



attributes of *God*

WEEK 3 — GOD IS ETERNAL



COLOSSIANS 1 : 9 - 10

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you,
asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him:
bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...

ISAIAH 40 : 28

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

Review: What is an attribute of God?

"Those qualities or characteristics of the divine being by virtue of which he is distinguished from all created beings and without which he would not be worthy of the worship and service of man" (WT Conner)

So far we have seen: The Unity of God and God's Independence

God Is Eternal

THE ETERNITY OF GOD DEFINED:

Eternal = lasting forever; to always exist; to have no beginning or end; ceaseless

"God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees and acts in time." (Wayne Grudem)

*"Eternity is not simply the negation of time with reference to God, but **the arena** of his full, majestic, unimaginably rich and overflowing life as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." (Danny Akin)*

Sometimes called infinity, timelessness, or "unto perpetuity"

God's relationship to time is very, very different than ours.
Limitations of time on us do not apply to God.

Aspects of God's Eternality

1. God has no beginning or end

Exodus 3:14 --- "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Deuteronomy 33:27 --- "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms...."

Psalms 90:1-2 --- "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

"Man looks back as far as he can, then turns around and looks forward as far as he can, until human thought falls exhausted and human eyes can no longer see" (A. W. Tozer)

Psalms 102:24-28 --- "'O my God," I say, "take me not away in the midst of my days-- you whose years endure throughout all generations!" Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end. The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their offspring shall be established before you."

Job 36:26 --- "Behold, God is great, and we know him not; the number of his years is unsearchable"

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

John 8:57-58 --- "So the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

Revelation 1:8 --- "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

2. Time began at creation

Before God made the universe, there was no time.

"But before the beginning, there wasn't any 'beginning'; there wasn't any 'before.'" (A. W. Tozer)

Genesis 1:1, 1:5, 1:14 --- "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.... God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day... And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years...."

John 1:3 --- "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Acts 17:24 – "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth"

God created the world with time, not in time!

"So what was the eternal God doing before he made the world? On Augustine's reading there was no such 'before.' There was no 'then' then. Eternity is the dimension of God's own life. It has no beginning and no end, no parameters or margins or boundaries outside of God himself. On the other hand, time was willed and created by God as a reality distinct from himself." (Danny Akin)

3. God is outside of time

What is time?

In His being, there is no succession of moments.

"God has no past! Now I want you to hear that. And I want you to shake your head hard here, because this is an idea that the old church fathers knew, but that we, their children, don't seem to care much about. God has no past. You have a past; it isn't really very long, although you may wish it wasn't so long. But God has no past and no future. Why doesn't God have a past or a future? Because past and future are creature words, and they have to do with time. They have to do with the flowing motion of time. But God is not riding on the bosom of time. Time is a little mark across the bosom of eternity. And God sits above time, dwelling in eternity: 'from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.'" (A. W. Tozer)

4. Time does not change God

God's immutability (*our topic for June 14!*)

5. God sees all time equally vividly

God sees all things past, present, and future equally vividly.

Psalm 90:4 --- "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night."

2 Peter 3:8 --- "But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Isaiah 46:9-10 --- "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'"

A day never ends to God. He always experiences it.

6. Yet, God acts in time.

God is Lord over time, so He acts in it for His purposes.

"He never becomes subject to time, measure, number: He remains eternal, and inhabits eternity. But he uses time as a means for the manifestation of His eternal thoughts and excellences; He makes time subservient to eternity, and thereby proves himself to be the 'King of the ages.'" (Herman Bavinck)

Matthew 24:36 --- "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

Acts 1:7 --- "He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.'"

Galatians 4:4-5 --- "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

7. We will always exist in time.

Nothing in Scripture indicates we ever will transcend time.

Revelation 4:10 --- "They cast their crowns before the throne..."

Revelation 14:3 --- "... they were singing a new song before the throne"

Eternity for us will be a succession of moments.

8. We desperately need God.

"You need God, for God is your eternity. You need God, for God is your tomorrow. You need Jesus Christ for Jesus Christ is your tomorrow. He's your guarantee of that which will be. He's your resurrection and life. And when the sun has burnt itself out and the stars have been folded up like a garment, God will still be, for God dwells in an everlasting now that nothing can get to. And He takes His children who believe in His Son into His bosom, into the heart of the everlasting now." (A. W. Tozer)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can thinking about the attribute of God's eternity help strengthen our faith?
2. Reread Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8.
How does the truth of these verses affect how we view our trials?
3. Reread Isaiah 46:9-10.
How does the truth in this verse affect how we pray?
4. Questions from Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*:
 - If you sin against God today, when would it start bringing sorrow to God's heart?
 - When would it stop bringing sorrow to God's heart?
 - Does this reflection help you understand why God's character requires that He punish sin?"
5. When you praise God, will that sound ever stop being present in God's consciousness and something in which He delights? How does that thought affect how you approach the worship of God both at church and in your daily life?
6. How does the attribute of God's eternity help us make wise choices about our use of time now?

