

THE ETERNITY OF GOD

The Attributes of God

Banska Bystrica, 24th March 2019

<p>כִּי כֹה אָמַר רַם וְנִשְׂא שָׁכֵן עַד וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׂמוֹ מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֲשֶׁכּוֹן וְאֶת־הַכָּא וְשִׁפְלֵי־רִיחַ לְהַחְיֹת רִיחַ שְׁפָלִים וּלְהַחְיֹת לֵב נִדְכָּאִים</p>	<p>Isa 57:15 For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.</p>
<p>אֶת־הַכֹּל עָשָׂה וַיִּפְּהוּ בַעֲתוֹ גַּם אֶת־הָעֹלָם נָתַן בְּלִבָּם מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמְצָא הָאָדָם אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים מִרֵאשִׁית וְעַד־סוֹף</p>	<p>Ecc 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end</p>
<p>בְּטָרָם הָרִים וְלָדוּ וַתְּחוּלַל אֶרֶץ וַתִּבָּל וּמַעֲוָלָם עַד־עוֹלָם אֵתָהּ אֵל</p>	<p>Ps 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, <u>from everlasting to everlasting you are God</u></p>
<p>Rev 4:8 ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.</p>	<p>Rev 4:8 "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"</p>

OUTLINE

0. INTRODUCTION

- 0.1. THE WORD "FOREVER"
- 0.2. THE WORD "ETERNITY"
- 0.3. THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

1. ETERNITY AND HUMAN ASPIRATIONS

- 1.1. ETERNAL EXISTENCE
- 1.2. ETERNAL LEGACY

2. ETERNITY AND THE BEING OF GOD

- 2.1. GOD – THE NECESSARY BEING
- 2.2. GOD INHABITS ETERNITY
- 2.3. GOD – THE FATHER OF ETERNITY

3. ETERNITY AND OUR HOPES

- 3.1. ALWAYS FUTURE
- 3.2. ALWAYS NEWNESS

4. TO REMEMBER

0. INTRODUCTION

- the French name for God: L'Éternel (YHWH)
- [BAVINCK] "**Infinity** in the sense of not being determined by time is the eternity of God."
- [AUGUSTINE] *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus* 17. – De scientia Dei – "Omne praeteritum iam non est, omne futurum nondum est; omne igitur et praeteritum et futurum deest. Apud Deum autem nihil deest, nec praeteritum igitur nec futurum, **sed omne praesens est apud Deum.**"

0.1. THE WORD “FOREVER”

- **Gen 3:22** ...take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live **for ever** (וְלַקְחָהּ גַם מִעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וַחַי לְעֹלָם)
- **Ex 3:15** ' This is my name **forever** (זֶה-שְׁמִי לְעֹלָם), and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.
- “a statute forever” (תְּקֻמָּה עֹלָם Ex 12:14, 17; 27:21; 28:43; Lev 3:17; 7:36; 10:9; 16:31; 17:7; 23:14, 21, 31, 41; 24:3; Num 15:15; 18:23)
- “everlasting hills” **Gn 49:26** The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents, up to the bounties of the everlasting hills (עַד-תְּאֻמֹת גְּבֻעַת עֹלָם). May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.
- “forever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων Ps 83:5; Gal 1:5; Phil 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17; 2 Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21; 1 Pet 4:11; Rev 1:6, 18; 4:9f; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5)

0.2. THE WORD “ETERNITY”

0.2.1. SLOVAK

- večný 1. stále trvajúci, jestvujúci (op. časný, dočasný) • odveký (trvajúci oddávna): večná, odveká túžba po láske • trvalý (nepretrúšaný v čase: op. prechodný): trvalý vzťah • stály • kni/. neustály (ktorý má trvale istú vlastnosť): večné, stále zvydy; neustále nariekanie • trváci: trváce puto • kniž. nehynúci (ktorý nezaniká): nehynúca sláva • nemenný: nemenný poriadok vesmíru
- Czech: Odvozenina *věčný* utvořena pro aeternus;

0.2.2. LATIN

ÆTERNUS, a, um, *eternal, everlasting, that endureth for ever, αἰδῖος, perpetuus, qui neque principium, neque finem temporis habet. Videtur esse ab æviternus per syn-cop. Cic. 2. de Fin. c. 27. Deus beatus, et æternus. Id.*

0.2.3. HEBREW

- (מֵעוֹלָם) "from time immemorial" (Ps 25:6; Jer 2:20)
- (עַד-עוֹלָם, לְעוֹלָם) "perpetually, for always"
- (לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶחָדָה לְעוֹלָם) "as long as one lives" (e.g., a slave for life Lev 25:46)
- עוֹלָם וָעֶד (Ps 9:6; 119:44; 145:1f, 21; Dan 12:3; Mic 4:5)

0.2.4. GREEK

- (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας) Luke 1:33; Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; 2 Cor 11:31; Heb 13:8; 1 Pet 5:11
- (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων) Gal 1:5; Phil 4:20; 1Tim 1:17; 2Tim 4:18; Heb 13:21; 1Pt 4:11; Rev 1:6, 18; 4:9f; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5

0.3. THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

- no beginning and no end; infinite perfection; immutability; life in himself;

1. ETERNITY AND HUMAN ASPIRATIONS

TENNYSON In Memoriam

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
 Thou madest man, he knows not
 why,
 He thinks he was not made to die ;
 And thou hast made him : thou art
 just.

RUFUS *Sestrička nádej*

Ani ja nemám inú voľbu
 ako, súc živý, žiť.
 A každý deň
 do každej jeho chvíle
 vodím si presne zničiteľné telo.
 A keďže nádej morzeuje: život,
 zatiaľ čo beznádej predbieha možnú smrť,
 je rozhodnuté za mňa—
 straním nádeji.

- “There exists a similarity as well as a difference between God's eternal present and man's consciousness of the present.”¹
- **2Pt 3:3-4** scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. (ἐλεύσονται ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν [ἐν] ἐμπαιγμονῇ ἐμπαίκεται κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῶν πορευόμενοι ⁴ καὶ λέγοντες· ποῦ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ; ἀφ' ἧς γὰρ οἱ πατέρες ἐκοιμήθησαν, πάντα οὕτως διαμένει ἀπ' ἀρχῆς κτίσεως.)

1.1. ETERNAL EXISTENCE

- eternity in the heart → Myths; Sci-Fi; art;
 - Gilgamesh → ... Gilgamesh looks for Utnapishtim, the only human being who was granted eternal life by the gods. He wants to learn the secret of how to avoid death.

[Megan ILNITZKI] In the great Mesopotamian epic Gilgamesh, the titular king and founder of the city of Uruk, witnesses the death of his closest companion, Enkidu, and becomes fearful of his own mortality. The anxiety over his own in-avoidable demise motivates Gilgamesh to embark upon a quest in search of immortality that takes him to the farthest ends of the Earth. At the end of the epic, Gilgamesh journeys back to Uruk under the impression that he had failed in his quest, as he had not obtained physical immortality. But as King Gilgamesh approaches his beloved city, however, he sees Uruk from an entirely new perspective, and he realizes that the piece of himself that lies within the very brickwork and fortification of the city is his immortality. Gilgamesh's journey therefore ends successfully as he understands that the legacy of his city will transcend the mortal boundaries of life and death. (<http://www.bu.edu/av/core/journal/xx/vol20-ilnitzki-gilgamesh-and-the-quest-for-immortality.pdf>)

1.2. ETERNAL LEGACY

- empires; philosophies; artworks...
- funeral speeches: perpetual remembrance...
- **Gn 11:4** "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

2. ETERNITY AND THE BEING OF GOD

2.1. GOD – THE NECESSARY BEING

- “If anything exists, something has to exist necessarily”.
- ⇒ “If there is a god, his/its(?) being is necessary”. *Being there* (existence) belongs to the definition of the word “god”.
- ⇒ It is impossible to think of a “non-existent god”. It is an oxymoron.
- God (YHWH) is outside time-space reality.
- He attributes of absolute independence (→ aseitas; infinity; glory; immutability; faithfulness...)

2.2. GOD INHABITS ETERNITY

Isa 57:15 (שָׁכֵן עִיר) → no decay; no fatigue; no boredom...

- dwelling = “home”, permanent abode; intimacy; “at home”
- dwelling = “starting point” of every activity
- dwelling = resting place; peace; “just being there”

2.3. GOD – THE FATHER OF ETERNITY

- God's eternal salvation
 - **Is 43:10-13** ... know and believe me and understand that I am he (כִּי-אֲנִי הוּא). Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me (לִפְנֵי לֹא-נִוצַר אֵל וְאַחֲרַי לֹא יִהְיֶה). ¹¹I, I am the

¹ Herman Hausheer, *St. Augustine's Conception of Time*. In *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 46, No. 5 (Sep., 1937), p. 510.

LORD, and besides me there is no savior.¹² I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and I am God.

¹³Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand (אֲנִי הוּא יִאֲזֶינ מִיַּדִּי מִצִּיל); I work, and who can turn it back?"

- **Isa 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father (אֲבִיעֶד), Prince of Peace.
- **Rev 1:8** "I am the Alpha and the Omega (τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ)," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come (ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος), the Almighty."
- **Rev 21:6** And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (ἐγὼ [εἰμι] τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὦ, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος). To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.
- Jesus Christ:
 - the Father of our eternal life
 - the Father of the future eternal world

3. ETERNITY AND OUR HOPES

3.1. ALWAYS FUTURE

- hope without end
- **John 17:3** ...this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσιν σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.)
- **Rom 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope

3.2. ALWAYS FRESH

- **Rom 6:4** ...as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς)
- **Isa 40:31** they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength (יִתְלַיְפוּ כֹחַ); they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint (יַעֲלוּ אֶבֶר כַּנְּשָׁרִים יְרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיָּעוּ וְלֹא יִלָּכוּ וְלֹא יִיָּעֲפוּ)
- **1Thes 4:17** we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (καὶ οὕτως πάντοτε σὺν κυρίῳ ἐσόμεθα)
- freshness; youthful vigour...

4. TO REMEMBER

- The eternity of God is his necessary attribute of being. Whoever/(whatever) is eternal, he is divine.
- Our deep desire for "eternal present" is a God-given gift that only he can give.
- We can share the eternity of God only through Jesus, his cross and his resurrection.