

Sermon by Bob Brown on Sunday AM 9/27/09
Attributes of God 5 - Eternality

When we apply the term immutability to God it is defined as "absolutely unchangeable". When we apply immutability to time it is called eternity.

When we think of eternity, our finite minds immediately think of time, and time is a strange kind of word, because God defines time but is not defined by it.

The concept of eternity has three main characteristics:

1. It excludes a beginning.
2. It excludes an end.
3. It has no succession of moments.

Eternity only is found in, and defined as the immutable, unbegotten, incorruptible God of all creation, who gives us time but is not contained by it. Everywhere we look the Bible speaks of God as transcending time and therefore, He cannot be measured by time.

As we read through the Scriptures we see time mentioned, in one form or another, over and over. There are a number of different Words for time in the Bible, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. They are descriptive of what is happening during a particular succession of events, and as moments move from one circumstance to another. We are all under laws of physics as created beings and are limited by not only our capacity but also our understanding of time.

The word eternal, is used in two senses in the Bible; **figuratively**, which speaks of an existence that may have a beginning, but will have no end, such as the human soul. This is why we speak of those who know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior as having "eternal life."

We also see eternal used **literally**, and this speaks of an existence that has no beginning and no end, the only instance is God Himself. Time, as we know it has a past, a present and a future, eternity does not!

Eternity is infinite in duration, without beginning, end or limit of any kind; eternity is a continuing living present! You and I can only conceive of eternity

as continuing indefinitely; it is moving from the present moment in one of two directions, to the past or to the future.

The writers of the Bible began to grasp this concept, many times just like us, without fully understanding how they fit in, but knowing that God was in complete control, that He always has been and always will be. Let's look at a few examples of this from the Word of God.

Habakkuk 1:12 *"O Lord, are you not from everlasting to everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die..."* In this passage Habakkuk is referring to the Chaldeans who had threatened to wipe out Israel. But this prophet knows that God is eternal and trustworthy; therefore it is impossible to wipe them out.

Psalms 90:1-2 *"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."* Here Moses is comparing the perishable nature of man with the imperishable, eternal nature of God.

Moses Learned of this eternal nature of God very early in his call to serve.

Exodus 3:13-14 Moses said to God, *"Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' Then what shall I tell them?"* God said to Moses, *"I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

Everything we need to know about time, everything given to us in revelation of time, past, present, and future, is found in the name of Jehovah, YHWH, the Great I AM!

When Jesus came to this earth, and people began to know Him as the Son of God, the theology of the Old Testament began to be seen through Him. The Apostle Paul, who had been very well trained in the understanding of the Old Testament God, had been silent for so long but when he met Jesus, he knew that He was Jehovah. Listen to this passage of Scripture that Paul wrote to Timothy.

1 Timothy 6:12-16 *"Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in*

the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”

The apostle Paul speaks of God doing things “in his own time” knowing that God is not constrained by time, but that all time is His. Everywhere, the Bible speaks of God as transcending time and therefore He cannot be measured by the time that we know. But the good news is that He makes Himself known to us, in our time, through His son Jesus Christ. He sent the Holy Spirit to us so that we could know Him, and so that we can find Him, trust Him, and above all else spend eternity with this One we have found.