

*Indulging the Imagination with...*

**A Mix of Random Thoughts  
on Eternity**

*A Teasing,  
Titillating,  
Thrilling  
Concept*



# *A Mix of Random Thoughts on Eternity*

*Please don't take the following wispy thoughts as being doctrinal tenets I am propounding. They are just thoughts that I cannot, and don't expect to, prove. They are intended merely to make you think and anticipate.*

-AJS

Today I am sitting at my computer, just thinking, thinking, thinking... As different thoughts move like actors across the stage of my mind – sort of auditioning for my approval, if you will – one of my favorites, Eternity, presents itself. At this point I send the others home – “Don’t call me; I’ll call you.” I can work with this thought. The concept of eternity is very appealing to my mind because it is so mysterious and it has much to do with the God I serve. None of us know much about eternity. That is what makes it so mysterious. We see just enough of the concept to be titillated by it and want to know more. And there is not much more we can know about it in this life.

This much we know: Time is surrounded by eternity. Time is a river flowing from point A to point B, from birth to death (for the individual) or from the beginning of creation to the Great White Throne Judgment. It has to progress and have a destination, otherwise it would not be time. Contrariwise, eternity does not "flow"; it is static. Eternity is a sea with no destination; it simply IS, vast and calm, unruffled by winds or storms. Eternity engulfs time. For further clarity, let’s use another figure: Time is like a capsule suspended in the sea of eternity, but eternity does not cease to be inside the capsule of time. Eternity is endless; and it pervades all time and space. God and eternity both pervade all space and time in a manner similar to the way that water permeates a sponge. The water is all through the sponge, but it is not an integral part of the sponge. Space and time are not God, yet nothing can exist outside of God's interpenetrating presence.

Perhaps you can now see why the thought of eternity grabs my imagination even though it is a confusing thought. How can there be a never-ending state of being and how can there be a never-ending entity,

something or someone who has never not existed and will never cease to exist? According to the Scriptures, we shall live forever, which is a concept hard to grasp. I don't say it is hard to believe. I firmly believe it although I can't grasp it fully. But, as far as we mortals know, we have not forever existed. We see ourselves as having entered, at birth, the flow of eternity, which then carries us forever into the "future," forever living the more abundant life – for those who believe in Christ. Unbelievers will *exist*, not have life as only Christ can give it. But we who believe entered the flow of eternity somewhere along the banks of time when we gave ourselves to Christ. We, again, as far as we know, have not forever existed.

That raises an interesting question: How can anything or anyone be eternal if they have not existed forever? The very word, eternity, connotes forever-ness, but it seems that we have entered the flow of eternity after being "born again" and thus inducted into eternity. That presumes a beginning, which is not what eternity is about. It seems to this writer in his ignorance that there is no beginning and no ending in eternity. Further, we have assumed time to be merely a tiny capsule in the all-pervasiveness of eternity, which completely enfolds time within its ubiquitous self; therefore, anyone who is a part of eternity has necessarily forever existed in time, and beyond. We can picture eternity as a limitless shroud that cloaks the tiny capsule called time, except that, unlike the usual shroud, this is a liberating medium that causes the essential person to expand to its fullest eternal potential.

This is all very good, but how can we, considering our time-bound selves, say we shall live eternally? We are created beings, logically shut out from eternity – it would seem.

Let me quickly throw in a parenthetical paragraph at this point. The issues I am dealing with in this rambling monologue are not issues that trouble me. They surely don't cause me to lose any sleep. The questions that arise intrigue me and exercise my mind and my faith. I know without doubt I shall live forever. I know I shall one day be a true eternal being. I don't know how or why, but faith has laid hold on this concept that the mind doesn't understand and I am a willing captive to the thought.

Now back to the mysteries of how we can be creatures of eternity. God is the only eternally existing Being, that is, He alone has forever existed. But in John 17:21 Jesus said of His followers, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us..." Read this passage again so that you may get the full awesome meaning in it. Jesus prayed that we might be one in Him (Jesus) in whom the Father lives and who also lives in the Father. That is almost a fearsome concept, that we should be one with the Father and the Son, who are themselves ONE eternal Being. But let's take it further: We are in Christ (Rom. 12.5) and we see again that Christ is in God (John 10.38b), which takes us again to John 17.21, telling us that we are in God. At this very moment we are eternal beings because by faith we have reached beyond the capsule of time. Time itself is, for a fleeting second, a unique and unusual part of eternity, a part in which we received Christ and thus expanded our horizons into the Eternal.

In John 17.21 Jesus prayed that we might be one with the Father and Him. But think on this: Our sinful bodies are "holy" only as long, and as much as, we keep them from acting in their naturally unholy way. They are not essentially holy and never will be. Therefore our physical bodies (identified with the "carnal mind" –Rom.8.7; 1 Cor. 2.14) cannot be one with God/Eternity, as there is no sin in God. It is true that our entire beings, including our sin-laced bodies, are enfolded protectively by God, but our bodies can never be one with Him. Furthermore, anything that is in eternity, other than through the anomaly of time, is itself destined to exist forever, and we know that sin cannot exist beyond the time allotted by God.

But this presents no problem. In the resurrection we shall be given glorified bodies, bodies that are holy and pure. So, if we are correct in taking Jesus' words to mean that we will be thoroughly integrated in the Father and the Son, is it possible that, because of this total amalgamation of the Father and Jesus and us believers, God's unsheathed power will somehow transform us into eternal beings – we who were finite beings created in time? Hold it! Don't worry about my sanity; this is just a thought.

Mark this: Those unfortunate people who have rejected Christ in this life can never be eternal beings although they shall exist forever. Merely existing in that disembodied, damned state will be as different from living as a drop of water is different from the ocean. There can be no valid comparison.

In our continuing efforts to comprehend eternity, let's try to visualize two things: "Eternity Past" and "Eternity Future":

### **1. "Eternity Past"**

#### **(a real contradiction of terms)**

Rather than attempting to make the gigantic leap all the way back to the "beginning" of forever, it may be easier if we go back incrementally in our minds to prominent milestones in the story of all creation. We can start this backward journey by recalling the creation of mankind. That is a long trip into the past. But it's a step we can make. Yet there is a compound event that happened further back than that: the creation of the universe. Going even further back into the haze of time than the creation of the universe (at which occurrence time also was created) and man, we come across the creation of angels, those creatures that some of you thought were eternal, just as you thought they had wings (they do not). No, they are not eternal in the sense of having no beginning. They seem to predate the advent of time – frankly, I am unsure of that– but they too are only created beings (Psa. 148.2-4; Col. 1.16). Of that I am sure.

This effort at going back as far as the mind can go has made us grasp just a trifle more the thought of eternity reaching back into an infinity of being. I say, "being," because without something or someone being or existing there can be no eternity. No existence = no eternity. Of course the only being that exists from forever to forever is God.

### **2. "Eternity Future"**

#### **(another contradiction of terms)**

Still attempting to put a handle on the idea of eternity, we'll now look ahead from our present vantage point in time. Above, when we looked at "eternity past," we were not certain of anything that went beyond the reach of time – except God Himself. (As implied, we cannot be sure of the occasion in which angels arrived on the scene: before the advent of time or after.) However, with regard to "eternity future," the Bible gives us just a trifle more information. Now we are really probing into eternity by looking ahead to the first event that we are reasonably sure is outside of the realm of time: The Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20.11-15). There all who have not been a part of the "first resurrection" will be resurrected and judged.

Next, mentally reaching ahead beyond the Great White Throne Judgment, we come across the City of God, the New Jerusalem that God is now preparing for His people. This is the city of which the author of Hebrews wrote,

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb 11:10)

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." (Heb 11:16)

"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (Heb 13:14)

Now we have "spanned" eternity from as far back as our minds can probe to as far into the future as they can soar. Have we fully grasped the reality of eternity? No, but our faith, which was not wavering, and our hope, which was already aglow, have been enhanced just by talking about the thrilling concept. In eternity we shall know a state of being that will be infinitely beyond anything of which we have ever dreamed. I can't tell you what it will be like because I have never experienced it and Scripture gives only very vague descriptions of that eternal state with God. I can only dream my limited dreams and indulge in my limited vision of things to come. But the dreams and visions, although they are severely restricted by my inadequate human mind, are thrilling to the extreme. They make me yearn so greatly for that Great

Day of God's ultimate destination for His people! My harassed mind awaits that day; my aging, buffeted body longs for it, and my soul/spirit quivers in anticipation of the time when we shall all come literally into the Presence of Jesus Christ.

What a time it will be!







