

# Will There Be Time in Eternity?

In Revelation 10:6 we read “that there should be time no longer.” In the hymn, *When the Roll is Called Up Yonder* the lyrics are as follows: “When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound **and time shall be no more.**” Often we hear Bible teachers say that when we enter eternity there will be no more time. Yet is this what the Bible says?

Certainly there will be a great difference between how we experience time here and now and how we will experience time in eternity. In our earthly pilgrimage we are locked into time. We were born at a certain time and our life will end at a certain time.<sup>1</sup> Our lifespan is brief and fleeting. “And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage” (Gen. 47:9). In contrast, when we enter eternity, we will no longer be captive to time. We will not have to think about our life some day ending in death. We will have passed into a realm where our life will be never ending. We will no longer be limited by time constraints as we are in this life where our time on earth is so short.

Yet, the question is, “Will there be time in eternity?” First, Revelation 10:6 needs to be translated correctly: “...that there should be delay no longer.” See almost every translation other than the KJV. It is true that the word “time” is used here (*chronos*), but the sense is that there will be no more waiting because God will be proceeding with His judgment. The waiting period will be over. His judgment will not be delayed. The time when this mystery of God will be finished will be nigh (Rev. 10:7). The announcement in verse 7 corresponds to the question of the martyrs in 6:10: “How long?” The answer to this question is that the delay will be no longer. God will act!<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious that the Spirit of God did not intend this passage to mean that there would be no more time. Indeed, the tribulation events described in that passage will be eventually followed by the millennium, a kingdom that is carefully defined by time (“one thousand years” is mentioned six times in Revelation 20).

So let’s come back to our original question, “Will there be time in eternity?” I’m not a scientist and I know very little of Einstein’s theory of relativity and how that theory relates to time. So I’ll keep things simple. There is a past, a present and a future. Time allows for a sequence of

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<sup>1</sup> The average lifespan is about 70 (Psalm 90:10); with medical advances the average lifespan in America is close to 80.

<sup>2</sup> For a good discussion of Revelation 10:6-7 see Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22—An Exegetical Commentary*, pages 68-69.

events, one event following another event. Such a sequence would be impossible apart from time. With this in mind, consider the following:

- 1) Will there be conversations in heaven (in eternity)? If so, does not this imply a time sequence? One person speaks followed by another person who speaks. A question is asked by one and answered by another. All these things happen one after the other, which involves a time sequence. Conversations involve a past, present and future. Something was said; something is being said; something has not been said yet but will be said.
- 2) Will there be music in heaven? In every piece of music there is a time signature. One note or chord comes before another note or chord. One measure follows another measure. There is the beginning of a song and the end of a song. All these things imply a time sequence. Music is impossible apart from time.
- 3) Does the Bible ever specifically teach that there will be no time in eternity? I'm not aware of any such teaching. Instead of saying that there is no time in eternity, would it not be better to say that there is endless time in eternity?
- 4) Most would agree that Ephesians 2:7 is speaking of the eternal ages. It speaks of "the ages to come." This implies one age after another age. The word "age" is a time word.
- 5) Consider Ephesians 3:21 translated directly from the Greek: "To Him be glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen." The KJV has "throughout all ages, world without end." Does not the term "ages" speak of time? If the world or if the ages do not end, does not this mean that they will go on and on forever? So again, instead of describing eternity as having no time, it is far better to describe it as endless time or unending time.
- 6) In Revelation 22:2 we have a continued description of the new heavens and the new earth (the eternal state). We are told in this verse about the "tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit **every month**." "Month" is a time word. Even though months in eternity may not be the same as months on earth now (months now reflect the lunar cycle), yet the term does suggest a sequence of time. God could be using language that we can understand and relate to, but the fact remains that the implication is that there is time in the eternal state. Henry M. Morris, a man of science and a man of the Word, wrote of the absurdity of saying that there will be no more time in eternity: "The space/time universe has been established forever, and there could be no ending of time as such without the annihilation of space as well. As a matter of fact, time will still be

measured by months in the new earth (Rev. 22:2)” (*The Revelation Record*, p. 182).

- 7) In Revelation 20:10 we learn that those in the lake of fire “shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” These time words are used to help us understand that this punishment will be unending. Robert Thomas writes, “This is a figure of speech based on the experience of our earthly time frame....It portrays the unending nature of the torment.”<sup>3</sup> If someone were to ask, “How long do people spend in the lake of fire?” a correct answer would be “forever.” “Forever” is a time indicator, as is the phrase “day and night forever and ever.” So again, it seems at odds with the Word of God to say that there is no time in eternity. It’s more accurate to say that there is unending time.

### **Conclusion:**

I know of no Biblical basis for saying that there will be no time in eternity or in the eternal state. Instead, there will be age after age, month after month, one event following another event, etc. There will be endless time. It will last forever.

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<sup>3</sup>Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22—An Exegetical Commentary*, page 427.