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Thinking about Time and Eternity

By Mike Wingfield

[Biblical references have been given to help the reader search the Scriptures. We admonish all of our readers to take time to read these Biblical references as they read this newsletter. Those who do this will learn the most.]

Under God's created order, we are all creatures of time. Think about it: We measure the progression of our experiences in seconds, minutes, hours, days, and years. However, as we grow older, we learn that our perspective of time changes. For most children, an hour can seem like forever! But, older adults often comment about how time passes so quickly.

Tragically, most people in our modern culture race through life without ever stopping to think about time and eternity! According to the Bible, God has made man to live forever. Once a man's time is complete upon this earth (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2; Hebrews 9:27), he will either go into "everlasting punishment" or enjoy "life eternal." (Matthew 25:46) Consequently, God has "set eternity" in every person's heart. [Ecclesiastes 3:11- The word translated "world" in the KJV is the Hebrew word *olam*, which means eternity.] This simply means that when we

walk with God in His wisdom, we live our days on earth with a Biblical consciousness of eternity. The only people who can do this are believers who walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:6-16) Those who do this will saturate their minds with the Word of God so that they can begin to think like God. (Isaiah 55:6-11)

Let us look at five Biblical realities about time and eternity:

1. The Bible is a revelation about time and eternity.

When we consider the Holy Scriptures, we must realize that they are divine revelation. When God speaks, He speaks from His perspective in eternity. While it is difficult for our finite minds to grasp, the Bible repeatedly tells us that God dwells in eternity – the eternal now. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that [inhabits] eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place..." (Isaiah 57:15) When God spoke to Moses at the burning bush, He referred to Himself as "I AM THAT I AM." (Exodus 3:14) God is not bound by time, space, or matter. When we say that God is not bound by time, it means He

is not confined to the progressive events of His creation. God has no past or future. God sees and experiences all of the events of His creation from eternity past to eternity future at the same moment. He dwells in the eternal now. Time dwells in the eternal God, but mortal man dwells in time! This means that time is God's servant. However, mortal man on earth is enslaved to time. We cannot save it, stop it, or slow it down. Time waits for no one.

God's revelation does deal with time. God must reveal His eternal plans to finite man within the boundaries of time. He must do this because on earth, man is a creature of time. This is what makes Biblical prophecy so valuable to the believer. The prophetic Scriptures continually paint a grand view of time and eternity within the eternal plans of God. Our finite thinking concerning the movements of God within our framework of time is a very difficult thing to grasp. We tend to think that God is like us and views everything from the perspective of time. For example, when the scoffers of the first century were mentally harassing the early church concerning the imminent hope of the Second Coming of Christ, the Apostle Peter answered by reminding them that they were willingly ignorant of the very nature of God. He said: *"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* (2 Peter 3:8) Peter was simply reminding these enemies of the gospel that they could not think of God in the terms of man. God is eternal and man on earth is finite, bound by time.

2. Time began with creation.

Without the aid of the Scriptures and the work of the Holy Spirit, man cannot think outside the boundaries of time. When we attempt to think of the absence of time before the creation, our minds go blank. Yet, this is where the Biblical revelation begins: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* (Genesis 1:1) Genesis 1:1 declares that in God's eternal plans, this was the beginning of time, space, and matter! Before this divine creative act of God, there was no time, space, or matter! Hebrews 11:3 declares: *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* In other words, Jesus Christ spoke time, space, and matter into existence out of nothing. For those of us who have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and have searched His Word, we have learned that while our minds

cannot totally understand all of this, we by faith accept it as being true. *"Now faith is the substance [confidence] of things hoped for, the evidence [persuasion] of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1)

As mentioned before, our perspective of time in our earthly experiences is relative. An examination of the Biblical record of the creation reveals that the Lord intended for us to measure time on the earth in relationship to the creation. In Genesis 1:14, He said: *"Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."* God gave us the sun and moon to help fix the measurement of time on earth. A day is the time it takes the earth to rotate on its axis. A year is the amount of time it takes for the earth to make one revolution around the sun – 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds. The concept of the measuring of time is only relative to those living on this earth. When the believer goes to heaven, he leaves the earthly bounds of time.

3. Time should be viewed in light of eternity and the purposes of God.

The overall testimony of the Holy Scriptures gives continual evidence that Jesus Christ is working *"all things after the counsel of his own will."* (Ephesians 1:11) *"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."* (Ecclesiastes 3:1) Everything that the Lord has purposed will come to pass. (Isaiah 14:24, 26-27) It will also take place at the exact time that He has predetermined in His eternal plan. (Galatians 4:4) All things are moving toward their divine consummation. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) In essence, this is the emphasis of Bible prophecy. The prophetic Word of God gives the student of the Bible a detailed view of the eternal plan of God within the context of earthly time.

The view of time in its relationship to eternity is at the heart of having real wisdom and finding the real purpose in life. Proverbs 9:10 states: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the [Holy One] is understanding."* To have true knowledge, understanding, and wisdom about life, an individual needs to focus on the person and purposes of God revealed in the Bible. To learn about God and His purposes is to learn about life. This is the only way to answer questions about

life: Who are we? Where did we come from? Why are we here? What are we to do? Where are we going?

When a person consistently looks at his life on this earth in light of eternity, he will have wisdom for living. Thus, life will become meaningful and joyful. This truth can be found in [Psalm 90](#). In this Psalm, man is caused to view his life in light of eternity. It begins: *“LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. ... For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch [3 hours] in the night.”* ([Psalm 90:1-2, 4](#)) In these verses, man is faced with one of the most awesome truths the human mind can try to comprehend – eternity.

Every person has a divinely-appointed time on this earth. ([Job 7:1](#)) [Psalm 31:15](#) declares that our time is in God’s hands. The Bible teaches that our lifespan is appointed by God. The days of our birth and death have been divinely chosen according to His eternal purposes. ([Job 14:1-2, 5](#); [Hebrews 9:27](#)) In light of this, the Psalmist cried out to God: *“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”* ([Psalm 90:12](#))

4. Eventually we will join God in a timeless eternity.

After much research, I have concluded that no person has a final grasp of this subject. It is very humbling to consider the subject of a timeless eternity. As mentioned before, the human mind, even when aided by the Scriptures, struggles with attaining such knowledge. Many Bible scholars I admire have a different view of understanding when and how man will enter into a timeless eternity. Please allow me to share with you what I believe the Scriptures teach about this matter.

When a believer passes out of this life, he moves out of earthly time and into a heavenly time frame. This heavenly time frame is a different perspective on time, unlike earthly time, but not yet timeless as it will in the Eternal State [the condition that will prevail in the New Jerusalem upon the new earth as described in [Revelation 21-22](#)]. Notice the cry of the martyred Tribulation believers in heaven in [Revelation 6:10](#): *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them*

that dwell on the earth?” It appears that these saints in glory are still creatures of time and are asking how long they must wait until the Lord will fulfill His promise of vengeance upon those who killed them. According to the eyewitness of this event, the Apostle John, the heavenly response pointed to a later time: *“...rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”* ([Revelation 6:11](#)) It appears that these believers in heaven still have some view of time. Furthermore, it must be remembered that all of the saints in heaven will return to earth to participate in Christ’s earthly kingdom that will last for 1,000 years. ([Revelation 20:4](#))

At the end of the millennial kingdom the original creation will suddenly and supernaturally pass away. Then, time will also cease to exist and all of the saved will enter into eternity with God in a new heaven and earth. In this new arrangement, heaven and earth will become one and the eternal God and redeemed mankind will live together. ([Revelation 21:1-3](#)) Theologians call this the Eternal State.

In the Eternal State, there will be no need for the sun or moon. ([Revelation 21:23](#)) The glory of God will provide unceasing light, expelling all darkness and night. ([Revelation 21:25](#); [22:5](#)) Thus, all marks of measuring time will cease to exist.

There will be no decaying or aging process. ([Revelation 21:5](#)) The One who lives in the eternal now will continually make His new creation perfect and timeless.

Memories that bring sorrow to the glorified minds of the redeemed will not be finally erased until they enter into the New Jerusalem. The very first act of God to take place as we enter the New Jerusalem is recorded in [Revelation 21:4](#): *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”* The past will disappear. The former creation and all of its experiences will be gone. Our new eternal minds will be programmed to enjoy and understand a timeless eternity. Long ago, the prophet Isaiah wrote: *“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”* ([Isaiah 65:17](#))

Eternity is more of a quality life, than a quantitative life. Think of time as being length. It is a progression of events on a linear plane. However, eternity has height and depth. It is more than forever and ever. Jesus said that it is an abundant life. (John 10:10) It is connected to the richness of knowing God and being in His presence. (John 17:3) In eternity, there will be no focus on time. The glorified mind will simply focus on the rich experiences of a constant life. The redeemed will constantly experience the joys of eternity in the presence of their eternal God.

While everything in eternity is timeless, that does not mean that the experiences of all (God, angels, the devil, demons, the saved in the New Jerusalem, and the unsaved in the Lake of Fire) will be viewed equally. Only God dwells in a timeless eternity that is perceived all at once. Only God is eternally infinite. All creatures, both redeemed and unsaved, will remain finite in eternity. Glorified saints will be *“like him,”* (1 John 3:2), but will never become infinite!

All of the good angels and the redeemed in heaven will enjoy a timeless eternity that will have order and a personal intensity of their experiences without any progression or sense of the passing of time. The evil angels and all the unsaved in the Lake of Fire will also focus on the personal intensity of their experience of suffering without any sense of the passing of time. In eternity, the resurrected believer will have a new body and mind, without any reference points to time.

5. Time is uncertain, while eternity is sure!

The Bible is filled with many exhortations that communicate the uncertainty of man's time on this earth, while at the same time his continuation in eternity is made sure. James 4:14 declares: *“For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that [appears] for a little time, and then [vanishes] away.”* Notice that this verse depicts man's life as a vapor. Our life is like the morning fog. It appears for a very little time, and then it is gone. This kind of thinking and evaluation of time on this earth comes when a person looks at his present life on this earth in light of eternity. How one lives his life clearly illustrates what he thinks about time and eternity.

One of the tests that a person can apply to his life to see if he is really saved is found in 1 John 2:15-17. A person

who is redeemed will give evidence of the change in his life and thinking by demonstrating that he pursues eternal things that will count for eternity, rather than the temporary glitter that is offered by this world system. *“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”* (1 John 2:17) Jesus continually warned those around Him about this. On one occasion He asked His disciples the following thought provoking questions: *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:26)

It is my personal opinion that the absence of the preaching and teaching of Biblical prophecy in most churches today has created a shallow view of Christian living. Most professing Christians are living like others who do not claim to be disciples of Christ. When Biblical prophecy is not faithfully and consistently taught, it will create a mindset that only focuses upon the present moment, rather than eternity. While we do need to focus on how we can deal with our problems and the struggles in our churches, homes, and nation, it is my opinion that the core problem is the absence of a longing to be with our Lord in heaven. Read Colossians 3:1-13. When we live our lives for the moment, not thinking about our Lord and eternity, we live like fools.

At the heart of living out Biblical faith is the eternal perspective that we are *“strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”* (Hebrews 11:13) Our focus is not upon our earthly setting, but upon the eternal city of God, and that moment when we will be with Him, and time will be no more. (Hebrews 11:13-16)

The person who views life from an eternal perspective will have a greater interest in the work of God than the work of his own hands. Psalm 111:2 says, *“The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.”* A greater pleasure comes in life when one realizes how his feeble, little works fit into the eternal plan of God! To view the hand of God in your daily world brings greater joy than all your own personal works that are bent toward your own needs and glory. It is for this purpose that we have been created. (Revelation 4:10-11) Therefore, the greatest pleasure comes in discovering the work of God in our world, and by His grace becoming a part of it! And, that will count for eternity!

Blind Hatred toward Israel

An examination of history will demonstrate that there has always been a hatred of the Jewish people among the Gentile nations. Jesus said to His Jewish disciples: *“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.”* (Matthew 10:22) Hatred blinds people. When people hate someone, they cannot see any good in the object of their hatred. They only see their sins and faults, which are exaggerated out of proportion. Such is the case with the Israeli Jew.

Aviel Schneider, editor of *Israel Today*, writes: More than 11 million Muslims have been killed in wars in the Middle East since Israel became a state in 1948. In the Arab-Israeli conflict the number is 46,000 Muslims, which amounts to less than half a percent of the total. In other words, more than 99 out of 100 Arabs have been killed by fellow Muslims. ... Still, Israel is branded as the aggressor and the source of all conflict in the Middle East.” (*Israel Today*, October 2013, p. 2)

No Peace

According to the Bible, there will be no peace in the Middle East until the Messiah-Savior, Jesus Christ, returns to this earth to reign as King over all the earth. As a result of His sovereign leadership, *“nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”* (Isaiah 2:4) However, the same Scriptures indicate that in the last days, Israel will face endless horrific wars and rumors of wars. (Deuteronomy 5:30; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:6-9) Long ago, Jeremiah recorded the desperate Israeli response to all of this: *“We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.”* (Jeremiah 30:5) Isaiah prophesied of the incredible Israeli disappointment of the failure of the proposed peace covenant of the last days. He wrote: *“From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a [sheer terror] only to understand the report.”* (Isaiah 28:19) Today, Israelis are filled with anger, disillusionment, frustration, disappointment, and fear. In the last few decades, they have made major compromises with the Palestinians to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict over the Jewish presence in the land of Israel. Each time they have yielded to the world’s demands to demonstrate to the Palestinians that they are willing to give up some land for peace, it has been met with greater resistance, hatred, rejection, and terror from the Palestinians. In September 1993, Israel

signed the Oslo Peace Accords with the Palestinians as directed by President Bill Clinton. Israel handed over much of the Biblical Land of Israel with the promise to yield more at a later date. Israel’s gesture of peace has been met with more hatred, rejection, and bloodshed.

“Since the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, more people died on both sides than before. Israel has had 1,425 victims of terror since Oslo, compared to 415 in the 20 years prior to the treaty.

“On the Palestinian side, about 9,000 Palestinians have been killed, most of them combatants including gunmen and suicide bombers. What human rights groups describe as ‘innocent civilians’ have never been targeted deliberately; those casualties are usually the result of fighting terrorists in heavily-populated areas. In the 20 years before Oslo, 2,000 Palestinians were killed, including 1,650 during the First Intifada or uprising (1987-1993).” (*Israel Today*, October 2013, p. 3)

According to a recent poll in Israel, “57 percent of Israelis believe that the Oslo Accords undermine Israel’s security as well as harming the nation politically and economically.” (*Israel Today*, October 2013, p. 3) When Israel recently released hundreds of Palestinian murderers from their prisons as a peace gesture to the Palestinians, they were received as heroes. The reception of these murderers, who had killed innocent Israelis, as heroes has demonstrated to Israelis that all talks of peace from the Palestinians are only lies. This is exactly what Isaiah had prophesied 2,800 years ago. (Read [Isaiah 28:14-22](#).)

A “Bad Deal”

Israelis view the recent Geneva deal, which was negotiated between the P5 + 1 nations and Iran a little over a month ago, as a ‘bad deal.’ In essence, this deal allows Iran to keep all of its nuclear facilities and equipment. Iran agreed to dilute fuel stocks of enriched uranium beyond 5 percent (20 percent is required for weapons grade). However, there is no provision made for the world to monitor the underground sites where Iran is conducting enrichment. In other words, the world is trusting Iran to keep its agreement without any proof of complicity. In light of Iran’s past record this is stupid and dangerous.

All of the nations of the Middle East, including Israel, are upset over this agreement. Israel’s prime minister, Ben-

jamin Netanyahu, called this agreement a “historic mistake.” He said, “Today the world has become a much more dangerous place because the most dangerous regime in the world has taken a significant step toward attaining the most dangerous weapon in the world.” (The International Jerusalem Post, November 29-December 5, 2013, p. 7)

Israel has a right to be concerned and feel betrayed by her friend and ally, the United States. Iran has not kept her hatred and threats of annihilation of Israel a secret. Only weeks before the world would allow Iran to continue its nuclear program, Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was quoted as saying: “Israel is doomed to extinction.” At an Iranian rally in November, signs and chants of hundreds of thousands called for “death to Israel,” and proclaimed, “There is justification to kill all Jews and annihilate Israel.” (A recent letter from Zionist Organization of America -ZOA) The president of ZOA, Morton Klein, states, “Jewish history has taught us that horrific, genocidal threats against our people cannot be ignored. Iran must be stopped.” (A recent letter from Zionist Organization of America -ZOA)

Those of us who study Bible prophecy know that Iran has

evil intentions toward Israel. They will join Russia and other radical Islamic elements in the Middle East to stage a major attack against Israel. (Ezekiel 38-39) One wonders how these recent events will set the stage for this invasion.

Annexing the Jordan Valley

Israel’s political leadership is preparing a vote for the Israeli government to annex the Jordan Valley. Not only is it viewed as a prized part of the Promised Land, but is seen as being very significant to Israel’s security. Israel seized the West Bank and the Jordan Valley in a defensive war in 1967. According to international law, Israel has the right to retain the land. Furthermore, the Jordan Valley was part of the land that was tagged by the international community in 1920 for a future Jewish state.

Such a move by Israel demonstrates their rejection of the flawed two-state solution to obtaining peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. This move will certainly enrage the world and bring Israel into greater international isolation. However, those of us who know the Scriptures and support Israel’s right to all of the Promised Land, applaud the proposed annexation of the Jordan Valley.

Micah’s Upcoming Speaking Schedule

Please pray for these meetings and encourage your family and friends who live near one of these meetings to attend. It is very important for God’s people to have a proper world-view and to understand world developments in the light of God’s prophetic Word.

February 2-7	Alamo, TX	Bibleville Conference Grounds	Brian Dent	218-244-8160
February 13	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist Church		540-798-5110
February 20	Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church		540-798-5110
March 6	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist Church		540-798-5110
March 9-12	Hinkletown, PA	Hinkletown Mennonite Church	Glenn Sauder	717-414-9699
March 20	Roanoke, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church		540-798-5110
March 22-25	Mishawaka, MI	Mishawaka Grace Brethren Church	Davy Troxel	574-256-0225
April 3	Rocky Mount, VA	Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist Church		540-798-5110
April 6-9	Floyd, VA	Beaver Creek Baptist Church	Thomas Simpkins	540-239-6059
April 13-16	Christiansburg, VA	Bible Baptist Church	Kenneth Wells	540-818-0874

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#198- When the Earth Passes Away

#199- The Making of the Tribulation Covenant

#200- The International Isolation of Israel