

## **THE STEP TAKEN IN ETERNITY**

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son (Gal. 4:4)

From now until Christmas Day morning we shall highlight *seven steps towards the cradle*. ... We shall begin at the start, - by looking into eternity, through the prism of God's Word, and that will lead us to understand God's plan. Then we shall consider what brought about, - in time, - the reason Jesus came into this world. We shall do this by looking at two of the many Old Testament prophecies, - first of all, Gen. 3:15, and then we shall go to the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6 ... and that will lead us into how God's eternal plan takes shape on earth. That, of course, will bring us to Bethlehem.

So, let's begin before time began. That, of course, is an incomprehensible concept. We have no means of knowing what it is like *not* to have the restraints of time. We get up in the morning, we have our daily routine, we return to bed at night ... our day is directed within the limitations of time. In eternity though, there are no such restraints, - there is no such thing as a minute, or an hour, or a day.

The only way, then, we can approach this subject with any authority is on the foundation of the truth of the Word of God. It accurately gives us an insight and explains to us *the step taken in eternity* towards the Lord Jesus coming into this world.

### **THE GREATNESS OF ETERNITY**

Once again, everything we do is 'wrapped up' within time ... but, eternity is timeless! It has no beginning or end. It has no clock and no calendar. ... There is no *past*, there is no *future* ... there is simply a continuous and endless *present*. ... That is what Heaven is like, and that also is what Hell is like ... one long continuous and endless *present*.

When we look up into the sky on a clear evening, and we see the stars ... there is such an incalculable vast array, and yet we can only see a limited number for our view is restricted. But vast as the universe is ... is eternity, and that is where God dwells, **Ps. 102:24** I said, O my God ... thy years are throughout all generations. **25** Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. **26** They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: **27** But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

... That is where Jesus came from, - He came from eternity ... and He came into this world, this world He created. ... He created it all, and He also created time ... and in His Word He tells us about a time in the future **II Peter 3:10** ... in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. ... Creation is a prisoner to time, and like anything else in time, it was never intended to last forever.

And the Bible even tells us how it will arrive at its conclusion ... the time when *God* decides it has served its purpose in His plan, and He shall remove it. And the apostle Peter continued, **II Peter 3:11** Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, **12** Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? **13** Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. **14** Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. ... That means time will have run its course, and time will be no more. So, we are to be *looking* for these things ... and the plan behind it all began in eternity, before time began for *God* worked it all out, Himself, in the Council Room of His own presence, in eternity ... before anyone or anything was.

**The greatness of eternity** ... It is beyond our capacity to fully explain for it is unfathomable, incomprehensible, immeasurable, and it is a concept that is impenetrable to the human mind imprisoned within the earthly dimension of 'time'.

### **THE GOD OF ETERNITY**

Obviously, since eternity is great ... the Creator of eternity must be even greater. Once again, we try with our finite minds to understand something of what the Bible teaches about the only eternal Occupant of this timeless space, - God Himself. God, - and God alone, - *inhabited* eternity. Even before the angels, He always was ... There is no such concept as 'before God', ... such a period never existed! ... Who made God? That question is like trying to quantify the unquantifiable, and to define the indefinable.

It is not even correct to state that God has always been ... the only words God used to illustrate His own eternality is when He introduced Himself

in His Word as, *I am*. ... There has never been a time when *I wasn't*, and there will never be a time when *I won't be* for *I am* the everlasting God.

That is how He described Himself to Moses, Ex. 3:14 Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. ... When the Lord Jesus was being 'hounded' by the Pharisees, he particularly infuriated them one day, - after they had sarcastically asked Him the question, Jn. 8:53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? ... As they were getting ready to bend down and pick up the stones to stone Him to death, He told them, v.58 I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

That is because Jesus is God, and God is *always* in the present tense. He is always the same. He said about Himself in Mal. 3:6, I am the LORD, I change not. He is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever (Heb. 13:8). The psalmist again declared, 41:13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen. ... 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. ... 93:2 Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting. ... 106:48 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen.

When Isaiah was prophesying about the coming of the Messiah, he told his people, Is. 9:6 his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father. He called to them, 40:28 hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. And He has not changed any! Time has not changed Him. He loses nothing *because He is forever perfect the way He always is* ...

His knowledge is never added to, neither does it diminish. He never has to amend His plans, Acts 15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Nothing the world does can cause a single change for all He has purposed takes place just as He decreed it.

He is not bound by time, as we are. II Pet. 3:8 one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day ... Ps. 90:4 a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. A thousand years to Him does not even constitute a tiny drop in a mighty everlasting ocean.

He is eternal, and He is the only God in and of eternity, - there is none other like Him. He is unlimited in all His dealings, the absolute embodiment of perfection, and holiness, and justice, and righteousness. He is infinite Wisdom, He is all-knowing and all-powerful ... He is outside of and not of this world and yet, - at the same time, - He is intricately involved in every aspect of His creation ... even to the falling out of the sky of the little sparrow.

And in the vast expanse of His creation there is a tiny little ‘dot’, and try as hard as some are trying, - no one has ever found another place in the vast expanses where there is life, compared to life here on earth. Imagine, out of all the seemingly limitless extent, there is only one little ‘speck’ upon which God has created human life!

And onto that little ‘dot’, - that one little ‘speck’, - God planned, in the eternal Council Room of His Glory, He would introduce a life-form with whom He would have a living and personal relationship, ... one that was undergirded by His holiness, and fashioned in His love ... and He created the first man and the first woman, sinless and perfect ... in His own holy image.

**The greatness of eternity, and the even *greater greatness* of the God of eternity ...**

### **THE GRACE OF GOD IN ETERNITY**

The Puritan, Stephen Charnock (1628-1680), wrote, “The promise of eternal life is as ancient as God himself.” That explains how our salvation did not come after God created creation. Our salvation was not an afterthought, as if sin somehow caught God unawares. Instead, the Gospel story of God’s saving grace began in eternity, for that is where [he hath chosen us in him \[Christ\] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love \(Eph. 1:4\) ... for already then, - in the plan of God, - was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world \(Rev. 13:8\).](#)

You see, our salvation is an eternal and everlasting work God formulated before anything was. Before the first sin was committed on earth, the Saviour already was. ... The Son of God, - had already, - in the mind of His Father, - planned the payment for our salvation. That is what God decreed in eternity ... Then, [when the fulness of the time was come, God sent](#)

forth his Son (Gal. 4:4), ... Not a moment too late, or not a moment too soon, ... God sent forth his Son. It was perfect timing. He came into this world as a real, true, human, living person, - He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7).

In His birth, He was born as every child was born, - He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in union with His mother, and He lived for those first nine months in His mother's womb. ... And He was born as any other child was born. And He died as any other man would die. ... He came into the world the same way as we did, and He went out of it the same way for He knew both birth and death ... and everything else in between. ... Jesus is God, and yet, - in the mysteries of Heaven, - He became man.

In His High Priestly prayer, He prayed, Jn. 17:1 Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. That means we, as believers, are the *love gift* of the Father to the Son ... v.2 that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

What does that mean? It means that since God is eternal, ... and even before Jesus was sent to die, the Father had already gifted us to His Son ... and what does that mean? It means, - in the words of the psalmist, - 48:14 this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death ... From our conception, God has been watching over us, - that is how special you are to Him, that He sent His Son to redeem you. ... for He has given you His most precious and enduring gift Rom. 6:23 the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have eternal life, through Jesus Christ, *right now*, even at this very moment! ... "When I draw this fleeting breath, When mine eyes shall close in death" ... He shall at that very moment gather us unto Himself, and He shall lift us into His dwelling-place ... as the Psalmist declares, 84:4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house ... 23:6 ... and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. ... That is the grace of God in eternity ... The very moment we leave this scene of time, we shall be with Him forever.

## CONCLUSION

### **The greatness of Eternity, the God of Eternity, and the Grace of God in Eternity.**

God did not wait until Christ was born to show us such grace. He was so excited about His plan, even in eternity. In the first chapter of Genesis He described all He had made, **Gen. 1:31** and, **behold, it was very good.** ... And the pinnacle of His creation was the man and woman He loved so much ... who He set above all His creation.

His grace, - unmerited and undeserved, - entered this world as a perfect and sinless little Baby because in eternity grace was already at work ... and grace was exercised in time when Jesus came to Bethlehem.

So, here is what is at the centre of this season for every believer ... It is all about how God sent His Son to be our Saviour. ... Enter the lowly room in Bethlehem and see how much God loved you. Consider where He came from to come down to us ... He came from eternity into time, setting aside His glory to bring about your salvation and mine, ultimately, at Calvary.

Father, 'twas Thy love that knew us  
 Earth's foundation long before:  
 That same love to Jesus drew us  
 By its sweet constraining power,  
 And will keep us ... Safely now, and evermore!