

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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Elders:

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(322 – 6374)**
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Deacons:

Joe Cronin
Jim Hall
David Witherspoon

Preacher:

John C. Robertson

Eternity

By Stan Cox

Man is bound by time. Time can be measured in millennia, potentially in what is referred to as “geologic time” spanning millions of years, but always it is measurable. It has duration, a beginning and an end.

Take for instance humankind. We begin with gestation, 9 months. Then infancy, perhaps a year. Then childhood, until the age of twelve. We talk of teenagers, until age 19, young adults (in my case the first 44 years), middle age (again, in my case always the next birthday), then old age. Truly, “*Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble*” (Job 14:1).

We talk of the lifespan of man (threescore and ten years, cf. Psalm 90:10). Generations, covering hundreds of years, and finally the entire history of mankind, from Adam until today, covering several thousands of years.

In the beginning, God created the universe (Genesis 1). In the end, God will destroy what he has created (2 Peter 3:10). And then, beyond the duration of time, there is **eternity**.

Because of our experience, being born and dying in time. It is difficult for us to grasp the nature of eternity. Perhaps the poets do so most ably. Consider the words from the song *Amazing Grace*, concerning eternity in heaven:

*When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun.*

Regardless of our struggles to quantify the infinite nature of eternity, it is an integral part of our faith. It is inextricably tied to our understanding of the divine. “*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,*”

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors. We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please come back at your every opportunity.

Nina Gray has been sick the last week. She has had a flare up of asthma and is having trouble breathing.

Pam Husak has had some infection show up in her stomach but it seems to be under control now. She has also suffered from knee problems and may be looking at a knee replacement surgery.

Benjamin Robertson had a knot removed from his neck Friday and is doing great.

Tom Witherspoon began a 12 week rehab program this past Wednesday and is doing well.

Gospel Meeting:

Don't forget to set aside time for our upcoming gospel meeting. We will have men from our own congregation doing the preaching. Dates are September 7, 8, and 9th.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Bessie Murphy
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty'" (Revelation 1:8). Also, "Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalms 90:2). What makes God God (among other divine attributes) is that He has no beginning and no end. He is the beginning, the originator of all things. He is the uncreated One.

The concept of eternity is likewise integral to our understanding of reward and retribution. It's inclusion in the promises of God give greater value to Heaven, and greater horror to the contemplation of Hell. Consider the following teaching of Jesus, in Matthew 25:

"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (vs. 41-46).

Consider the extreme sensation that comes from a momentary contact with fire. The singeing of the hair, the blistering of the skin, the intense heat, and the searing pain. The horror of it serves to fuel the nightmares of man. And the Bible indicates that the punishment in fire reserved for the ungodly will be without end. They will suffer the "vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

Now consider the momentary happiness we treasure in our lives. The happiness never lasts, as cares and concerns always intervene; but for short periods, we have all experienced bliss. Again, the Bible indicates that such bliss, itself to a degree beyond our comprehension, is the eternal reward of those who are faithful. "For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Galatians 6:8).

Add to this the great gulf fixed between punishment and reward (cf. Luke 16:26), ensuring that your position in eternity is for... eternity; and the importance of obedience to God is clearly seen.

It may be that we can not easily grasp the concept of eternity, but we certainly can see our need to prepare for the inevitability of it!

Introduction:

The Christian is likely the only picture of spirituality to many in the world. The world, in general, has no interest in Bible matters and is likely to not worship on the first day of the week. When we tell those of the world that we belong to Christ they watch our every move. The things that we say and the places we go define the life of a Christian to those of the world. Indeed we are the world's Bible. We can have great influence over those of the world or we can cause them to make the common statement, "they are all hypocrites." The function of this lesson shall be to remind us of our influence in the world. We can cause others to live a life of Godliness if they see that we are consistent with our proclamation of faith.

The World's Bible

(Page 460)

"Ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh."

II Corinthians 3:3

Nehemiah

- God had commanded that the temple and wall around Jerusalem be built (Ezra 6:14; 9:9; Neh. 2:17).
- Approximately 20 years pass with half heated work (Ezra 5:3; Neh. 2:15-16).
- Nehemiah gains permission to go to Jerusalem to build the wall (Neh. 1-2).
- Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem to assess work (Neh. 2:17-20).
- The working Jews were laughed at (2:19), made fun of (4:2-3), threatened (4:11), exhausted (4:10), and hungry (5:2) they had a mind to work (4:6).
- The work of the faithful people of God caused the world to feel shame due to their sinful deeds (Neh. 6:15-16).

Zechariah

- The people of God were cursed due to their disobedience in reference to building the temple of God (Hag. 1:7-11) and general wicked behavior (Zech. 5:5-7).
- God's blessings were contingent upon their obedience (Zech. 8:12-13).
- Zechariah's job was to motivate them to build the temple (cf. Ezra 5:1ff; Zech. 8:9) and repent of their wickedness (Zech. 1:4).
- When God's people are faithful He blesses them. When God's people are blessed the world sees and desires to have said blessings (cf. Zech. 8:20-23; 14:16-19).

II Corinthians 3:3

- The Corinthians stood condemned (I Corinthians all)
- The apostle Paul called upon their change (I Cor. 4:14-21)
- The letter to the Corinthians was necessary (II Cor. 2:9-11).
- The fruit of said preaching is salvation (II Cor. 2:14-17).
- The life of the Christian is being read like a letter by the world that they may be saved (II Cor. 3:1-3).

Practical Application

- What do our co-workers or fellow students at school see in us?
- Does the world see our happiness and thereby desire to be happy (Ps. 1:1)?
 - At work
 - At home
- Does the world see my spirit of contentment and thereby desire that same satisfaction (Phil. 4:10-13)?
- Does the world see me as a person of purpose (Rom. 6:1-2, 22)?
- Does the world see my confidence in Christ and so desire this spirit (Rom. 8:1, 31, 37; 10:11).
- What does the world see in us?
- Consider II Sam. 12:14