



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Character of God” Series Lesson 5 – August 28, 2016

Incommunicable Attribute of Eternity

I. **Lesson Starters:**

Last week we looked at the Incommunicable attribute of Immutability(Unchangeable). Today we will look at Eternity. God’s eternity can be defined as follows:

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

Definition of time:

- **Time** is the continued progress of existence and events that occur in succession from the past through the present to the future. Time is a component quantity of various measurements used to sequence events, to compare the duration of events or the intervals between them in material reality or in the conscious experience.

Sometimes this can also be referred to as the “Doctrine of God’s Infinity with respect to time”. To be infinite is to be unlimited. God is not limited by time. The passing of time does not add or subtract anything from God. He knows all things past, present and future with the same degree of understanding and vividness.

II. **God is Timeless in His Own Being:**

Psalms 90:2

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

Job 26:26

26 The number of his years is unsearchable

Revelation 1:8

8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

- God’s eternity states the fact that God always is and always existed
- God has no beginning or end; He never “began” to exist (Trinity as well)
- Gen 1:1, John 1:3, 1 Cor 8:6, Col 1:16 and Heb 1:2
 - God created all things from when there was no matter or existence
 - Matter, time and space must all occur together
 - Before God created the universe, there was no “time”, at least not defined as now with a series of occurrences
 - Time depends on God’s eternal being and power to keep it existing, like all of creation

The fact that God has always existed before there was time as shown in these scriptures indicates to us that God’s own being does not have a succession of moments or progress through time from one point to another. God’s existence is always somehow in the “present” not defined by past, present and future. It is difficult for us to understand since our existence is not defined that way.

III. **God Sees All Time Equally**

Psalms 90:4

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

- God sees all time vividly the same, not with difficulty in seeing or remembering the past
- There is no such thing as memory or clarity of thoughts about times past with God

- All of past history is viewed by God with great clarity and vividness

To God, an extremely long period of time is as if it just happened, but the inverse is also true that the a very short period of time seems to last forever; it never ceases to be “present” in his consciousness.

- God sees and knows all events past, present and future with equal clarity
- God is timeless, not experiencing a succession of moments

Isaiah 46:9-10

9 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 the ancient times things not yet done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.”

- God alone is the one who knows and can declare future events
- God stands above time and is able to see it all as “present” in his consciousness

IV. God Sees Events in Time and Acts in Time

God clearly knows what is happening with events in his creation as they occur in time. God clearly acts within time and acts differently at different points in time. God predicts his actions at one point in time through his prophets and people, yet acts them out in “creations future”.

- God created time, rules over time and uses it for his own purposes

V. We will Always Exist in Time

Will we ever share in God’s eternity? Be timeless in our after life with God? Will time exist at that point? What about the new heaven and the new earth? Hymn that begins “When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound, and time shall be no more...” And scriptures say “The city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light and its lamp is the Lamb...there shall be no night there” (Rev 21:23, 25)

Nevertheless, it is not true to say that Heaven will be timeless or without the presence of time or passage of time. As finite creatures, we will experience events one after another.

- Rev 21 shows that there are a series of activities bringing things into the heavenly city; events done one after another
- Casting one’s crown before the throne of God (Rev 4:10), requires different moments
- Tree of Life in the heavenly city is said to be “yielding its fruit each month” (Rev 22:2)
- There clearly seems to be a “succession of moments” with one thing happening after another in the new heaven.
- We will experience eternal life, not in duplication of God’s attribute of eternity, but rather in a duration of time that will never end; It will go on forever.

VI. Group Questions:

1. In Section II scriptures, discuss how God could have always been there? How could He never have had a creation point? Try to think of this in terms of our own existence and measurement of time; our own reality verses God’s.
2. Discuss what it means to be “timelessly eternal”? Does God not exist in time when he creates or acts in time with intervening with His creation?
3. In Section III, discuss how God “can see all of time and is able to see it as “present” in his consciousness? How can God “not have succession of moments” that defines time?
4. Do you agree with Section V conclusions that we will always exist in time in the new heaven? Why or why not?
5. Talk about the differences between “God’s eternity” and “our eternal life”?