

The Spiritual Realm

Lesson 7: Time and Eternity

Psychological account of time: sensing the flow of time as fast or slow.

Cultural account of time: sensing the flow as fast or slow.

Philosophical account of time: linear and momentary or circular and determined.

Scientific account of time: time is a fourth dimension connected to three-dimensions of space.

Definition of time: the continuous, irreversible progression of existence from past through present to future, measured as the duration or interval between events, and quantified by phenomena like clocks.

Titus 1:2 *in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the (eternal) ages began. aiōnios = eternal | Chronos = ages = time | before eternal times*

2 Timothy 1:9 *who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the (eternal) ages began*

God and the eternal “now”

Isaiah 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.’*

Psalms 90:2 *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

- We live in a stream of time—past, present, future.
- For God, who “inhabits eternity,” the whole of time is known and present before Him.
- There is never a moment when God is “older” than He was before.

The arrow of time and entropy

- As time goes forward, things naturally become more disordered unless energy is constantly supplied to maintain order.
- Entropy may have existed before the fall as a physical principle, but it was: restrained, balanced by God’s sustaining power, not ruling creation.
- When entropy is gone, we will experience time and eternity in a way that we can hardly imagine now.

Eternity: not just “endless time,” but fullness of experience

- Eternity is not an endless string of minutes; it is an experience of “timelessness” rather than “inexhaustible time.”
- For the believer, the present will be completely full—no longing for “someday,” no regret for “back then.”
- In eternity, the *flow* of time will not be the focus. The **fullness of the moment** in God’s presence will be the focus. There will be no need for a calendar, no need for a watch.

Is there time in heaven?

- Heaven will have: Real events, real relationships, real actions and worship.
- But it will not have: Aging, death, decay, maintenance, waiting for something better.
- People will be living the **eternal now**, where the quality of the experience fully satisfies the heart.

Death, the rapture, and different time frames

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 *Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.*

For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 *For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

Luke 23:43 *Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.*

Philippians 1:23 *...My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

2 Corinthians 5:8 *Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

2 Corinthians 5:1–4 *For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.*

A possible resolution: different time frames

From our perspective on earth: The rapture is future. People die in the past are “waiting” for the resurrection.

From the perspective in heaven: They step out of **earthly time** into the **eternal now** of heaven’s time. The “waiting” between their death and the rapture **will not be experienced at all**.

Ephesians 2:6 *and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*

Hebrews 4:3 *...although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

Revelation 17:8 *...And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*

Ephesians 1:4 *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...*

Time lapse or stepping out of time

Acts 8:39–40 *And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.*

John 6:21 *Then they were glad to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.*

Revelation 1:10–11 *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, “Write what you see in a book...”*

Time ends, the eternal now remains

Revelation 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*

Application:

Death loses its fear.

Live in the present.

We live with eternal perspective.