

Session 7



God Is Eternal

THE POINT

*Those who trust in the eternal God
will live with Him forever.*

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Humans can't really grasp something lasting forever. For us, a dynasty is three Super Bowls in a row. That's a far cry from the phrase, "World without end, Amen," found in Ephesians 3:21 (KJV). For us to think about an eternal God requires a rewiring of our brains—a capacity to imagine a God who can look at the surface of a DVD and see the entire story of humanity, rather than the three inches of videotape that we can see at any given time.

Yet, the book of Ecclesiastes says that God has "put eternity in [our] hearts" (Eccl. 3:11). That means that on some level the Lord has given us the capacity to grasp the infinite.

During this unit, we've talked about God's character. His holiness. His justice. His omnipotence. His love. But what if, after every one of these, you attached a temporal modifier:

God is holy . . . *for now*.

He's all powerful . . . *for now*.

He loves you . . . *for now*.

That would negate God even being God! The eternity of God is what grounds every other attribute of God. These aren't just temporary promises. They are for all time.

QUESTION 1:

What do you think of when you hear the word "dynasty"?

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

PSALM 102:18-22

¹⁸ This will be written for a later generation, and a people who have not yet been created will praise the LORD: ¹⁹ He looked down from his holy heights—the LORD gazed out from heaven to earth—²⁰ to hear a prisoner’s groaning, to set free those condemned to die, ²¹ so that they might declare the name of the LORD in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem ²² when peoples and kingdoms are assembled to serve the LORD.

The superscription of Psalm 102 in the CSB and NIV doesn’t give the name of the author, but it does give him a state of mind. This psalm is “a prayer of a suffering person who is weak and pours out his lament before the Lord.” So even before we get into the text itself, we’re already given a powerful truth: throughout history, God hears the cries of the afflicted. Even when our prayers come across as complaints, He doesn’t reject them. The fact that this psalm even made it into the Bible is a testimony to God’s eternal love and compassion toward all those who are in distress and seek after Him.

Verse 18 begins with a remarkable statement: what the psalmist wrote was meant for “a later generation.” This wasn’t intended just for the people of his time; it was a message intended for those yet to come. By recording these words, the psalmist aimed to ensure others in the future would remember God’s faithfulness.

Whether or not we’ve ever written a book or even kept a journal, we must share our experiences of faith with the next generation. Every family has stories and traditions and experiences they pass down. Make sure your stories

of how God has worked in your life are passed down also. Everything God permits to happen in our lives, both struggle and victory, is so that a people not yet created will praise the Lord.

In verse 19, the psalmist described God looking down from His “holy heights.” This imagery conveys God’s intimate involvement in the lives of His creation. He isn’t distant; rather, He is aware of our struggles and needs.

The psalmist noted that God listened to “a prisoner’s groaning” in verse 20. He was even willing to set free those who are condemned to die! Whether they were guilty of the crimes they committed was irrelevant to God. Think about the thief on the cross (Luke 23:40-43). He acknowledged his wrongdoing to the other thief, then turned to Jesus and asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. From that moment, the thief was set free!

God cares deeply for those who suffer, whether from personal struggles, the consequences of sin, oppression, or spiritual bondage. In every generation—whether we are destitute, imprisoned, knocked down, overwhelmed with circumstances, battling illness, facing unem-

ployment, or dealing with family conflicts—God is ready to respond with grace and compassion. When God intervenes in our lives, the rescued will declare the name of the Lord. This means that experiencing God’s salvation leads us to share our stories with others. Our testimonies of God’s faithfulness not only affirm our trust but also encourage those around us to seek Him.

The psalmist emphasized the communal aspect of faith, showing that individual experiences bring people together in worship. It reminds us we’re not just rescued to praise God, but to serve Him. The psalmist envisioned “peoples and kingdoms . . . assembled to serve the LORD” (v. 22), showing that serving God together has greater impact than serving alone.

The core message of Psalm 102:18-22 is a reassuring reminder: God rescues those who call on

Him. Throughout history, people cry out to God in their need, and He faithfully responds. This promise resonates with us today, inviting us to reach out to God, knowing He hears and acts.

Consider the Israelites in Egypt or individuals facing difficulties today—God remains a refuge. He hears the cries of His people. The continuity of His faithfulness reassures us that we’re never alone. Each generation can experience God’s help, emphasizing that His love is timeless.

QUESTION 2:

How does this psalm speak to God’s work in future generations?

PSALM 102:23-25

²³ He has broken my strength in midcourse; he has shortened my days. ²⁴ I say, “My God, do not take me in the middle of my life! Your years continue through all generations. ²⁵ Long ago you established the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

After all these assurances that God rescues those who call on Him, verse 23 seems out of place. Something happened to the psalmist in the prime of his life that broke his strength and shortened his days. Interestingly, the word for “answered” and “broken” are the same word in Hebrew (*anah*). So, in verse 2, he begged God to answer (*anah*) him when he called. Now, in verse 23, we find him complaining that the Lord had broken (*anah*) his strength.

The truth is, this is not contradictory at all. Sometimes God must break us of our own strength in order to answer us when we call. In

our own strength, we can forget our need for God. Whatever happened to the psalmist at the midpoint of His life brought him to the place where his only hope was the Lord’s rescue.

Have you ever felt the weight of the world pressing down on you? Maybe you’ve had moments in life where it felt like everything was happening too fast, or you were left wondering if you had enough time to accomplish all that you wanted. The psalmist captured that emotion perfectly. He felt as though his strength was fading, and he spoke directly to God about this very real concern.

However, right in the middle of his lament, the psalmist shifted his focus. Here, he invoked God's unchanging nature: "Your years continue through all generations" (v. 24). What a beautiful reminder that, while our lives are fragile and fleeting, God remains steadfast and eternal. His reign isn't limited by time as we experience it.

Even in our struggles, God is in control. He reigns over all circumstances, regardless of how chaotic our lives may seem. The psalmist reminds us that God's authority goes far beyond our human experience. His strength and stability are constants in a world filled with change.

In verse 25, the psalmist beautifully articulated the foundational truth that God is the Eternal Creator: "Long ago you established the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands." This statement declares God's sovereignty and acknowledges His creative power. It invites us to consider the grandeur of creation itself as a testament to God's enduring presence. The heavens, the earth, and all that is in it point to a God who is not just a distant observer but an active participant in our world. We are reassured that the same God who created the universe is still intimately involved in our lives.

Verse 24's emphasis on "all generations" is a reminder that, while our moments are tem-

porary, God's reign and His promises endure beyond our own lifetime. Throughout history, people have experienced the ebb and flow of life—the joys, trials, and uncertainties. Yet, God remains the unwavering foundation we can lean on.

Think of the many stories throughout history of God's people facing challenges, loss, and despair, yet still testifying to how they turned to God and found solace and hope in His constancy. God doesn't change; He "is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

As we navigate the ups and downs of life, we can take comfort in knowing that God is sovereign and eternal. He listens to our struggles and is our anchor through every storm. This psalm not only resonates with the human experience but calls us to remember that God reigns through all generations, providing strength, stability, and purpose in our transient lives.

QUESTION 3:

How do creation and history reflect the eternal nature of God?

PSALM 102:26-28

²⁶ They will perish, but you will endure; all of them will wear out like clothing. You will change them like a garment, and they will pass away. ²⁷ But you are the same, and your years will never end. ²⁸ Your servants' children will dwell securely, and their offspring will be established before you."

Engage

A PRAYER THAT WILL LAST

Choose a few of the phrases below that stand out to you, and use them to praise the Lord, and to write a prayer expressing your authentic needs to God.

“A later generation” “People not yet created” “Shortened days”

“In the middle of my life” “Dwell securely” Groaning

Condemned Broken Strength “You are the same.”

“Praise the LORD” To serve the Lord “You established the earth”

“The Heavens” are Yours “You will endure.”

Father, You are the eternal God whose days and “years will never end.”

Today, I... _____

Amen.

In the 1980s, the atheist astronomer Carl Sagan began his landmark television series “Cosmos” by saying, “The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be.”¹ It certainly seems like the universe will be around forever. However, it’s not the cosmos that was and is and is to come. It’s the Lord God almighty (Rev. 1:4,8). Verses 26-28 show us that God is eternal, and His children will live with Him forever. The psalmist declares, “They [the earth and the heavens] will perish, but you will endure” (v. 26). It’s an acknowledgment of the fact that everything in our physical world is temporary. No matter how everlasting the natural world may seem, it will eventually wear out like an old pair of pants. This is an important warning for anyone who would choose to worship the “created instead of the Creator” (Rom. 1:25).

But there’s also tremendous hope in this truth for anyone struggling through difficult circumstances. Just as heaven and earth will pass away, so will our hardships. Just like the seasons change, the difficulties we endure aren’t permanent. In contrast, God remains unchanged, steadfast, and eternal. Very few things in our everyday life feel permanent. So, the assurance of verse 27, that God is “the same, and your years will never end” is refreshing. God doesn’t change with time or circumstances. How comforting is that in our age of engineered obsolescence?

QUESTION 4:

How can knowing God never changes help us face uncertainty in our lives?

God’s eternal, unchanging nature provides stability. It reminds us that there’s a constant we can trust. When things get chaotic, we can rely on a God who is always present, always loving, and always faithful. Verse 28 emphasizes the security of God’s children and their offspring. Those who serve God have a lasting heritage. This inheritance isn’t just about physical possessions; it encompasses spiritual security and the promise of eternal life.

Our connection to God doesn’t end when this life does. There’s an assurance that extends beyond the boundaries of time into eternity. It suggests our faith and devotion to God can have implications for future generations. It encourages us to recognize that living faithfully today not only impacts our lives but also paves the way for those who come after us.

We have the opportunity to pass down values and beliefs that reflect this eternal truth. In a world driven often by transient concerns, knowing that we can establish a legacy of faith can be a guiding principle. God’s unchanging character is the foundation you stand upon. Struggles are temporary, but your relationship with God can last forever. Whether you’re wrestling with doubts or striving to establish a legacy, this psalm invites us to lean into the promise that God will endure, and through Him, we have lasting hope and security.

QUESTION 5:

What are some practical ways we can demonstrate an eternal perspective in life?

LIVE IT OUT

God is eternal, and those who trust in the eternal God will live with Him forever. Here are some steps to reinforce this truth this week.

- **Reflect.** Reflect on your relationship with God. Take time to pray and express your concerns. Remember that He is eternal and cares about your struggles. Trusting Him means knowing you're never alone.
- **Share.** Share your faith stories with friends or family. Talk about how you've experienced God's presence in difficult times. Encouraging others to trust in God can inspire them to seek a relationship with Him.
- **Explore.** Dive deeper into the concept of God's eternity and faithfulness by studying theological resources or joining a small group. Engage in discussions about how recognizing God's unchanging nature affects both your personal faith and your role in the community. Actively look for opportunities to serve others, demonstrating the eternal hope found in trusting God.



1. Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73–150*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 13, *New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 259.