

The God of the Bible - Part 2

by Richard Owen Roberts

God's eternity, timelessness, and immutability are essential truths that can bring us comfort, encouragement, and reassurance in our daily lives.

Duration: 40:23

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Genesis 21:33, Isaiah 57:15, Jeremiah 10:10, Daniel 4:3, Habakkuk 1:12, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2, Hebrews 13:8, 1 John 1:1, Revelation 1:8, Revelation 22:13

Topics: "Character Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the concept of time and its significance in our lives. He emphasizes that everything in the physical world, including our lives, has a beginning and an end, but God is eternal and not bound by time. The preacher quotes from Ecclesiastes chapter 3, highlighting the various seasons and purposes that exist under heaven. He also ponders on what God was doing before the creation of man and emphasizes that God's existence is from everlasting to everlasting. The sermon concludes with a reflection on the brevity of human life and the need to seek wisdom and mercy from God.

Transcript

At the 90th Psalm, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations before the mountains were brought forth. Wherever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction and sayest, return, ye children of men.

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood. They are as asleep.

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth and it groweth up. In the evening it is cut down and it withereth.

For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath.

We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow. For it is soon cut off and we fly away.

Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long, and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

O, satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us. Yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. In particular, we'll be thinking about verse 2, before the mountains were brought forth, wherever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

It's almost impossible for us to comprehend eternity. We live in a world of time, and everything we see, and everything we feel around us, and everything we know through our physical senses, has a beginning and will end. We ourselves had a beginning.

While we may not remember it, we are aware that we began, and we are certainly aware that we shall end. Our children began, and many of us can remember distinctly the very hour of a child's birth. Our mothers and our fathers began.

It's a lot harder, however, to comprehend that, than to comprehend the beginning of our children. In fact, it's difficult to comprehend the beginning of anyone that we highly honor and respect. If you have a favorite professor that you can remember, you may remember them as they were in the days that they taught you, but to think of them as an infant, to think of them in their mother's arms, to think of them having a beginning is difficult.

If you greatly love your pastor, you don't think of him as an infant, or as one having a beginning. And yet, all have had a beginning. Our church had a beginning.

There was a time when it was not. Our employment began, or our unemployment. Our houses began.

Our clothes, our cars, our money, our investments, our debts, our furniture, everything that we have began. Our pains began. Our troubles began.

Our friendships began. Our grass, our flowers, our bushes, our trees, they all began. The heavens began.

The earth began. The water we drink and the food that we eat, these began. All the stars of the sky and all the planets of all the universes began.

Everything we know, everything we love in this physical world had a beginning. And everything we know and love in this physical world shall end, even our physical lives, but not God. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

To quote the of Ecclesiastes chapter 3, to everything there is a season and a time, to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted.

A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to break down and a time to build up. A time to mourn and a time to dance.

A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together. A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing. A time to get and a time to lose.

A time to keep and a time to cast away. A time to end and a time to sow. A time to keep silence and a time to speak.

A time to love and a time to hate. A time of war and a time of peace to everything. There is a time and a season, but not to God.

From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. For God there is no time. God inhabits eternity.

There was not time for him to begin and there shall never be a time for him to end. You cannot think in terms of God without thinking in terms of that which is eternal or everlasting. The Bible itself is full of descriptions portraying the eternal nature of God.

In Genesis 1, 1, in the beginning, God. And in Revelation 22, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. The testimony of Scripture is uniform and overwhelming.

God always has been and always shall be. It's hard to lay hold of. To Abraham, God, as recorded in Genesis 21, was the Lord, the everlasting God.

To Moses, he was the I am that I am. And in his 90th Psalm, Moses said, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

And in his dying speech, as recorded in Deuteronomy 33, this same Moses declared, the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. In Psalm 100, the mercy of God is declared to be everlasting. And it is said that his truth endureth forever.

And then in Psalm 103, David informs us that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. And it is unto them that fear him, and his righteousness is unto children's children. Isaiah, that mighty prophet, had a vision of the God of all eternity.

And in the 40th chapter, he asked the question, hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not and is not weary? In his 44th chapter, Isaiah records, thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts, I am the first and the last, and beside me there is no God. And again, in the 57th chapter, Isaiah, speaking as God spoke, declares, I am the high and the lofty one who inhabiteth eternity. Jeremiah likewise spoke of the eternal nature of God in the 10th chapter in saying, the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and he is the everlasting King.

Daniel described the kingdom of our God as an everlasting kingdom, and he said in the fourth chapter, and of his dominion there shall be no end. And even that little prophet Habakkuk stated, art not thou, O Lord, from everlasting to everlasting? And he knew in his heart the answer, absolutely. The New Testament, of course, is also filled with this kind of truth.

It pulses with the certainty that God is from everlasting to everlasting. In Romans, we read of the eternal power and Godhead. In Corinthians, of the wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

And in Ephesians, of God's eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. And nowhere is there anything more overwhelming on the subject of the eternity of God than in both Testaments, old and

new, in describing Jesus Christ. And if there is anyone here who is the least bit shaky as to whether Jesus Christ is God or not, they have only to review the evidence presented in Scripture concerning the fact that God only is eternal, and Jesus Christ is eternal.

And thus, of absolute certainty, Jesus Christ must be God. In Isaiah, he is spoken of as the everlasting Father. In Proverbs, mind you, of all places, the wisdom which in Proverbs can only be Jesus Christ is described as that wisdom which was set up from the everlasting, from the beginning, before the earth.

Why? In Colossians, Jesus is plainly described as being before all things. And he is also in the first chapter, verse 16, described as the one who created all things. And this great emphasis upon Christ, the eternal creator, is repeated also in Hebrews 1, 2. In Hebrews 13, Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, forever, in Revelation 1, 8, he is the one which was and is.

And in 1 John 11, a beautiful portrayal of the eternal nature of Christ in which he is described as the one and only source of all eternal life. Overwhelmingly, the Bible testifies to the eternity of God. We want to try and lay hold of this this morning.

There is an abundance of Scripture, but I wonder how well you've done comprehending the truth portrayed in the Bible of the everlasting nature of God. Now, in meditating upon this, we must first face the fact that in describing God as eternal, it means for certain that God had no beginning. And that's easily said, but not so easily lay hold of.

In Psalm 93, 2, the statement is made, thou art from everlasting. Now, God did not begin when he created man. God did not begin when he created everything out of nothing.

When did God begin? Well, he didn't. And that is really mind-boggling. In the 90th Psalm that we have read together, we had these words, a thousand years are in thy sight, as yesterday which is past, or as a watch in the night.

So, in our minds now, let us think. One day equals one thousand years, or one watch, and the watch would have been either two hours or four hours. One watch equals a thousand years.

Now, let your mind work on that a little, will you? One day equals one thousand years. One year equals 365,000 years. One average lifetime, 70 years, equals 25,550,000 years.

Or, human history as we know it, approximately 7,000 years equals 2,550,000,000 years. Now, Peter was acquainted with this statement in Psalm 90, and he made a statement which is similar but a little different. He said, one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day.

So, putting the matter in reverse, as Peter does, the 7,000 years which covers the entire span of recorded history of man in Scripture, equal one week of God's time. Or, the 70 years of the average life of an individual, equal less than two hours of God's time. Now, I don't think either the psalmist or Peter intended us to think that literally God runs on a different clock than we do, and that one day equals one thousand years.

That's not the point. The intent of both those passages is to cause us to stretch our minds, and to begin to realize that we live in a world of time, and we are bound by time. And, as I sought to point out in the beginning, everything we know has to do with time.

It all started, and it all ends, but God does not have to do with time, and he isn't regulated by it. And, he did not begin, and he will not end. And, we're trying now to come to grips with the fact that God had no beginning.

Can you think in terms of 365,000 years? Or, can you think in terms of 25,550,000 years? Or, can you think in terms of 2,550,000,000 years? Now, insofar as we can tell from the biblical record, the creation of man occurred approximately 7,000 years ago by our time scale. So, what was God doing prior to that? Waiting? Just twiddling his thumbs until the right moment came to make man? Thinking? Saying to himself, well, what will I do? Well, you know, there's a tremendous fault with many of us. We don't think of God as being any bigger than the time span with which we have some acquaintance.

But, I say again, God didn't begin with the history of man 7,000 years ago. Now, some people are greatly troubled by science that tells us, in a variety of ways, that the world is older than we think. Some say it's a million, and some three million, and I suppose some five billion, and we've heard all kinds of figures.

So what? Well, maybe the world is a hundred billion years old in its elementary form. That's no problem. God was here then.

God didn't just start. Somewhere, way back before anybody can comprehend, God, out of nothing, made everything that is. But he might have remade what he made a thousand times.

This may not be the first race of men that lived on this particular planet. Is it not perfectly conceivable that the God who made Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden some 7,000 years ago, had made some other race prior to that, which occupied this planet, and which, for reasons of his own, known to himself, he destroyed? I'm not saying that's true. I'm only saying God existed long before the time span of which we have any acquaintance, and it is inconceivable that he did nothing.

And if he didn't do something as far as this planet was concerned, long before he made Adam, maybe he did it somewhere else. Maybe one of those billions of planets out there that man has still to see in his telescope was the center of God's activity for 7,000 years prior to this particular world being the focus of his attention at the moment. How do we know? I'm not saying, I'm only asking you to let your mind run with scripture and let your imagination be stretched by the fact that God had no beginning, and long before we know anything about God was at work doing what God wills to do.

Remember this, however. God is the first cause, and everything that exists exists as an effect, and there is absolutely nothing that predates God. There may be some things older than this earth.

There may be planets out there in space created long before our, but there is nothing anywhere that predates God, for in the beginning God created, and there is nothing prior to that. Now nothing in the Bible really is more clearly stated than the fact that God is the self-existing eternal God. I want to remind you again of that word spoken to Moses by God from the burning bush, I am that I am.

And Moses said, but Lord, what shall I say to the people? And the answer, say, I am has sent you. What does that mean? Well, God didn't say I was, and he didn't say I will be, but I am. There is no past with God.

There is no future tense, as far as God is concerned. He has always been, and he will always be. God might have said to Adam, I am.

He might have told David, I am. God could have confronted Saul on the road to Damascus and said, I am. God could come in a felt way into this chapel at this moment, and with an audible voice and say, I am.

In speaking 950 billion years before the creation of the first angelic being, God could have said, I am. And in describing himself 675 trillion years from now, God could still say, I am. And grasp that, if you will, the wonder of a God who has no beginning.

And obviously, also, we must face the fact that he has no ending. In Psalm 102, verses 25 to 27, the statement is made, of all thou hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure.

Yet all of them shall wax old like a garment. As a vesture shalt thou change them. They shall be changed, but thou art the same.

Thy years have no end. But God cannot end. Well, that's quite obvious, isn't it? There is no being or power that can destroy him.

The devil is a midget in comparison with God. The devil is but a created being who has fallen from the realm of grace and is consigned and chained to the realm of darkness. The devil has no power to put God out of existence.

Nor could all the devil with all his angels and all the powers of evil arrayed together, marching against God, even so much as put a dent in his armor. God must, of necessity, always exist because there is no power with the capacity to put him out of existence. And God himself has no self-destructive tendency.

There is nothing within God that will destroy him. In Acts 15, 18, the statement is made, known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. God didn't just suddenly dream up things to do.

But going right back to the very beginning, whenever that was, which there really was no such thing when it comes down to it. Yet God had in his mind all the things that he was going to do. And in the mind of God, right back there, was an awareness of the fact that he was going to create angelic beings.

And that angelic beings were going to rebel and march against him. And that they were going to be cast out and consigned to darkness. So the angry episode of the devil against God did not take God by surprise.

It had no effect or influence upon his eternal nature. He has no end. Now try to comprehend that.

Try to think, if you will, of a thousand years from now, a million years, a trillion years. That's the concept of a God who goes on and on and on and on and on. And then add to the realization that he has no beginning and no ending, the realization also that he doesn't age.

Have you thought about that? God was never young and God will never be old. That's really something, isn't it? God doesn't know more now than he did earlier. He doesn't learn by experience like we do.

I already told you that in the very beginning he knew all, and he has known all ever since. God isn't losing his memory with age. He's not growing soft and flabby as the ages pass.

God is not becoming more tolerant or more mellow as the years go by. God isn't getting too tired to maintain his own law and enforce his own discipline. God isn't affected by the tides, or by the moon, or by

the seasons, or by atmospheric pressures, or by the change of life.

God is eternal. He doesn't receive anything new, and he doesn't lose anything old. Nothing comes as a shock to God, and no new schemes intrigue him.

There's no danger of God becoming senile, nor will God ever be replaced by a younger and a more modern version from everlasting to everlasting. Thou art God. Set your mind as far as you can with this great truth.

But it's wonderful to realize that it isn't merely abstract truth that has no profound effect upon us, but in actual fact, truth that enters into our daily lives and alters our thinking and our living. Consider this truth of the eternal nature of God as applied right here, now. If God is eternal, which he most assuredly is, then we can be reassured that nothing temporal can upset or prevail against him or against his plan.

Or against his people. Now perhaps your life has seemed to be in a turmoil. Maybe some of your favorite plans have gone astray.

Maybe things aren't working out as you hoped they might. But the eternal God is on his throne. There's not anything disturbing him.

No assaults of Satan are shaking the throne. No turmoil or conflict is disturbing his peace. The great I Am reigns throughout all of his kingdom.

And the 70 years of your troubled life are not more than two hours of his time. Why is it that you're worked up and alarmed and disturbed or discouraged or affected unduly by that which is passing when the eternal God has a plan which is unwavering? We ought to take great comfort and encouragement from the fact that God is from everlasting to everlasting and is without change. The great question, when we find ourselves disturbed in a state of turmoil, is not where is God? The great question is, where am I? For if I am with him and he is king in my kingdom, then what am I worried about? What am I troubled about? Why am I not as relaxed and secure as he is? And if you find yourself troubled or discouraged or affected today by what's going on around you, then get yourself more nearly aligned with the kingdom of God which nothing prevails against.

But also thinking in terms of the here and the now, let us for a moment focus upon this sobering fact. All sin and all human rebellion becomes even more heinous or awful than we normally realize when we set it in perspective and realize that sin and rebellion of every sort are against the eternal God. In Romans chapter 1, the heinousness of idolatry is declared, and it is shown to be a changing from the human side of the incorruptible God into a corruptible figure of a bird or a beast or a human being or a creeping thing even.

And the great evil of idolatry consists in the fact that in the mind of the idolater, he has turned the God that is from everlasting to everlasting into something which is merely temporal. Now will you think in terms of yourself? To love anything, now get this, to love anything which is perishing, money, sex, popularity, security, to love anything which is passing in any way which equals or surpasses love for that which is eternal is sin so grievous as to be absolutely incomprehensible. That's the fact that it's sheer nonsense.

It is absolutely weird and crazy to attach our affection on things which are transitory and in a moment of time shall be gone forever, when instead we have the right and the privilege through Christ of attaching our affection on the eternal God who had no beginning and has no ending and in whom there is no

variableness nor shadow of turning. We say the here and the now ought to be affected by our realization of the eternal nature of God. But may I also add that we should also be greatly affected as far as our consideration of the world to come.

For a moment let us consider the blessedness of the eternal reward promised to those who love and serve Christ. Now if God were not eternal, the bliss which those who are children of God expect will someday be there, could lose its shine, its sparkle. I mean suppose God were not eternal.

And suppose that when we died we did go to God's heaven. But suppose because God was not eternal, somewhere down the line he ceased to exist. Or some other God greater than himself destroyed him.

What would happen to our eternal bliss? I ask you to think in terms of being in a heaven that's uncertain, that's shaky, that could at any moment be overrun by demons. The anticipatory pleasures that are ours of the coming glory are there because God is eternal. The everlasting life which he has promised to us, and which in actual fact he made promise of before the world ever began, can no more be altered or perished than can God himself.

Now you might have an earthly estate of a million dollars at the moment. And you might live very nicely at 15 percent interest off the income on that million dollars. But you live with the realization that in a month or two that million dollar might not be sufficient to buy a single loaf of bread.

But the inheritance of the children of God is an eternal inheritance, and it's no more subject to aging or to shrinkage or to perishing than is God himself. And will you think of this precious truth? The enjoyment of God after a hundred million years in heaven will be as fresh and as beautiful as the first day you step across the Jordan and enter his presence. Now there isn't anything on earth that you can possess that is guaranteed to make you forever satisfied.

You buy a brand new car and for a few weeks it's wonderful, but then somebody plows into the side of it and it loses some of its value in your sight. There isn't anything that we acquire on this earth that is not by some means or another tarnished and diminished, and our power of affection is somehow gradually declining because the change that occurs in us is in it. But when we think of heaven, it never grows tiny or loses its power to thrill and excite because God, the everlasting, is there.

It isn't enough to think in that direction. We ought also to think on the other side, just for a brief moment. The same God that guarantees the enduring and the satisfying nature of heaven also guarantees the enduring and the terrible nature of hell.

The fire in hell will never go out, and God will always be on hand to see that it doesn't. The wind there will never die, and the eternal God will see to that. It will never improve.

After a trillion years in hell, there will still not be any relief, and a person might well after a trillion years cry out, with that poor man in Luke, send us someone with a drop of water to cool my tongue, but no relief will come. There is no danger of God changing his mind. The doom of the impenitent has been fixed from the beginning of time, and it will never alter.

The sheer fact that God is from everlasting to everlasting stands as a guarantee of that. Father in heaven, grant that each one of us will be moved upon by the Spirit of God to contemplate in greater depth and breadth your eternal nature than we ever have before. And in the days of the week before us, may we find ourselves in the grip of the eternal God.

And in this grip, may we be wonderfully altered for your eternal glory. Amen. you

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