

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

THEOLOGY PROPER

The Doctrine of God

UNIT 4: THE INCOMMUNICABLE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Lesson 11

The Eternity and Infinity of God

Beyond Time and Beyond Measure

Key Texts: Psalm 90:1–2; Psalm 145:3; Isaiah 57:15; 2 Peter 3:8

From Everlasting to Everlasting — The God Who Inhabits Eternity

Dr. Joshua Nichols

Pastor, Theologian, Author

faithfultotheword.com

Series Verse

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Romans 11:33–36, NASB 1995

Introduction

In Lessons 9 and 10 we have explored the first two of the incommunicable attributes: the aseity and self-sufficiency of God, the truth that He exists entirely from and of Himself, the I AM who needs nothing, and the immutability of God, the truth that He does not change in His being, perfections, purposes, or promises, and that His covenantal faithfulness rests not upon the worthiness of His people but upon the unchanging rock of His own eternal character. These two attributes together establish the profound ontological stability of the God we worship: He is what He is, from Himself, always.

Now, in Lesson 11, we take up two attributes that carry us into perhaps the most vertiginous theological territory in the whole of Theology Proper, attributes that stretch the mind to its creaturely limits and remind us, more forcefully than almost any other doctrines, that the God we are studying is categorically, ontologically, and permanently beyond the full grasp of any created intellect: the eternity and the infinity of God. Eternity addresses God's relationship to time; infinity addresses His relationship to all limitation and measure. Together they constitute what the tradition has called the divine immensity, the truth that God is not bounded, circumscribed, or contained by any dimension of the created order, whether temporal or spatial.

These doctrines can seem, at first approach, like the most remote and impractical of all theological subjects, abstract speculation about the metaphysics of time and space that has little bearing on the daily walk of the Christian life. But the Scripture will not permit us that comfortable dismissal. The very passages that declare God's eternity and infinity are among the most pastorally urgent in the entire canon: Psalm 90, the great meditation on human mortality and divine eternity; Isaiah 57:15, the declaration that the high and exalted One who inhabits eternity also dwells with the contrite and humble; 2 Peter 3:8, the pastoral comfort that the Lord's apparent delay is not human delay measured against divine forgetfulness, but the patience of the Eternal who is not subject to our anxieties about time. As we shall see, the eternity and infinity of God are not obstacles to pastoral application but its deepest foundation.

I. The Eternity of God: Without Beginning, Without End, Without Succession

The eternity of God is, in its most fundamental formulation, the affirmation that God exists without beginning, without end, and without the succession of moments that constitutes the time in which creatures live and move and have their being. He is not merely very old; He is not the Being who has existed for the longest imaginable duration of time. He is the Being to whom time itself belongs as a creature, the One who made time when He made the world, who holds time within His sovereign governance, and who is Himself not subject to the passing of moments, the pressure of the clock, or the erosion of age.

The primary biblical anchor for the divine eternity is Psalm 90:1–2, the great prayer of Moses, the man of God:

“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”, Psalm 90:1–2, NASB 1995

The Hebrew of verse 2 is worth attending to carefully. The phrase translated “from everlasting to everlasting” is *me ‘ōlām we ‘ad-‘ōlām*, from the vanishing point of the past to the vanishing point of the future, God is. The verb at the end of the clause is the simple Hebrew imperfect *’attah*, “You are.” Not “You were” and “You will be,” but the single, undivided, eternal present: You are. The mountains are born; the earth and the world are given birth; these are the oldest features of the created order, the immovable geological permanences by which human beings measure the antiquity of things. But before all of them, before the mountains were born, before the earth was given birth, God is. His “is” is not a moment in time; it is the eternal present that precedes and encompasses all time.

Isaiah provides the most majestic declaration of divine eternity in the prophetic literature, in a verse that will serve as one of our key texts for this lesson:

“For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’”, Isaiah 57:15, NASB 1995

The phrase translated “who lives forever” in the NASB is *shōkēn ‘ad* in the Hebrew, literally, “inhabiting eternity” or “dwelling in the forever.” The One who inhabits eternity is not merely the Being who has always existed and always will; He is the Being for whom eternity is the native environment, the native mode of being, the native “place.” Eternity is where He dwells, and what He dwells in is not a very long time but a categorically different mode of existence altogether, unbounded by the before and after, the earlier and later, the was and will be that constitute temporality.

The New Testament adds its own dimension to this understanding in 2 Peter 3:8:

“But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”, 2 Peter 3:8, NASB 1995

Peter’s declaration is not an arithmetical equivalence between days and millennia; it is a declaration of the ontological transcendence of the Lord over the entire framework of time within which human beings experience duration, urgency, and delay. The apparent “delay” of Christ’s promised return, which was already becoming a pastoral problem in the early church, is not delay as the Lord experiences it, because the Lord does not experience time as humans do. For the One who inhabits eternity, the distinction between short and long, between now and later, between imminence and distance, does not apply in the way it applies to creatures who are embedded in the flow of time.

II. God’s Relationship to Time: The Classical and Relational Views

The precise nature of God's relationship to time has been one of the most carefully debated questions in Christian theology and philosophy of religion, and it is a question that engages some of the most demanding conceptual territory in the whole of Theology Proper. We will survey the two primary positions, the classical view of divine timelessness and the relational view of divine everlastingness, with the goal of understanding what each position affirms, what it is designed to protect, and how the full biblical witness best adjudicates between them.

A. The Classical View: Divine Timelessness

The classical view, articulated in various forms by Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, and Aquinas, holds that God exists entirely outside of time, that He is not merely temporally unlimited in both directions (without beginning and without end) but that He exists in a mode of being that is categorically different from temporal existence altogether. God does not experience a succession of moments; He does not have a past that is gone, a present that is here, and a future that is coming. He exists in what Boethius famously called the *nunc stans*, the standing now, the eternal present, in which all of time is simultaneously present to His infinite and unchanging mind.

On this view, God's knowledge of temporal events is not sequential (He does not know the creation, then the fall, then the promise, then the incarnation, then the return, in succession); it is simultaneous. He knows all things, past, present, and future from our perspective, in a single, eternal, undivided act of cognition. His act of creating the world was not an event in His own experience of time; it was a free, eternal act of will in which He determined that the world should exist, and the world accordingly exists within time, while God Himself remains outside time in the eternal present of His own being.

The strength of the classical view is that it takes with full seriousness the genuine ontological transcendence of God over the created order, including the temporal dimension of that order. If God created time, if time is a feature of the created universe rather than a pre-existing framework within which God operates, then it is difficult to see how God can be genuinely infinite and uncreated while simultaneously being embedded in time. The classical view also provides the most straightforward account of divine foreknowledge: God knows the future not because He has access to future moments of time before they occur, but because all of time is eternally present to His infinite mind.

B. The Relational View: Divine Everlastingness

The relational view, associated with theologians such as Nicholas Wolterstorff and open theists, holds that God exists within time but without the limitations that creaturely temporality imposes. On this account, God is everlasting rather than timeless: He had no beginning, He will have no end, and He has genuinely experienced every moment of time as it has unfolded. He existed before the creation of the world in an everlasting "before," He has lived through every moment of history, and He moves through time with His creation in a genuine temporal sequence of before and after.

The strength of the relational view is that it seems to account more naturally for the biblical language of divine action in history, God speaking at particular moments, responding to prayer, grieving over sin, relenting of announced judgment, without

requiring the elaborate explanations that the classical view must offer for why a timeless God appears to act sequentially in the narrative of Scripture. The relational view also appears to make divine-human interaction more immediately genuine: if God genuinely experiences temporal sequence, His responses to prayer seem more naturally personal than if all of history is simultaneously present to Him in an eternal moment.

C. Evaluation

Both positions have genuine biblical and philosophical strengths, and neither should be embraced without careful thought. The classical view has the deeper grounding in the biblical testimony to God's transcendence over all dimensions of the created order, including time. The declaration that God is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2), coupled with the declaration that He "inhabits eternity" (Isaiah 57:15) and the New Testament's affirmation that "with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day" (2 Peter 3:8), suggests a mode of divine existence that is not merely temporally unlimited but categorically transcendent over the temporal framework altogether.

At the same time, the classical view must be handled with the care that prevents it from sliding into a God who is so transcendent over time that He is effectively unrelated to the temporal order, a God who cannot hear prayer addressed to Him now, who cannot act in history at a particular moment, and who is essentially indifferent to the temporal particularities of creaturely existence. The relational language of Scripture, God speaking, acting, responding, engaging, must be given its full weight.

The most faithful reading of the full biblical testimony is that God's eternity is not the eternity of temporal infinitude, not an endless extension of time in both directions, but the eternity of genuine transcendence over time, in which the God who is categorically beyond the temporal framework nonetheless engages genuinely, personally, and responsively with His temporal creatures. The "eternal present" of the classical tradition is the most precise formulation available, provided it is held alongside the equally certain biblical testimony to God's genuine relational engagement with history.

III. The Infinity of God: Without Limit in Being, Knowledge, Power, and Presence

The infinity of God is the complement to His eternity: as eternity addresses God's transcendence over the temporal dimension of the created order, infinity addresses His transcendence over every dimension of limitation and measure. The infinite God is the God who is without limit in His being, without limit in His knowledge, without limit in His power, and without limit in His presence. He is not merely very great in each of these dimensions; He is beyond all comparison, beyond all measure, beyond all the categories by which greatness is assessed within the created order.

Psalms 145:3 provides the most direct declaration of divine infinity in the Old Testament:

"Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.",
Psalms 145:3, NASB 1995

The Hebrew word translated “unsearchable” is *’en chēqer*, literally, “there is no searching,” “there is no sounding the depth of.” The greatness of the LORD is not merely very great but unsoundable, it has no bottom, no outer boundary, no edge beyond which the explorer arrives at a frontier where the divine greatness ends and something else begins. His greatness is not great in the way that the tallest mountain is great, for the tallest mountain can be measured; it is great in the way that the infinite is great, which is to say, in a way that is categorically beyond all measurement.

The infinity of God has several specific dimensions that deserve attention individually, though they are inseparable in the divine being itself.

A. Infinity of Being

God’s being is without limitation or measure. He is not finite being elevated to its maximum degree; He is infinite being, a categorically different mode of existence from finite being. Every creaturely being exists within the limitations of its kind: a human being exists within the limitations of humanity; an angel within the limitations of angelhood; even the greatest and most glorious of the seraphim exists within the limitations of its created nature. God alone exists without any such limitation. His being overflows all the categories of creaturely existence. He is, as the tradition has expressed it, not the supreme being within a chain of beings, but Being itself, the One whose existence is identical with His essence, whose being is underived and unlimited.

B. Infinity of Knowledge

God’s knowledge is without limit: He knows all things, all things actual and all things possible, all things past and all things future, all things great and all things small, all things visible and all things invisible, all things spoken and all things thought and all things felt and all things imagined. Psalm 147:5 declares: “Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite” (NASB 1995). The Hebrew for “infinite” here is *’ein mispar*, literally, “there is no number,” “without count”, His understanding is without number, without limit, without any boundary of ignorance. No fact in the universe is hidden from Him; no possibility is outside His awareness; no depth of the creature is below His sight.

C. Infinity of Power

God’s power is without limit: He can do all things consistent with His own nature and will. Nothing is too difficult for Him (Jeremiah 32:17, 27). No obstacle can stand permanently against His sovereign intention. No force in the universe can overcome His purpose. The infinity of divine power is not the power of a very strong being who might, in principle, encounter something stronger; it is the power of the omnipotent, the All-Powerful, who is the source of all power that exists in the universe and who is constrained only by the limits of His own perfect nature (He cannot lie, cannot sin, cannot contradict Himself) rather than by any external force.

D. Infinity of Presence

God’s presence is without spatial limit: He is fully present everywhere, without being confined to any place or excluded from any place. This dimension of infinity is so

significant that it constitutes its own incommunicable attribute, the omnipresence of God, which we will examine in detail in Lesson 12. For now it is sufficient to note that as eternity is infinity with respect to time, omnipresence is infinity with respect to space: both declare that God is not bounded by the dimensions of the created order but transcends them entirely while remaining genuinely present within them.

IV. The Distinction Between Infinity and Spatial Extension

One of the most important and most frequently misunderstood aspects of the doctrine of divine infinity is the distinction between genuine infinity and mere spatial extension. A common but mistaken picture of the infinite God imagines His infinity as a kind of spatial bigness, as if God were a very large Being who fills up all of space and perhaps extends beyond it. On this picture, God's infinity is essentially the same in kind as spatial extension, only carried to its maximum possible degree: God is infinite in the same sense that a very large room is larger than a small room, only without any walls.

This picture is not merely inadequate; it is positively misleading, and it generates a cascade of theological errors. If God's infinity is essentially spatial extension, then His presence in creation is the presence of a very large being who fills up all of space, which is indistinguishable from pantheism. If God is the space that all things occupy, then the distinction between the Creator and the creature collapses, and the God of the Bible is replaced by the impersonal Ground of Being of Neoplatonism or the God-as-the-universe of contemporary pantheism.

The biblical and classical theological tradition insists on a categorically different understanding: God's infinity is not spatial extension but the transcendence of all spatial limitation. He is not spread out through space; He is not the sum of all spatial extension; He is not a being who occupies a very large volume of space. He transcends space entirely, as He transcends time. Space, like time, is a feature of the created universe, a mode of the extended, material world that God created. God is not within space as its largest possible occupant; He is above space as its Creator, the One who brought it into being and who holds it in existence, who is present to every point within it without being contained by any point or by the whole.

Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple expresses this distinction with clarity: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27, NASB 1995). The highest heaven cannot contain God, and the reason is not that God is too large to fit in even the largest possible space; it is that containment is a spatial category that does not apply to the One who is not spatial in the way that created things are spatial. God is not contained by any place because He is not the kind of Being who is in a place in the creaturely sense. His presence to creation is real, but it is the presence of the Creator to His creation, a presence that transcends the spatial categories by which creatures are present to one another.

V. The Incomprehensibility That Flows from Infinity

The infinity of God is not only a description of His greatness; it is the deepest ground of His incomprehensibility. We established in Lesson 2 that the incomprehensibility of God, the truth that He can never be exhaustively known by any finite mind, is one of the most foundational affirmations of Theology Proper. Now we can see precisely why: God is incomprehensible because He is infinite, and the finite can never exhaustively contain or comprehend the infinite.

Psalm 145:3 declares that God's greatness is unsearchable, literally, there is no sounding its depth. This is not a counsel of theological agnosticism; it is a call to theological humility and doxological wonder. The incomprehensibility that flows from infinity is not an obstacle to knowing God but the condition that makes the knowledge of God an inexhaustible, ever-deepening, eternally engaging enterprise. A finite God, a God who could be fully known, fully comprehended, fully exhausted by a sufficient expenditure of intellectual energy, would not be worthy of the eternity of joy and wonder that the biblical vision of heaven promises. The God who is infinite is the God who can be known truly without ever being known exhaustively, explored genuinely without ever being mapped completely, loved deeply without ever reaching the end of what there is to love.

Job 11:7–8 captures this incomprehensibility with a series of rhetorical questions that pile up the impossibility of exhausting the divine: “Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know?” (NASB 1995). The questions do not expect or admit of an affirmative answer. The depths of God cannot be discovered; the limits of the Almighty cannot be found, not because they are hidden behind insufficient revelation, but because they do not exist. There is no depth beyond which the divine being ends; there is no limit at which the Almighty is bounded. The infinity of God is the inexhaustibility of God, and the inexhaustibility of God is the inexhaustibility of the joy, the wonder, and the adoration that He will call forth from His redeemed people throughout all of eternity.

The doxological response of the apostle Paul in Romans 11:33 is the appropriate creaturely response to this truth: “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” The depth that cannot be sounded, the riches that cannot be exhausted, the ways that cannot be fully traced, these are not the lamentations of a theologian confronted with his ignorance; they are the celebrations of a worshipper confronted with the infinite richness of the God he studies. Incomprehensibility, properly understood, is not the frustration of theology; it is its greatest spur and its most enduring reward.

VI. The Pastoral Comfort: Eternal Promises, Infinite Resources

Having pressed into the theological precision that the doctrines of eternity and infinity require, we arrive at what is always the destination of genuine Theology Proper: the pastoral comfort and the practical transformation that these doctrines make possible in the life of the believer. The eternity of God is not merely a metaphysical description of His mode of existence; it is the guarantee of the durability of everything He has promised. The infinity of God is not merely a philosophical claim about the unlimited

character of His being; it is the guarantee of the inexhaustible sufficiency of everything He has made available to His people in Christ.

A. An Eternal God Makes Eternal Promises

Every promise God has made bears the character of the One who made it. The God who is eternal, the One for whom everlasting to everlasting is the mode of His own being, makes promises that are eternal in their validity, eternal in their force, and eternal in their fulfillment. His covenant commitments do not expire. His word of salvation does not have an end date. His purposes for His people are not temporary arrangements contingent on historical circumstances but eternal decrees established in the counsel of His will before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4–5).

The eternal gospel, the proclamation of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), is eternal because its Author is eternal. The eternal life that Christ promises (John 17:3; John 10:28) is eternal not merely in its duration from the moment of receiving but in its source: it is the life of the eternal God, shared with creaturely beings through the redemption accomplished by His eternal Son. The eternal weight of glory that awaits the people of God (2 Corinthians 4:17) is eternal because it flows from the eternal character of the God who prepared it for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). Every promise is as durable as the eternal God who made it, which is to say, absolutely, unconditionally, and permanently durable.

B. An Infinite God Has Infinite Resources for His Children

The infinity of God means that every resource He possesses, every dimension of His power, wisdom, love, grace, mercy, and faithfulness, is available to His people in infinite and inexhaustible supply. He does not run low on grace. He does not grow weary of dispensing mercy. His power is not diminished by exertion. His wisdom is not depleted by the complexity of the situations He governs. His love is not exhausted by the magnitude of the sins it covers or the depth of the need it addresses.

Paul's great declaration in Ephesians 3:20 is grounded in precisely this infinity: "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." The ability of God to exceed all that we ask or think is the ability of the infinite God, the One whose resources are without limit and whose capacity to bless is not bounded by the boundaries of our imagination. We ask for help; He gives more than we asked. We imagine a blessing; He provides beyond what we imagined. We think of grace; He pours out grace upon grace (John 1:16). This is not hyperbole; it is the straightforward pastoral implication of divine infinity.

Psalms 90, the very psalm that declares God's eternity most powerfully, closes not with an abstract meditation on divine transcendence but with an urgent pastoral petition, grounded in that transcendence: "Do return, O LORD; how long will it be? And be sorry for Your servants. O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days" (Psalm 90:13–14, NASB 1995). Moses the theologian becomes Moses the intercessor: knowing that God is eternal, knowing that the One to whom he prays inhabits everlasting to everlasting, he petitions for the satisfaction that only the infinite God can provide, the lovingkindness that answers the

deepest hunger of the mortal soul. The eternity and infinity of God are not reasons to feel small and overwhelmed; they are grounds for the boldest, most confident, most expectant prayer.

VII. The Doxological Response: Wonder Without End Before the Eternal and Infinite God

The eternity and infinity of God are not, in the end, doctrines to be catalogued and filed but realities to be inhabited, truths that, when truly apprehended, produce in the creature the only response that is adequate to them: wonder. Not the wonder that is merely surprised or impressed, but the wonder that is genuinely undone, the wonder that stands at the edge of the infinite and finds that the edge has no edge, that the depth has no bottom, that the greatness has no ceiling, and that the response it is capable of rendering is infinitely smaller than the reality that called it forth.

Jonathan Edwards described this response with characteristic precision and depth: the contemplation of the infinite God produces in the soul a kind of holy unease, a divine restlessness that is not dissatisfaction but rather the recognition that the Object of contemplation always exceeds the act of contemplating it. We are never done with God. We will never be done with God. Through all of eternity, the redeemed soul will move from one depth of the divine glory to another, from one dimension of the divine beauty to the next, from one facet of the divine wisdom to a further and more resplendent one, and at no point will the soul arrive at a place where it can say: “I have now seen everything there is to see; I have now understood everything there is to understand; I have now loved everything there is to love.” The infinite God eternally exceeds the creature’s capacity to exhaust Him, and that infinite excess is the ground of the eternal joy that awaits those who are His.

Isaiah’s vision of the seraphim in Isaiah 6 is perhaps the most vivid biblical picture of the creaturely response to the divine infinity. The seraphim, the highest order of the angelic host, beings of immeasurable intelligence and holiness by any creaturely measure, cover their faces with two of their wings in the presence of the LORD of hosts. The covering of the face is not false modesty; it is the recognition of the genuinely infinite distance between the greatest creature and the Creator, the acknowledgment that the glory of the One enthroned above them is more than they can bear to look upon directly. And yet they do not turn away; they cry to one another: “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isaiah 6:3, NASB 1995). They cover their faces and they praise without ceasing. This is the creaturely posture before the eternal and infinite God: overwhelmed and adoring at once, covering the eyes and opening the mouth, undone by the greatness and drawn irresistibly to declare it.

Let this be our posture as we close Lesson 11. The God we study in Theology Proper, the God who inhabits eternity, whose greatness is unsearchable, whose understanding is without number, whose ways are beyond tracing out, is the God who is ours in Christ Jesus. He has not remained at the infinite remove of His eternity and infinity; He has stooped, in the condescension of His incomprehensible grace, to enter the created order of time and space in the Person of His Son, to be born under the law, to die under our condemnation, and to rise in the firstfruits of the eternal life that His people will

share with Him forever. The eternal and infinite God has loved us with an everlasting love. That love is the ground of all wonder, the source of all worship, and the inexhaustible delight of all eternity.

Key Texts (NASB 1995)

Psalm 90:1–2

“Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

Psalm 145:3

“Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.”

Isaiah 57:15

“For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’”

2 Peter 3:8

“But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”

Theological Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Eternity	The divine attribute affirming that God exists without beginning, without end, and without the succession of moments that constitutes creaturely temporality. God does not merely exist for a very long time; He inhabits a mode of being that is categorically transcendent over the temporal framework of the created order. Declared in Psalm 90:2 (from everlasting to everlasting, You are God) and Isaiah 57:15 (the One who inhabits eternity).
Divine Timelessness (Classical View)	The classical theological position (Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Aquinas) that God exists entirely outside of time, in a <i>nunc stans</i> (eternal present) in which all of time is simultaneously and eternally present to His infinite mind. God does not experience temporal

	succession; He knows all events in a single, eternal, undivided act of omniscient cognition.
Nunc Stans	Latin for “the standing now.” Boethius’s formulation for the eternal present of God’s mode of existence: not a moment that passes but an eternal present that encompasses all of time simultaneously. God’s eternity is not a very long time but the “standing now” that transcends the before-and-after structure of temporal existence altogether.
Divine Everlastingness (Relational View)	The position (Wolterstorff, open theists) that God is everlasting rather than timeless: He has no beginning and no end, but He exists within time, experiencing temporal sequence, with a genuine past, present, and future. Designed to account for the biblical language of God acting and responding in history, but criticized for compromising divine transcendence over the created order.
Infinity	The divine attribute affirming that God is without limit or measure in His being, knowledge, power, and presence. God is not finite being elevated to its maximum degree but a categorically different mode of existence altogether, unbounded by the limitations that define creaturely being. Declared in Psalm 145:3 (His greatness is unsearchable) and Psalm 147:5 (His understanding is infinite).
Divine Immensity	The technical theological term for the combined truth of divine eternity (transcendence over time) and divine infinity (transcendence over spatial limitation and all creaturely measure). The immense God is the One who is not bounded, circumscribed, or contained by any dimension of the created order, whether temporal or spatial.
Incomprehensibility	The doctrine that God, in the fullness of His infinite being, can never be exhaustively known by any finite mind. Infinity is the precise ground of incomprehensibility: because God is infinite and the creature is finite, the creature can know God truly and ever more deeply but can never exhaust what there is to know. Declared in Psalm 145:3 (greatness unsearchable) and Romans 11:33 (judgments unsearchable, ways unfathomable).
Shōkēn ‘Ad (שֹׁכֵן עַד)	Hebrew phrase in Isaiah 57:15 translated “who lives forever” (NASB) or “who inhabits eternity.” Literally, “dwelling in the forever” or “inhabiting the everlasting.” Eternity is not merely something God possesses (an attribute of duration) but something He inhabits (a mode of existence that is His native environment).
‘en Chēqer (אֵין חֶקֶר)	Hebrew phrase in Psalm 145:3, translated “unsearchable.” Literally, “there is no sounding the depth of,” “there is no searching out.” Used to describe the magnitude of God’s greatness: it has no bottom, no outer boundary, no edge. Also used of God’s understanding in Psalm 147:5 (infinite, lit. ‘without number’).
Me ‘ōlām We ‘ad-‘ōlām (מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד-עוֹלָם)	Hebrew phrase in Psalm 90:2 translated “from everlasting to everlasting.” Literally, “from the vanishing point of the past to the vanishing point of the future.” Used to describe the God who is

(present tense, 'attah) before the mountains, before the earth, before all created things. The eternal present of God that encompasses all of temporal history.

Practical Application

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe that God's eternity is not merely a very long duration of time but a categorically different mode of existence, that He inhabits eternity as His native environment, that the temporal framework of the created order is His creation and not His container, and that He is genuinely transcendent over time without being unrelated to the temporal world He has made. We must believe that His infinity is not spatial bigness but the transcendence of all limitation, the absolute unlimitedness of His being in every dimension, being, knowledge, power, and presence. And we must believe that these attributes, far from being obstacles to personal relationship with God, are the very grounds of the most secure and most enduring relationship possible: we are held by the eternal and infinite God, who cannot be changed by time, depleted by circumstances, or overcome by any force within or beyond the created order.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

The eternity and infinity of God should produce in us an unquenchable holy wonder, the wonder of the creature that stands before the infinite and finds that no matter how deeply it looks, it has not yet begun to reach the end. This wonder is not frustration; it is the delight of one who has found that the ocean has no shore, that the treasure has no bottom, that the music has no last note, that the beauty has no outer edge. Let us cultivate this wonder as a devotional discipline: not merely knowing that God is eternal and infinite, but spending time in His presence, in His Word, in prayer, allowing the inexhaustibility of His being to be felt as well as known. And let us desire the eternity that He has promised to share with us, the eternal life that is not merely endless duration but the endless, ever-deepening knowledge of the eternal and infinite God (John 17:3).

C. For the Hands: What Must We Do?

1. **Read Psalm 90 regularly and meditatively.** The psalm moves from the declaration of divine eternity (vv. 1–2) through the meditation on human mortality (vv. 3–11) to the petition for divine favor grounded in the eternal God's ability to satisfy the mortal soul (vv. 12–17). It is the most complete biblical meditation on the intersection of divine eternity and human temporality, and it should be a regular companion in the devotional life of every student of Theology Proper.
2. **Use 2 Peter 3:8 as an anchor for patience in waiting.** When God's timing seems inexplicable, when answered prayer is delayed, when the promised return of Christ seems distant, when the arc of history seems to bend toward injustice rather than toward justice, return to 2 Peter 3:8. The Lord's apparent delay is not

delay as the eternal God experiences time. His timing is perfect precisely because He inhabits the eternity from which all of time can be seen in its fullness. What feels like delay from inside time is not delay from outside it.

3. **Let Isaiah 57:15 be the anchor of your approach to God in prayer.** The high and exalted One who inhabits eternity also dwells with the contrite and lowly of spirit. The One who is most infinitely beyond us is also most intimately near to us. Let this double declaration, transcendence and immanence held together, shape the posture of your prayer: Come before God with the reverence owed to the One who is eternally exalted above all things, and come with the confidence of the one who knows that this same God has promised to dwell with the humble and to revive the contrite.
4. **Cultivate wonder as a spiritual discipline.** The incomprehensibility that flows from infinity is not an obstacle to knowing God; it is the condition that makes the knowledge of God an eternally deepening adventure. Deliberately set aside time, in personal devotion, in corporate worship, in theological study, for the practice of wonder: for attending to the inexhaustibility of God rather than rushing past it toward the next item on the theological checklist. Linger in the greatness that is unsearchable. Let the nunc stans of God's eternity interrupt the urgent hurry of your own temporality.
5. **Ground your hope in the eternal promises of the eternal God.** Identify the promises that God has made to you in Christ, forgiveness of sins, adoption into His family, the indwelling Spirit, the resurrection of the body, eternal life in His presence, and then specifically connect each promise to the eternity and infinity of the God who made it. He has infinite resources to fulfill every promise. He has eternal constancy to maintain every commitment. These promises are not contingent on the stability of the world or the consistency of your own faith; they are grounded in the eternal, infinite, immutable, self-sufficient God who has pledged Himself to them.

D. For Every Season of Life

For the new believer: The eternal life that Christ gives (John 17:3; John 10:28) is not merely life that lasts for a very long time; it is participation in the life of the eternal God Himself, the life that is not subject to decay, not vulnerable to death, not bounded by the passing of moments. You have been given a share in the eternity of the eternal God. Let that truth expand your sense of who you are and what has happened to you in your conversion.

For the one facing time pressure or anxiety: The urgency of the temporal, the pressure of deadlines, the fear of running out of time, the anxiety that circumstances are moving faster than God is acting, is real and felt. But it is felt from inside time, by a creature who is embedded in temporal sequence. The God to whom you pray is not embedded in temporal sequence; He inhabits eternity. His timing is perfect, His purposes are eternal, and the "delay" you experience is not delay from His perspective but the unfolding of an eternal purpose whose fullness you will one day see and celebrate.

For the one in the grip of mortality: Psalm 90 was written in the shadow of human mortality, the awareness that “our years come to an end like a sigh” (Psalm 90:9, NASB 1995). The psalmist does not deny the reality of human finitude; he holds it up against the eternal God and petitions for the satisfaction that only the Eternal One can give. The God who is from everlasting to everlasting is the God who holds the eternal life that mortal creatures are invited to share. Mortality is not the last word for those who are in Christ; eternity is.

For the pastor and teacher: Lessons 11 and 12 together cover the divine attributes most directly related to God’s relationship to the created order: His transcendence over time (eternity), His unlimited being (infinity), and His presence to every point of creation (omnipresence). These are the attributes that most directly address the existential questions of human experience: Where is God when I suffer? Is He aware of what is happening to me? Is He limited by the complexity of my situation? Preach and teach these attributes with pastoral urgency, and let the people of God discover that the One they worship is infinitely greater and infinitely nearer than their fear has imagined.

Study and Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. Have you ever stood before something so vast, the ocean, the night sky, the Grand Canyon, that you felt genuinely small in a way that was not frightening but actually freeing? How does that experience of creaturely finitude before created vastness point toward, and yet fall infinitely short of, the experience of standing before the eternal and infinite God?

Observation Questions (What Does the Text Say?)

2. Read Psalm 90:1–6. What does Moses declare about God in verses 1–2? What Hebrew grammatical features (the present tense “You are”, the phrase “from everlasting to everlasting”) are significant for understanding the nature of divine eternity? How does Moses contrast the eternal God with the mortality of human beings in verses 3–6?

3. Read Isaiah 57:14–16. What is the full title God gives Himself at the beginning of verse 15? What does the phrase “who inhabits eternity” (or “who lives forever”) declare about God’s mode of existence? What is the surprising second movement of the verse, and what does it declare about the relationship between divine transcendence and divine immanence?

4. Read 2 Peter 3:3–9. What is the pastoral problem Peter is addressing in this passage? How does verse 8 answer that problem? What does the comparison of “one day” and “a thousand years” declare about the Lord’s relationship to time? How does verse 9 connect God’s temporal transcendence to His patience and redemptive purpose?

Interpretation Questions (What Does It Mean?)

5. Explain the difference between divine timelessness (the classical view) and divine everlastingness (the relational view). What does each position affirm, and what theological concern is each designed to protect? Which position do you find more consistent with the full biblical testimony, and why?
6. What is the difference between God's infinity and mere spatial extension? Why is it theologically dangerous to picture God's infinity as a kind of bigness that fills all of space? How does Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:27 ("the highest heaven cannot contain You") clarify the nature of God's infinite presence?
7. Explain how the infinity of God is the precise ground of His incomprehensibility. Why is an infinite God necessarily incomprehensible to finite minds? How does this incomprehensibility function not as a frustration of theology but as its greatest spur and most enduring reward?
8. Isaiah 57:15 describes the eternal and exalted God as also dwelling "with the contrite and lowly of spirit." How does this pairing of infinite transcendence and intimate immanence illuminate the character of the God of Scripture? How does the incarnation represent the supreme expression of this divine movement?

Application Questions (What Does It Demand of Us?)

9. How does the eternity of God provide pastoral comfort in a situation where God's timing feels wrong or His answer seems delayed? What specifically does 2 Peter 3:8 offer to the person who is struggling with unanswered prayer or what feels like divine inaction? How might you speak this truth to someone in that situation?
10. The lesson argues that the incomprehensibility of God, the truth that His greatness is unsearchable and His understanding infinite, is not a frustration of theology but an invitation to the eternal adventure of knowing God more deeply. Is this how you currently experience theological study and devotional engagement with God? If not, what might need to change about your approach?
11. The seraphim of Isaiah 6 cover their faces and cry "Holy, Holy, Holy", undone by the greatness and drawn irresistibly to declare it simultaneously. What would it look like, practically, to cultivate this posture, overwhelmed and adoring at once, in your own experience of worship, both private and corporate?
12. Reflect on the declaration that "an eternal God makes eternal promises" and "an infinite God has infinite resources for His children." Identify one specific promise of God that you are currently struggling to trust. How does the eternity or infinity of the God who made that promise change your relationship to it? What difference does it make that this promise was made by the One who inhabits eternity and whose resources are without limit?

Prayer Focus

Open your prayer with the great declaration of Psalm 90:1–2: Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, before You gave birth to the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. Pause in the weight of that declaration. You are not praying to a being who came into existence and will one day pass away; you are praying to the One who inhabits eternity, the One for whom the eternal present is home, the One whose “is” is not a moment in time but the timeless actuality of His own infinite being.

Then come before the God of Isaiah 57:15: the high and exalted One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, who dwells on a high and holy place, and who also dwells with the contrite and lowly of spirit. Come in the humility that is appropriate to the creature approaching the eternal and infinite Creator. And come with the confidence that the eternal One has promised to be near to the humble: to revive the spirit of the lowly, to revive the heart of the contrite. Bring your specific needs, your unanswered prayers, your anxieties about timing and outcome, and place them before the One who inhabits eternity and for whom no concern of yours is either too large or too small.

Close with the doxology of Psalm 145:1–3: I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. Let the unsearchable greatness of the eternal and infinite God be the final note of this lesson, and the opening note of the eternity of praise that awaits all who are His.

Soli Deo Gloria

To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Dr. Joshua Nichols

josh@faithfultotheword.com | faithfultotheword.com