek. I showed a young man who is from Greece the Greek which underlies part of the Majority Text—it's called the Textus Receptus—and contains the path to translation of the AV or King James Bible of 1611 and his comment to me was quite surprising and illustrative. He said he could read it, but with difficulty and that it was "old Greek" even to him.

<Jim Responds>

Fact number three: understanding different languages implies the need for translations and translators. Thus we showed how crippled Augustine was in understanding scripture—and thus God Himself—since he was unwilling to learn the Greek language. He had to have someone like Jerome translate from Greek into Latin before Augustine could figure out "what God was saying." And so it has always been. We also noted that Jerome had an unfortunate tendency to embellish the meaning of the Greek in his Latin version the Vulgate. So whatever errors he made, would naturally be multiplied by anyone using his translation.

<Jim Responds>

Fact number four: no translation is perfect—even the vaunted to almost worship status—Vulgate and KJV. To show that the KJV isn't perfect you don't have to look any further than Acts 12:4 which incorrectly translates πασχα as Easter. As we have pointed out on more than one occasion from these microphones, πασχα has but one meaning: the Israelite Passover. It is translated in every other location in the Bible—

both Old and New—correctly except for here in Acts 12. In order to get a clearer understanding of God's word, it became necessary to lay a foundation over several shows for the audience to understand the true meanings of certain Hebrew and Greek words which also have been translated improperly.

<Jim Responds (Obviously this is your jumping off point to start the review of Olam and Aion)>

To see the difficulty our translators had with these words because of preconceived notions, limited knowledge, and pride, you will need to go to our web site and listen to the our first four shows. A quick summary of those shows produces the following facts. These facts challenges tradition, and they cannot be ignored:

- The more common understanding of aion was a limited period of time as evidenced by religious leaders, historians, philosophers, and politicians who spoke the Greek language right before, during, and after the time of Christ. These include men such as Josephus, Philo, Herodian, Jerome, and Justinian, Clement of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignacius of Antioch, Origin, the two Gregories, Ireaneas, and Ambrose to name a few.
- There is also evidence that many, perhaps the majority of the early Greek speaking church assigned a limited duration of time to these terms.
- Five of the first six Christian schools of learning taught a limited duration.
- Jesus taught that aion meant a limited period of time as evidenced in Mathew 13:38-40. and Olam is aion's Hebrew counterpart, hence the same meaning can be extended to Olam.
- But it was argued by Latin church leaders reading from various Latin translations that the terms should be assigned an infinite period of time. The Latin Church's view calcified over time to become the orthodox opinion of the church.
- According to several scriptures, aions have beginnings and endings contradicting a possible infinite meaning.
- Olam is doubled up and used in the plural at least eleven times. Aion is used in the plural or in the context of the plural in 2/3'rds of its occurrences. Each of these instances contradicts the idea that either word could be used in the context of a limitless period of time.
- Several Bible translations and many Biblical scholars, commentators, and language experts from the past up to the present do not assign an infinite duration of time to these terms.
- The KJ, NIV and Revised Standard, to name a few editions, translated these words as "age" or used other terms in many places indicating that choices had to be made.

Having established that in all cases O&A can be translated with finite scope, we argued that we're not sure of a single case where either word must carry infinite scope—even

when referring to *God*. To make our case sure we cited example after example from both testaments that show the inconsistencies in translation that the English versions have introduced because they attached eternal and eternity to words that weren't meant to carry such a meaning. Indeed we showed that in the Greek alone there are 10 other words our Lord and Paul—Judas' replacement—could have used in discussing punishment, but never chose to use. Why?

<Jim Responds>

Tying infinity to these terms, obviously, cannot be done consistently, and if one is not consistent, then that person must choose between two contradictory expressions because finite and infinite periods of time are as far apart as the east is from the west. They are mutually exclusive terms. So, I believe the H.S. stayed away from terms that we know meant unending.

Find a single scripture where one of these other 10 words are used to describe the length of punishment for humans, and we will have to reconsider.

From this point we ventured down the sad and weary history of the road that led to the translations we now have. We came to understand that even Latin was not a monolithic language and that misunderstanding and inconsistencies emerged between two language centers—one in Africa and the other in Rome—which led to differences in the understanding of how to translate the meanings of these vital biblical words. Soon it became all too obvious to us why our translations are the way they are.

<Jim Responds>

A discussion on how eternity slipped in can be found in an article "Whence Eternity?" which can be found on the web.

And of course, when it was all said and done, we couldn't help but notice the role politics played in translating the word of *God*. How could you ever really hope to translate *God's* word impartially when you're boss—the King of England—told your translation committee not to "rock the boat" and overthrow a 1000 years of church tradition by your efforts?

But there was a price to be paid for all of this wasn't there? It's a price that is still being paid to this day.

<Jim Responds>

Assigning an infinite meaning to the terms produces the following:

- Inconsistency
- Conflicts with many other scriptures (All means some)
- Pride
- Fear
- Anguish
- Great sadness

Assigning a finite duration to the terms produces the opposite

- Consistency

- Eliminates apparent scriptural conflicts (All means All)
- Humility
- Peace
- Joy
- Great Comfort
- Ultimately - the greatest affection for our heavenly father

We discussed the agonies of but three men—knowing that millions have felt the same things—who could not bear the weight of Augustine's god. Yet they had no answer and nowhere to turn. What is the price of continued belief in Augustine's god—the God of most of Orthodoxy? Listen once again to the sad lament of an honorable man who knew no peace while serving the Prince of Peace:

<Jim Reads>I have felt every difficulty that any man has ever felt. In my thought I walk around about the terrific fact of the future. I, too, take into account the Fatherhood of God, and I look upon the unpitied nations of the globe, and with inexpressible longing and anguish for which there is no word, I have sought relief. But there is the plain, simple testimony of Jesus Christ. I cannot get around that, nor get over it¹. There it is. I have nothing to say. I cannot fathom the matter. A child can ask me questions that I cannot answer. I find my soul aching. As it were drops of blood flow for tears. But after all I do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and I do not believe he would deceive me nor deceive you. And if you ask me for the reason of the faith that is in me, I simply say this, "Jesus says so:" that is all. And I cannot give up his testimony. I preach the love of God, and I do not know what the scope of that love is; I do not know where it would logically lead. But I am sure that I am right in preaching that all punitive elements are under the control of love. I am perfectly sure that love will bring every thing right in the end. I therefore preach without qualification, and almost without limitation, on that side. But I am not to be understood on that account, as not believing what Christ himself deliberately says in respect to the peril of sin, or in regard to punishment in the life which is to come...

<Mike Reads>It goes to my heart to say these things. This is not the side that I seem to myself called to preach. Yet it is there; and, if I am faithful to my whole duty, I must preach it. As a surgeon does things that are most uncongenial to himself, so sometimes I do. And I do this with tears and with sorrow. It makes me sick.

There is not another teaching of the Bible that comes home to us as does this truth of punishment in the future life. On this subject men cannot keep down the heart while they are coolly weighing the evidence...My brethren, it is one thing to

read in the Bible the chapter as I read it in your hearing this morning, and other such passages, and another thing to ponder them in the face of a dead child. It may not be difficult for a theologian to sit in his chair and reason abstractly, rebutting and counter-thrusting in argument; but when he is called to follow his own son, who through a doubtful or an openly-ignominious career has gone out of life, it is not in human nature any longer to reason in the same calm mood. To apply this truth in the intensity of agonized love following its lost companion, like another Orpheus seeking Eurydice, - these are things that bring this question home as almost no other is ever brought home to us.

<Jim Reads>If to be born again, if to begin to love, if to hate selfishness, if to begin a separation from our animal nature, are the conditions of joy in the future life, then how few of all the existing people on the globe have met those conditions! And yet I will defy any man to look with a sympathetic heart out upon the masses that are moving more than all the leaves of the forests of the continent, and let the conviction pass his mind as even the shadow of a shade, without being utterly overwhelmed. A man cannot have the susceptibility which is cultivated by the gospel of Christ, and then look boldly in the face the terrific application of this simple truth to the outlying masses of mankind, and not shiver and tremble with sensibility.

The *eternity* of punishment, when any thing like a conception of its signification and meaning seizes the mind, seems to paralyze many with grief. The eternity of future punishment is the point where almost all agonizing doubts and struggles of Christian theologians have arisen. And of what are called the *insoluble mysteries of divine government*, it seems to me, that, if the doctrine of the eternity of punishment were removed, nine out of ten would disappear of themselves; for I believe that they result simply from that one term, 'suffering eternity.'

We close this review as we started it. **We mentioned a moment ago that Mr. Beecher and many others over the centuries have had nowhere to turn. The same cannot be said of you dear listener. You do have a choice. You can continue to go year after year and sit in pew after pew, listening to Augustine's god being portrayed as a god of love. Or, you can do something about it.**

<Jim Responds>

Mike, in this life, do you believe it is ok to torture people who merely believe differently than you? Do you believe it is ok to kill people who believe differently from you? (We are not talking about people who want to kill or do harm, we are just talking about people who believe differently than you on some subject.) **Would you ever support a**

government entity or a religious group who would allow such barbarianism?

Then, why would we support a church that thinks it is ok to torture and or annihilate the vast majority of people who ever lived? And what is worse, many of those to be tortured or annihilated are our family and friends? And the torturing doesn't last for a few finite moments in time, but goes on forever???

Mike, I can no longer support any organization that teaches this is acceptable behavior for anyone, including their god.

So dear Christian, what verdict do you render? What say you? Who do you say that Christ is?
