

God's Eternality (Existence)
 "God the Eternal One"

Psalm 90:1-2

Lord, you have been our dwelling place^[a]
 in all generations.

²Before the mountains were brought forth,
 or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
 from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

1 Tim. 1:17 - ¹⁷To ^(A)the King of the ages, ^(B)immortal, ^(C)invisible, ^(D)the only God, ^(E)be honor
 and glory forever and ever.^[a] Amen.

Intro:

There are many things in the Holy Scriptures that we need to study. We need to know about the creation of the world, about the devastating corruption of sin that entered the human race, about the coming of the Savior and his death and resurrection for our sins, about Christ's return and the full consummation of the kingdom of God. So many great truths and realities that are crucial and instructive. But there is no greater subject in the Bible to devote our attention to than the study of God himself, the nature of his being. In other words, what is God like?

If someone were to ask you, "What is God like?," how would you begin to describe him? You might say, "Well, he made all things." Or you might say, "He's the Father of Jesus Christ?" or you might say, "He's the sovereign ruler of the universe." Well, all these answers are correct, at least they're partially correct.

To accurately describe God, the God of the bible, is no easy task. The bible, as most of you know, has a lot of information about God. That is why God inspired the prophets and apostles to write these various books in the Bible, so that we people could learn what he is really like.

Today I want us to begin a study of God. The study of God is quite different from other studies we might undertake. For example, if we want to study geology, the make up of the earths' surface, it rocks and soils and mountains, we have a lot of concrete stuff to work with, a lot of stuff you can pick up with your hands or dig into or take photos of. You could go the Grand Canyon in Arizona and take your camera and satchel and little shovel and rent a donkey and meander down into the canyon and spend days studying the various rock formations, taking samples, and photos, and come back and write up an article, with pictures and samples, of what you had discovered.

But the study of God is quite different for one big reason: God is invisible, he is a Spirit, we cannot see him or touch him or photograph him. But he is as real as the rocks and

mountains, in fact, he is more real because he existed before all the rocks and mountains and he created them, he brought them into existence.

So, how are we to learn about this invisible God? There is only one place – it is in the Bible. For this great God who is all wise, so determined that he would reveal himself to men by the inspiration of his Spirit, and they would write down what he showed them or told them. This is really quite amazing, but the fact of the matter is that God wants to reveal himself to us, he wants us to learn about himself.

We can, of course, learn some things about him, by looking at nature. As the apostle Paul said in Romans 1:20, "...his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world,^[8] in the things that have been made." So when we look at the clouds, the stars, the trees, all of nature around us, we observe the creative, artistic results of God's handiwork. So God has shown us certain things about his existence and power just from the things around us that he has created.

But there are many other things about his nature, his being, that are not revealed in nature, and these more specific qualities of God have come to us through the writings of the holy men of old who have written down what God has revealed to him about himself. It is to this study that we will devote ourselves to in the preaching/teaching time of the next couple of months on the Lord's Day. This is a great enterprise; we cannot do it in our own wisdom and or knowledge. We need help from God himself, so let's pray.

Prayer:

Gracious Father in heaven, today as we begin our study of your attributes, those special characteristics of your being that belong to you and make you God alone, we need your help. We ourselves are ignorant and weak creatures but you are God almighty and eternal. Lord, your person, your nature, your being is so much greater than ours that it is hard for us to grasp the immensity and glory of your being. But we need to know you better, this is our calling in life, we need to grow in the knowledge of you and of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

We cannot do this, O Lord, in our own wisdom or intellect; we need the guidance and instruction of your Holy Spirit. So, come, O divine Spirit, and teach us about our God, who our eternal resting place, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

How shall we begin to learn about God? We can only go the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; there is no other place on earth where the divine truth of who God is and what he is like can be found. How do we begin to describe God?

To begin, let me give you a few descriptions of God:

From the Westminster Shorter Catechism:

Q. 4. *What is God?*

A. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Or from our own church, Good Shepherd Community Church in Dallas, Texas, from Article 2:

Article 2: **God**

We believe in the one true and living God, an intelligent, spiritual, eternal, incomparable and personal Being, Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and unchangeable in wisdom, holiness, truth, justice, mercy, goodness, and love and eternally existing in three persons as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There's a lot in this description of God, about 20 different descriptions of his nature and being. So where do we begin our study of God himself. As I thought about this, I decided that perhaps the best attribute of God to being with would be his eternity.

I was led to this conclusion by the scriptures themselves. There are two texts in the bible, one in the OT and one in the NT, that will guide us in our thinking today about God's eternity. In the OT we read in Psalm 90, called the Psalm of Moses, verses 1 and 2:

***Lord, you have been our dwelling place^[a]
in all generations.***

***² Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.***

You notice here that verse two says that before the earth ever came into existence, God was there. It says from "everlasting to everlasting you are God." A literal translation of this phrase from the Greek version of the OT reads, "from the ages to the ages you are God."

Or from the NT we have 1 Tim. 1:17, 1 Tim. 1:17 - ¹⁷ ***To ^(A)the King of the ages, ^(B)immortal, ^(C)invisible, ^(D)the only God, ^(E)be honor and glory forever and ever.^[a] Amen.***

Some of the other English translations read, "To the King eternal, immortal, invisible..." etc., This phrase in the ESV "of the ages" is a more literal translation of the Greek, but the idea is the same: "of the ages" means "eternal."

What do we mean when we say that God is eternal?

My definition: When we say that God is eternal what we mean is that he has always existed. There never was a time in the past when he did not exist, and there will never be a time in the future when he will not exist. His existence has no beginning and no ending. He has always been there, always been alive, always been ruling and directing all things and always will be. There can never be a time when God does not exist because by his very own

intrinsic nature he is life, he is the only living being that always been in existence and will always will be in existence. In all eternity past and all eternity future, God is there, God is alive, God is a living being; he is the source of any other life or existence that may come into being. All other beings or creatures can only come into existence by his will and power.

There is no other creature or thing that is eternal; only God is eternal. For example, what living creature has the shortest life-span? Mayflies (order Ephemeroptera) are aquatic insects known for having the shortest lifespans of any creature in the animal kingdom—they typically live for only one day. You could say that the Mayfly is the opposite of God in their life-span. God lives forever; they live for only one day.

How long do we humans live? Psalm 90 gives us an answer in verses 9 and 10:

***For all our days pass away under your wrath;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
¹⁰ The years of our life are seventy,
or even by reason of strength eighty;
yet their span^[e] is but toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.***

Interesting that this description of a human's average life-span lines up well with current statistics. In the U.S. in 2021, the average life span was 76.33 years.

From our primary text today, Psalm 90, I want us to consider three great truths:

- I. God existed before Creation**
- II. God created the world**
- III. God will continue to exist after creation.**

I. God existed before Creation

Psalm 90, v. 2 states in plainly,

***² Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.***

God was God from everlasting to everlasting, from the ages to the ages, before the mountains ever came into existence. Now, if there is one thing on earth that is massive and stable it is mountains. They are massive, you cannot move them. But God existed before they were ever formed; in fact, he formed them, he created them.

We have the picture here of God being a potter, and with his hands he molds and shapes the earth and the mountains and all the geographical formations of the earth.

Let's go to the first verse in the bible. We read in Gen. 1:1 - ***In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.***

In other words, at the beginning of the creation of the universe, God was already there. It was only because he was there and he willed it, that the universe came into existence.

God had been existing in all eternity. He was complete in himself. He did not need anything else to make him complete. But for his own purposes he decided to create a universe, and he decided to create people and put them on planet earth, and it's a good thing he did, or you and I would not exist today. The bottom line is that we creatures of time and space owe our existence to the will and creative power of the eternal God.

Some humans are so foolish and deceived to think that all living things arose by some spontaneous collision of atomic particles that began to evolve over millions of years into higher and higher forms of life. We owe our existence to the person decision and will of the eternal Creator. He created us for a purpose, for himself, for his own glory, and for our good and blessing. The eternal God willed to give us life and bring us into relationship to himself so that we can join him in his never-dying, always living, existence.

It's like a man traveling to a far city and he picks up a hitch-hiker and carries him along with him for the journey. God comes and picks us up so we can join him in his march forward into eternity future. Of course, he can only do this because of the work of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he sent to the earth to die for the sins of his people, then to rise from the dead on the third day, and ascend back to heaven. As we are joined to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ we are able, so to speak, to join the everlasting God as travels into eternity future. This is good news; this is great news. For the believer in Jesus Christ, this life is not the end; we do not cease to exist at death, but we await the resurrection of the dead, so we can join our Savior in his never-ending life.

Jesus said in John 17:3, ***3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.***

Moses, who wrote Psalm 90, came into an awareness of the eternality of God one day while he was herding his sheep. He came across a bush that was on fire, yet it was not being burned up. He had a face-to-face encounter with the Angel of the LORD. And God spoke to him out of the burning bush and said, Exo. 3:14,

¹⁴God said to Moses, "I am who I am."^[a] And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you. "I am who I am" is the word "Yahweh," the personal name of God. This is the name that God revealed to Moses as his personal name that he was to carry back to the people of Israel.

The word "Yahweh" is a description of God's nature. What he is saying and revealing here is that he is the One who has always been, who has always existed. "I am God now, and I have always been God, and I always will be God." Another way this word "Yahweh" could be translated is "I will be who I will be."

What God is revealing to Moses here is that he is the self-existent God who has always existed and who will always exist; in other words, he is the eternal God. From everlasting to everlasting he is God.

Man lives for a while and then dies. Flowers bloom and fade. Nations rise and fall. Presidents change. Culture changes. But God does not change. God remains the same forever. He does not die; he cannot die. He is the eternal God, the source of all life, of all other beings.

Isa. 40:8 - *The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.*

So we see that **God existed before Creation**

In John 1:1-3 we read, ***1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.***

Here we see that in the beginning of creation, along with God, was the Word, that is Jesus Christ, who is the invisible God's visible word to humanity. We're talking about the eternal existence of God and we see that God was not alone. But with him was the Word, the Word was "face to face" with God and he was, in fact, God himself. So the bible is revealing to us that with God, the eternal God, was also the Word, the Son.

But not only was the Word with God, but the Holy Spirit was with God. We read in Gen. 1:2, *The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

So before Creation, God the Father, and God the Word, or the Son, and God the Holy Spirit existed together as the one God. Deut. 6:4 says, ⁴"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one...". This was the great confession of the nation of Israel: she rightly confessed and declared there is only one God. This was in contrast to the pagan nations around her who sometimes worshipped multiple gods.

But the uniqueness of the one true God is that within his being he has eternally existed in three persons. Each person is equal in glory, power, and authority with the other persons. They have always existed in perfect union and harmony and purpose.

The Father sent the Son to die for our sins, the Son became incarnate of the virgin Mary, and the Spirit proceeds from heaven to reveal Jesus to his people and awaken them to spiritual life.

This this is the eternal God, the triune God, who has always existed and who revealed himself supremely through the coming of Jesus Christ into the world.

I. This is God who existed before Creation

II. this one triune God created the world.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
 or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
 from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Where did the world and the earth and the mountains come from. They did not develop from some cosmic explosion in eons past but were created by the will and word and command of God almighty.

I. God existed before Creation

II. God created the world

III. God will continue to exist after creation.

Jude 25 - ²⁵ to ^(A)the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, ^(B)be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time^[a] and now and forever. Amen.

Rev. 1:8 - ⁸^(A)“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, ^(B)“who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Acts 17:30-31 - ³⁰^(A)The times of ignorance ^(B)God overlooked, but ^(C)now he ^(D)commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed ^(E)a day on which ^(E)he will judge the world ^(G)in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and ^(H)of this he has given assurance to all ^(I)by raising him from the dead.”

JG - God acts in time: in acted in the past, acts now, and will act in the future. Although he is over time and created time and is greater than time, the acts with our time, within the time he has created and in which we humans live.

The great, eternal God, has acted to create us in an environment of time, and he is not a deist God, but is active and imminent within our time, within our experience.

Q. Will we experience time in heaven, or will we be somehow absorbed into God’s position of what has been described as a never-ending, on-going, eternal present? It seems that since we are creatures, who had a beginning, that that kind of historical progression will continue in heaven. For example, we read in Rev. 22:1-2, “Then the angel^[a] showed me ^(A)the river of ^(B)the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of ^(C)the street of the city; ^(D)also, on either side of the river, ^(E)the tree of life^[b] with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were ^(E)for the healing of the nations.”

“Each month” seems to indicate a progression of time that we as creatures will continue to experience in heaven. As WG says, “We, as God’s people, will experience fullness of joy in God’s presence for all eternity – not in the sense that we will no longer experience time, but in the sense that our lives with him will go on forever” p. 206

The scriptural revelation of God’s attribute of eternity so enables us to understand this aspect of his being so that we may better understand him, worship him, serve him, and rejoice in him.

Praise be to his holy and eternal name forever!

-by Jeff Gregory, Pastor
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