

## THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

### **Week 2: FOREVER ... and EVER and EVER and EVER and ... (the mystery of eternity)**

*Eternity. It is a mystery. For some, eternity is an exciting thought – for other, downright scary! Can we “glimpse” eternity? What will we do for eternity?*

#### HOW PEOPLE “WITH WATCHES” CONSIDER ETERNITY

BIG ISSUES confront us when we consider eternity:

##### (1) GOD NEVER STARTED!

> How many of you as kids liked to blow your mind trying to figure that one out?

> Why is this concept so hard to conceptualize??

\* Time is FINITE. (What does that mean??)

-- Time was CREATED BY GOD.

-- Time has a STARTING POINT and ENDING POINT

-- Time does not LIMIT GOD.

\* We humans are LIMITED TO TIME.

-- That’s why there will never be time travel (as disappointing as that is to us sci-fi fans!).

-- It’s also why we cannot conceptualize what it means to be BEYOND TIME.

##### (2) Time is WITHIN GOD!

> T/F God is bigger than time. \_\_\_\_\_

> T/F God is not limited by time. \_\_\_\_\_

If these statements are TRUE, then God doesn’t have a past, present and future as we consider them. Instead ... God is SIMULTANEOUSLY IN OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE!!!

\* John 8:58 – “Before Abraham was born ... I AM!” (not “I WAS”)

\* Isaiah 57:15 NKJV – He is “the high and lofty One who INHABITS ETERNITY”

\* Hebrews 13:8 – Jesus Christ is the SAME YESTERDAY and TODAY and FOREVER

> ill: A timeline within a circle!

Q: The age-old question – “How can I have free will to make choices if God already knows what I’m going to choose?” – is addressed by our understanding of God’s transcendence of time. How?

A: When we ask such a question, we’re HUMANIZING God – He doesn’t know what we WILL do (such an idea presumes that God has a future Himself and is, thus, limited by time). He knows what we DO.

Prep for (3) on next page: Star Trek illustration. “What happens when eternity and time collide?”

(3) Can anyone cross between the TEMPORAL and the ETERNAL? YES!!!

- a. Jesus relates to us in our time! Deism is not true!!
- b. Jesus limited himself to time (approx. 6 BC – 30 AD).

> But here's the biggie ... WHAT ABOUT HUMANS? I strongly believe the answer is NO!!!

- Visions of heaven, lights at the end of tunnels, glimpsing eternity – all in the MIND!  
(Maybe visions given by God)
- Once in heaven, glorified humans CAN'T CROSS BACK TO THE OTHER SIDE.
  - > Luke 16:19-31
  - > mysterious exception: *people raised from the dead*

This raises an interesting thought:

- > Things that we say at funerals don't always mesh with what we're learning today!  
Ex: "Grandpa is watching over us today from up there!"
- > BIG QUESTION: Are humans in heaven AWARE of us on earth??  
My answer: NO!

Why? For such awareness to be possible, the temporal and the eternal would have to be ALLIGNED – i.e., their time would have to be equal to our time.

- > 2 Peter 3:8 – our time and heaven's "time" (or absence of it) can't be aligned
- > Luke 16:19-31

\* Does it sadden us if our loved ones aren't aware of us "down here?" (discuss)

- > Reconsider 2 Peter 3:8 and Psalm 90:4.
  - I believe that when we enter heaven, at the next very moment, we're welcoming our children! (*if 1,000 years are like a day, what will 40 – 50 years be like?*)
  - ... Imagine that!!!

### HOW GLORIFIED PEOPLE CONSIDER ETERNITY

What many think, but few will say ... "I'm afraid I'll be BORED in heaven."

What will we do for eternity???

- (1) We won't BE BORED (implies the existence of finite time)
- (2) We won't LOOK FORWARD to things, either.  
(If this sounds negative, you're thinking like someone who is limited by time!)
- (3) It won't be a WORSHIP SERVICE. (Where does this idea originate? Rev. 4: 6-11)
- (4) It will be like EDEN! (DISCOVERY, ENJOYMENT, ACTIVITY)

In [Luke 23:43](#), Jesus declared, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in paradise." The word Jesus used for "paradise" is *paradeisos* which means "a park, that is, (specifically) an Eden (place of future happiness, paradise)". *Paradeisos* is the Greek word taken from the Hebrew word *pardes* which means "a park: - forest, orchard" (Strong's). Jesus said, "Today you shall be with me "en *paradeisos*," not "en *nephele*" which is Greek for "in clouds." The point is that Jesus picked and used the word for "a park." Not just any park but "the paradise of God" or park of God ([Revelation 2:7](#)) which for us will be a place of future happiness. Does this sound like a boring place? When you think of a park, do you think of boredom?