

The Implications of God's Eternality

My husband is almost ten years older than I am. Most of the time, that age difference doesn't really matter. However, it becomes really obvious when we start talking about our past. My husband will talk about things that were popular when he was growing up in the 80s, and I'll tell him, "That was before my time." My memories are of growing up in 90s.

Whether we realize it or not, we are products of our generation, the time in which we were raised. Generation gap is real. Our values and standards, even our worldview is somewhat shaped by the time period in which we grew up. Kids today are very different even from when I was a child 30 years ago. So, we're shaped by the time in which we live.

We are also slaves to time. We live by the clock. Our entire day is governed by what time it is. We have appointments and responsibilities that demand being on time. Time controls us, but we have no control over time. Sometimes we wish it would speed up or slow down, but ultimately, time passes as it will and we just have to make the best of it.

God, however, is not shaped by time or a slave to time. He is eternal. He is infinite in regards to time, which means that He is not bound by time the way that we are.

God has no beginning and no end.

Psalms 90:1-2 says, "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." This concept is more than our feeble minds can grasp. We don't have such an issue with God being forever in the future, or having no end. We ourselves will have no end. We can somewhat comprehend existing forever.

Our problem comes when we try to understand how God can have no beginning. Everything else that we are familiar with, everything within our experience, has a beginning. Every person that has ever existed began at the time of their conception. Whether you are an evolutionist or a creationist, whether you believe the world has been around for billions of years or just a few thousand, you have to agree that everything in the world around us had a beginning.

An Atheist's Argument

So how could God have no beginning? This is a popular argument for atheists. They want to deny that God exists because they deny that anything could have existed forever. They ask, "If God made everything, who made God?" The problem with that question is, if anyone made God, then He wouldn't be God. God is infinite. He's not bound by the rules of His creation. So, everything that was created has a beginning, but God is not created. Therefore, He does not have to have a beginning.

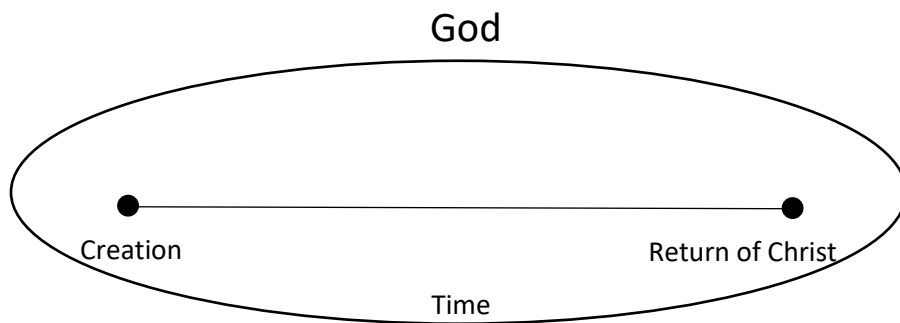
This is one of those doctrines of Christianity that we just accept on faith. We'll never be able to fully understand God's existence into eternity past. Joel James puts it this way:

Don't think about that too long. It'll be as frustrating as trying to build a pyramid out of marbles. You little bit of mental string (and mine) isn't long enough to tie up the elephant-sized parcel of God's eternity.

God is outside of time.

God transcends time, because time was created along with everything else. We read in Genesis 1:14 where 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.” Part of God’s purpose in creating the universe was to help establish time—day and night, seasons, years. None of that existed prior to creation.

So, just as God is not bound by space or by the laws of physics or anything else that He created, He’s also not bound by time. He’s outside of time. If you were to illustrate this idea, you would have to draw a timeline that contains all events from creation until the return of Christ, as which point time as we know it will end. Then draw a big circle around that timeline. That circle represents God, who is totally removed from the events of that timeline.



What is the significance of God being outside of time?

This concept is actually huge. It means that God does not experience time the way that we do. We look back into the past on all these things that we’ve experienced, with varying degrees of clarity. Some events of the past we remember better than others. Some events we’ve completely forgotten. We also spend a lot of time looking into the future—planning for it, worrying about it, or just wondering what’s to come. We probably don’t spend enough time in the present. But the point is, we experience one moment at a time, in succession. We forgot what’s in the past and can’t know what’s in the future.

God is not like that. He doesn’t experience one moment at a time like we do. He sees the entire timeline of history all at the same time. He doesn’t forget the past, because He’s there. He doesn’t have to wonder about the future, because He’s there too. All times are “now” with God.

God acts within time at just the right time.

God is personal. He interacts with people, and He involves Himself in events of human history. Although God is outside of time, He reaches down into time and guides each event to His chosen end.

Because God can see all of time at the same time, He always knows when to act at just the right time. We don't always use time well. Sometimes we delay making a decision, so we miss an opportunity. Other times, we rush into making the wrong decision and end up with regret. We may do the right thing, just at the wrong time, so we don't get the result that we had hoped for. That's not true of God. He's never early or late. He's never in a rush. Everything He does is always done at just the perfect moment to accomplish His will.

Jen Wilkin writes the following about God's timing:

Free to act within time as he will, he exists outside of it. He is simultaneously the God of the past, present, and future, bending time to his perfect will, unfettered by its constraints. The past hold for him no missed opportunity. The present holds for him no anxiety. The future holds for him no uncertainty. He was, in is, and is to come.

We may grow impatient waiting on God's timing, especially for certain things we pray for. Our days are numbered, and we feel the end drawing near more and more every day. We want God to act now, during our lifetime, so that we can see the result. But God doesn't operate according to our timeline, and some things may take longer than we would like. But we can be confident that whenever God chooses to act, it is just the right time.

Implications of God's Eternality

We should find comfort in the fact that God will always be with us.

God is not dead, nor will He ever die. We don't have to worry about a day coming when God ceases to exist. There's never a time when He will not be with us. He will always be there to watch over and protect us, and He will also be with us forever in heaven.

We should accept the fact that our time on Earth is limited.

It's all too easy to become so focused on our life on earth that we forget that this is only the beginning. Our few years here are only the tiniest fraction of eternity. We will live forever, and we must prepare for what's to come after our time on earth is done.

For believers, that means storing up our treasure in heaven, by focusing on things that will have eternal value. Pursuing a deepening relationship with God and telling others about Him should our primary focus.

We should make the most of the time that we have been given.

We spend too much time looking back to the past, with regret or with nostalgia. We also spend too much time focused on the future, either with anxiety over what's to come or impatience to get past present trials and on to better times. We need to focus on the present, the time we have now to invest in those around us and to enjoy the gifts that God has given us this day.

The information in this post was based on the following resources:

[*None Like Him: 10 Ways God Is Different from Us*](#) by Jen Wilkin

[*Behold Your God: The Weight of Majesty*](#) by John Snyder

Taste and See that the Lord Is Good: A Study of the Attributes of God by Joel James

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