

ETERNITY  
Text: Isaiah 57:15

INTRO: The word "eternal" is used several times in the Scripture, but our text is the only verse in the KJV where the word "eternity" is found. God is without beginning or end. He inhabits eternity. The NKJ uses the word eternity in at least one other passage, Eccl. 3:11. We will look at that verse later.

I. DEFINING ETERNITY.

A. Our finite minds are insufficient to completely grasp the concept of eternity.

B. In its most literal usage, it describes duration outside of, & in contrast to time. It describes a state of existence without beginning or end. God had no beginning. He always was. He has no end. He will always be.

Before the mountains were brot forth, or ever You had formed the earth & the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. (Psalm 90:2).

C. One writer described eternity as "time no longer measured by the succession of events."

D. I am sympathetic with attempts to illustrate eternity in terms of time but such efforts can as easily detract from the truth as illustrate it.

1. The ant crawling around the world, etc.
2. "When we've been there 10,000 years..."
3. "One eternal day." (eternal 1\2 day?)
4. "Spending eternity." If I could spend it, it didn't last forever.

5. All such efforts to illustrate eternity involve poetic license. I do not necessarily oppose them. I only caution that they are less than adequate to accomplish their lofty goal.

## II. THE GREEK & HEBREW WORDS TRANSLATED ETERNAL USUALLY EMPHASIZE ENDLESSNESS.

A. As already noted, God is eternal in the strictest sense of the word--without beginning or end.

B. But many passages, even passages about God, are emphasizing the fact that He is unending.

The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood, & the Lord sits as King forever. (Psalm 29:10).

C. The verses that speak of "eternal life" or "eternal condemnation" look only toward the future. A more literal translation would be "everlasting" or "endless."

D. We humans, of course, had a beginning--but there is a sense in which we will have no end.

1. God is a Spirit (JN 4:24), an eternal Spirit (Heb 9:14). He made us in His image, Gen. 1:27.

2. He put eternity in our hearts.

I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts... (Eccl. 3:10-11).

...Man goes to his eternal home & the mourners go about the streets. (Eccl. 12:5).

3. Because God put eternity in our hearts, we will all exist somewhere forever.

## III. HEAVEN IS PREPARED AS A PLACE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

A. Eternal life is quality life forever; union with God & all His blessings. To be separated from God is to be dead in sin. To be united with Him is to be truly alive.

B. Heaven is pictured in terms of what is beautiful, desirable,

& valuable. It is a place free from all pain, sorrow, sickness & death. READ REV. 21:4, 11, 18-21.

C. Heaven is a place where all inhabitants will dwell in perfect harmony, in total love & acceptance, endlessly, forever.

#### IV. HELL IS PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL & HIS MESSENGERS --A PLACE OF EVERLASTING SHAME & CONTEMPT.

A. Existence in hell is never referred to in the Bible as "life." JW's point out that the Bible says nothing about eternal life in hell. They are correct in that. The Bible doesn't call that living.

B. But make no mistake about it. The Bible does teach that those in hell will be conscious forever in a state of shame, misery, & contempt.

READ REV. 19:20; 20:10-15

READ MARK 9:43-48

READ MATTHEW 25:41-46

CONCLUSION: God has put eternity in your heart, Eccl. 3:11. You will be conscious somewhere forever. Will it be endless, quality life, or will it be a gnawing grinding death that never ends in release? The difference is determined by our acceptance or rejection of God's offer of forgiveness in Christ. The difference will not be that some sinned & others did not. It will not be that some sinned big sins & others only sinned little sins. It will not be that some sinned many sins & others few sins. The difference will be whether our sins have been forgiven. If we meet God's conditions of forgiveness, our sins will be forgiven--great or small, many or few. Believe, Repent, be Baptized. MK 16:16; Acts 2:38. Walk in newness of life.

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 17, 1996

Oaks-West, Burnet, TX, December 8, 1996  
La Porte, TX, March 31, 1997 (meeting)  
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, December 28, 1997  
Dexter, ME, September 28, 2003 (meeting)  
Highway 29, Liberty Hill, TX, June 11, 2004 (meeting)