

# **ETERNITY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Eternity might be defined as all of existence that falls outside of **time**, without beginning or end.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Time began at the moment the universe was created.

## **ETERNITY PAST**

### **Did God the Father have a beginning?**

Psalms 90:1,2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Isaiah 57:15 Thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy.

### **Did God the Son have a beginning?**

Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.

1 John 1:2 We ... show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

### **Did God the Holy Spirit have a beginning?**

Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience.

### **What did God do before He created the universe and time?**

John 17:24 Thou [the Father] loved Me [the Son] before the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1:3,4 God ... has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.

1 Peter 1:20 [Christ] was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you

### **What is the difference between eternal and everlasting?**

John 3:15,16 Whoever believes in Him should ... have eternal life; whoever believes in Him should ... have everlasting life.

## **ETERNITY PRESENT**

### **Do believers in Christ possess eternal life while still living on earth?**

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

### **Is eternal life more than a life that never ends?**

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

*Eternal life is not just life that is never ending, but it is a new kind of life, that we might know the only true God and Jesus Christ.*

## **ETERNITY FUTURE**

### **Can eternal life be gained by good works?**

Matthew 19:16 And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? ... Jesus said unto him, If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.

*If you want to have eternal life on the basis of your good works, you must be perfect. Jesus gives the man an almost impossible challenge.*

Luke 10:25-37 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself [parable of the good Samaritan] ... Go and do likewise.

John 5:39 [You] search the scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

### **Helping others to attain to eternal life**

John 4:36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

### **Eternal life comes by belief on (or is it “in”) the Lord Jesus Christ**

John 3:15,16 That whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

*These verses have eis, “on”.*

John 3:36 He who believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he who believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.

*This verse has eis, and KJV translates “on”.*

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who hears My word, and believes [on] Him who sent Me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.  
*This verse does not have eis, so it should read "believes Him."*

John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who believes on me has everlasting life.  
*This verse has eis.*

### **That which characterizes those who trust Christ**

John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.  
*This is not a one time drink (say, at the age of 7 or even 3 or 4) but having a spiritual artesian well that continues to flow and quench spiritual thirst throughout our lifetime.*

John 6:54 Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.  
*It is not simply assent to the facts of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that saves, but assimilating Christ into our being, making Him part of us, being changed into His image.*

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.  
*Timothy is to live out in practice the eternal life that he already possesses. A verse with a similar sentiment is Philippians 2:12, "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." We are to live our own lives according to the principles that our Savior, Jesus Christ displayed in His earthly life.*

1 Timothy 6:19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.  
*We want to use our material things in such a way in this life that they will reap eternal dividends, and thus lay hold on eternal life.*

### **The blessings that accompany eternal life**

Luke 18:30 [The faithful one who leaves house and family for Christ] shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting (also Matt. 19:27-29).  
*There is blessing in this present life as well as eternal life for faithfulness to Christ.*

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.  
*Just as those in the Old Testament times who were bitten by snakes had to look upon the brazen serpent, so those who look to Christ and see the Son will have everlasting life. Also, this everlasting life isn't some kind of spiritual existence while the body decays in the grave, but we will be raised up when Christ comes again. "The dead in Christ shall rise first and then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds."*

John 10:28 I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.  
*Here we have the eternal security of the believer.*

Romans 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

*We are set free from sin as our master and now have God as our Master; we will produce the fruit of holiness and in the end life in its fullness for eternity, including the glorified resurrection body.*

Titus 3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

*Christ has an inheritance for His people, His bride, and it will be way beyond our imagination ("The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," Eph. 1:11,14,18.)*

1 John 5:13 These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, who believe on the name of the Son of God.

*We can have the assurance of eternal life.*

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

*God inhabits eternity along with those who are saved.*

### **Desiring and striving after eternal life**

John 6:27 Labor not for the meat that perishes, but for the meat that endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him has God the Father sealed.

*Jesus had been talking to the Jewish people who were among the 25,000 miraculously fed and were wanting to experience a repetition of that miracle. They were following Jesus all over the place in hopes of physical food. Jesus encourages them to seek with equal vigor the spiritual food that endures to everlasting life.*

### **God's election**

John 17:2 Jesus prayed, Father ... glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.

Acts 13:48 As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

### **No alternative to Christ**

John 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

### **Eternal life even for the chief of sinners**

1 Timothy 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to those who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.

### **Against universalism: not everyone will have eternal life; also the consequences of not believing**

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

John 3:16 Whoever believes in Him should not perish.

*The implication is that whoever does not believe in Him shall perish; additionally, verse 18 says that he who believes not is condemned already.*

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who hears My word, and believes [on] Him who sent Me ... shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

*The one who believes not is condemned already (3:18).*

John 12:25 He who loves his life shall lose it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

1 John 3:15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Eternal judgment for unbelievers**

Matthew 3:12 He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Matthew 18:8 If your hand or your foot offend you, cut them off and cast them from you; it is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Matthew 25:41 Then shall [the King] say also unto those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Mark 9:43-48 It is better for you to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dies not and the fire is not quenched.

John 3:36 He who believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God **abides** [or stays] on him.