

## THE ETERNITY OF GOD

## Psalm 90

I want to speak this morning about the ~~et~~ernity of God. The Bible clearly teaches that the ultimate purpose in salvation is that we will be like God, and like His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29 says that we are "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son." First John 3:2 says that "We shall be like him for we shall see him as he is." Phillipians 3:20-21 says that "Our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior our Lord Jesus Christ who shall change these bodies of humiliation that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." II Corinthians 3:18 tells us that "We all with an unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being changed into that same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord." It's also clear in Scripture that though we shall be like God and like the Lord Jesus Christ we will never be Deity. There will always be a difference between the members of the Godhead and those of us whom they have redeemed. In order to bring this out in the study of the Scriptures, Bible teachers and theologians have taught the attributes of God by distinguishing between God's incommunicable attributes and His communicable attributes. Some we share with God, some we do not share with Him. There will always be aspects in which we are not like God. The Bible distinguishes between those attributes which God possesses by Himself, these are the incommunicable. They are not transferable. The others are those which He imparts to us. And to the extent to which He imparts His wisdom, His love, His power, His grace we are becoming like God. The subject which we have before us this morning in the eternity of God is one of God's incommunicable attributes. All of us have had a beginning in time. God is without beginning and God is without ending. He has always existed, He will always continue to exist. He never began to be. Nor will He ever cease to be. He is, as we read in the life of Abraham, "The Lord, the everlasting God." The eternity of God means not only that God lives but that He always has lived and always will continue to live. But in addition when we examine the passages that deal with this aspect of the character of God, we know that it also indicates that since He is

eternal He is without change in any way. This unchangeableness of God has been spoken of as God's immutability and God's eternal existence and His unchangeableness are brought together in a passage like Psalm 102 beginning with verse 25 and verse 27. And I am going to ask you this morning if you will to turn to some of these passages of Scripture so that you can follow them as I read. The last four verses of Psalm 102 where you see the eternal character of God and the unchangeable character of God brought together. Verse 25, "Of old thou hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 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. But thou art the same and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue and their seed shall be established before thee." So God is eternal and God is unchangeable. And everything about Him is eternal is unchangeable. His knowledge for example is unchangeable. God never learns anything. Now if that were stated about me or about you that would be bad. We say that about God because He knows all things and therefore it's not necessary for Him to learn. His wisdom never changes. He has never made any mistakes and He never will make any mistakes. His power never changes. He has not gradually gotten so that He could do more and more. But He has always been able to do everything that He can do now and has done in the past. His love never changes. Being an everlasting God He loves with an everlasting love and this was the message of Jeremiah to the people of Judah which you find in Jeremiah 31:3. God's holiness never changes. He does not improve because He is eternally perfect in the absolute sense of the word. God's will does not change. God's promises do not change. God's Word never changes. Everything about God is eternal and unchangeable. Henry Light in his hymn Abide With Me has mentioned this eternal and unchanging characteristic of God to show how comforting it can be to those of us who are the people of God. I will just read one of the verses this morning, it goes like this, you have sung it many times.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away  
Change and decay in all around I see  
O thou who changes not, abide with me.

And let me state this morning as we consider together the eternity of God that what I have said about God applies equally to the Lord Jesus and applies equally to the Holy Spirit. Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ Paul states in a charge that he gives to Timothy in the later part of the 6th chapter of First Timothy, that the Lord Jesus Christ only has immortality and then many of you will remember the statement that is made in the book of Hebrews concerning the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus that He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God. So God the Father is eternal and unchanging. The Lord Jesus is eternal and unchanging. The Holy Spirit is eternal and unchanging and we want to look at some of the passages this morning which point this out and then see some of the lessons especially from Psalm 90 that we are to learn from this. There are a number of passages that I could cite and our Scripture reading this morning in Psalm 90 especially the first two verses you will notice that this is the theme that Moses strikes in Psalm 90 before he comes to the other things that are mentioned in that Psalm. The first two verses read, "Lord thou has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Psalm 93 begins the same way. "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty. The Lord is clothed with strength wherewith he hath girded himself. The world also is established that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old. Thou art from everlasting." At the close of Moses' life at the end of the book of Deuteronomy you remember that the 33rd chapter of the book of Deuteronomy is devoted to blessings which Moses conferred upon the children of Israel just before his death. And it's interesting to me to see that these are the last recorded words of Moses. And since Moses is the writer of the Psalm which we have read this morning, Psalm 90 I want to read from Deuteronomy chapter 33, the last four verses of this

chapter and as I mentioned the last words that we have recorded that Moses spoke. In verse 26 of Deuteronomy 33 he says, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun who rideth upon the heaven and thy [unclear] and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee and shall say destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone, the fountain of Jacob shall be upon the land of corn and wine. Also his heaven shall drop down dew. Happy art thou oh Israel. Who is like unto thee oh people saved by the Lord. The shield of thy help and who is the sword of thy excellency and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee and thou shalt tread upon their high places. " Isaiah is one who has a great deal to say about the eternity of God. A passage of Scripture which I know most of you not only know but love and have trusted, depended upon many, many times is found at the end of Isaiah 40 where the question is raised beginning with verse 28, "Hast thou not known, 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. He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." And then the 41st chapter which immediately follows continues with the same idea and I will just read the 4th verse of the chapter but originally there were no chapter divisions and so this was all one part, but in the 4th verse of the 41st chapter, "Who hath wrought and done it calling the generations from the beginning. I the Lord the first with the last, I am he." Chapter 43:10 in Isaiah, "Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord and my servants whom I have chosen that ye may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me there was no God formed neither shall there be after me." Chapter 44 beginning with verse 6, "Thus saith the Lord, the king of Israel and his redeemer the Lord of hosts. I am the first and I am the last and beside me there is no God. And who as I shall

call and shall declare and set it in order for me since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come let them show unto them. Fear ye not neither be afraid. Have not I told thee from that time and have declared it. Ye are even my witnesses. Is there any God beside me, yea there is no God, I know not any." And in Isaiah 57:15 God is referred to as the One Who inhabits eternity. The eternity of God is even implied isn't it in the very first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. " Just a moment ago in my introductory remarks I mentioned the reference to God that is found during the life of Abraham in Genesis 21:33 where it is stated that Abraham called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God. Now if I were to translate that a little more literally so that you could see the point, we could translate it, "He called on the name Jehovah, the everlasting God." And most of you recognize that the word Jehovah is a word for God, a name for God that appears all through the Old Testament hundreds of times. And everytime you find the name Jehovah used which is translated Lord in most of our English translations that name always is used to convey the idea that God is eternal and that God never changes. The word Jehovah is made from the verb to be. It means that He is the one who is and who always has been and the one who continues to be as He has been throughout eternity. So we have these emphasis. And I could mention many other passages this morning. But you find it also in the New Testament and let me ask you to turn to the last part of the book of Romans, the last chapter of the Book of Romans and in the last few verses. And it's at least interesting to compare this with the fact that Moses' last words had to do with the eternal God and Paul's last words in Romans have to do with the eternal God. Beginning with verse 25 of Romans 16, "Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now is made manifest and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for obedience to the faith, to

God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever and ever." And then turn if you will to the opening verses of the Book of the Revelation in chapter 1. And these words are stated not only with reference to God but with reference also to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the 4th verse of Revelation 1 where John is introducing this last book of the Bible, he says, "John to the seven church which are in Asia, grace be unto you and peace", now note "from him which is and which was and which is to come." And the 8th verse of the same chapter, "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty." Verses 17 and 18, John says, "And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead and he laid his right hand upon me saying unto me, fear not, I am the first and the last.. I am he that liveth and was dead and behold I am alive forevermore amen. And have the keys of hell and of death." In the book of Hebrews the first chapter of the book of Hebrews the writer quotes from the 102nd Psalm words which I read a few moments ago but whereas they seem to apply to God in the 102nd Psalm, the writer of Hebrews applies them to the Lord Jesus Christ. And I am thinking of the verses that we have in Hebrews 1:10-12. "And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish but thou remainest. And they all shall wax old as doth a garment and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed. But thou art the same and thy years shall not fail." Now I have just read this morning a few passages of Scripture that deal with the eternal character of God and in reading these from the Old Testament as well as from the New Testament and to see how this is related to the name of God Jehovah, no person could come to any other conclusion than that this is an extremely important subject. It's important for us to know that God is an eternal God and being an eternal God that He never changes. And obviously the reason that we find this in the Scriptures, and I want to apply all of these in the time that I have left, is because all of this has a direct bearing upon not only our understanding and spiritual growth but upon the lives that we live. It's hard for us to understand somebody who

never changes. It's hard for us to understand a person who has always existed. There *are* things about this that we will never fully comprehend at least until we get to heaven. But I go back to that verse of Isaiah's, and I won't ask you to turn to it again, we read it just a short time ago, where Isaiah said speaking on behalf of the Lord, "Ye are my witness whom I have chosen that ye may know and believe me and understand that I am he, before me there was no god formed, neither shall there be after me." Now Isaiah has a great deal to say about the way in which the children of Israel in the Old Testament were to bear witness to the living God among all of the nations of the earth. And here he singles out this one particular thing. They are to know this about their God. Now when you relate this and I will ask you to turn back now to the 90th Psalm. When you relate this to the 90th Psalm, this psalm of Moses, the man of God, we see that this must have been a tremendously important truth to Moses. Many of you will remember the opening chapters of the book of Exodus when Moses came back from exile to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. And how everything went smoothly until he went to Pharaoh. I referred to this just recently in a message. And it looked like the work was all falling apart. And that the children of Israel were in greater trouble than if Moses had stayed in exile and had never come back into the land of Egypt. But when God begins to explain to Moses why Pharaoh did not immediately let the children of Israel go He mentions that in past days He had been known to His people by the name God Almighty but that up to that hour He had never focused attention upon the fact that He was Jehovah. And this is the name that conveys the eternity of God, the unchanging character of God. So that as the Lord met Moses in those difficult circumstances it was to emphasize this truth that is before us this morning. And Moses never got away from this truth, in fact if you go back just in the incidents that I have been referring to you will find them recorded in Exodus 5 and 6, if you go back to the 3rd chapter when God called Moses from the burning bush and Moses began to present his objections to the Lord as to why he shouldn't go back into the land of Egypt one of the things that he says was this, "But when they

come to me and they say to me, well God has sent you but what is His name, what will I tell them." And there you have that majestic statement and the translators of our King James have printed it all in bold letters, God said to Moses, "When they ask you what my name is tell them I AM that I AM and that I AM has sent you unto them." The same idea we have seen in the Gospel of John, I am the bread of life, I am the resurrection and the life. The I am's of the Gospel of John are incorporating this fact that the Lord Jesus did not become the bread of life when He came to the earth, He always has been the bread of life, always will be the bread of life because they are eternal. And this truth got into the heart of Moses and this truth was a truth that held Moses in time of testing and trial and need. And as we can see in the Psalm that he has given to us, this is a truth which can mean a tremendous amount to you and to me. Because I don't believe that you and I can face the kind of trials and testings that we are bound to have in this life unless we know something of the eternity of God, and the unchanging character of God. And I commend it to you today as a study that will bring great reward to your own heart and to your own life if this happens to be a truth that you have neglected.

Now I want you to look at Psalm 90 with me so that we can see the affect that this truth had upon Moses. And I am going to take these things up in order. There are about 7 things that I can mention. I probably could mention other things. But I want you to see them and I want you to place these along side of your own life as you think about these great characteristics of our wonderful God. Let me read the first two verses again, and I want you to see that when this truth got into the heart of Moses according to this Psalm it seems that the first result was that it caused him to worship God. I was talking to one of our men this past week who was referring to the fact that Moses was on his face so much before the Lord and he said they could probably have identified Moses among the children of Israel as the one who

had the dirt on his face, because he was prostrating himself before God continually. Notice here how Moses as a result of this truth worships the Lord. "Lord, thou has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Now I don't believe for a moment that you and I sitting here this morning simply reading over these verses can get a hold of this truth the way we need to. God needs to teach us of His eternity, of His unchanging character. But once it gets into our hearts, once we begin to see it and I am sure that it is a truth that gradually opens up more and more to us as our knowledge of the Lord increases, one of the first affects its going to have on our lives is that we will spend more time worshipping the Lord. You know I shudder sometimes when I hear people praying as though the Lord were just some friend that you would meet on the street, some person who had a beginning, some person who is troubled with all the difficulties and limitations and sins and imperfections that you and I have. And when we can approach God without being overawed with a sense of His eternity, of His unchanging character then it is evident that there is a great deal of ground for us to gain in our relationship with the Lord. And I would love to have heard Moses say this as one who had really come to understand that from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

Well let me point out a second thing. He goes from verse 2 to verse 3 and he is looking exclusively at the Lord in verses 1 and 2 and you see as you run down through those verses down as far as verse 10 that this had a humbling affect upon Moses. He has a different perspective as far as human beings are concerned. He speaks of man as being the grass and in the 6th verse it flourishes in the morning and grows up and in the evening it is cut down and withers and he speaks of people as being consumed by the anger of God and troubled by His wrath. So that once you see the grandeur and the majesty and the glory of this eternal God Who never changes, you can never have the same conception of the human heart again. And I hope I am not

stating things the wrong way but it seems that we are living in a day when there is a tremendous tendency for us to glory in men, glory in their achievements, glory in their name, glory in their positions. And everytime we glory in men, we rob God of glory that belongs exclusively to Him. So that when Moses understood the eternity of God, the unchanging character of God, his attitude toward himself and all other human beings was forever changed. As I was studying this passage of Scripture this week I couldn't help but wonder if this may not be the reason that in Numbers 12:3 Moses is referred to as the meekest man on earth. And is the reason that you and I know so little about true humility before God and before each other is simply because we know too little about the eternal character of God and His majesty as the unchanging One.

But there's a third thing that I want you to see in this passage. Not only is he concerned with the fact that here is a God who is from everlasting to everlasting dwelling among people who are like the flower of the field which is there in the morning and is gone at night, but he says in verse 8, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath and we spend our years as a tale that is told." You see when I come to understand the eternity of God, that He is from everlasting to everlasting it not only changes my ideas of God and of man but it helps me to see sin as it really is and it enables me to understand that God not only sees the sins that everybody else sees but God sees the secret sins that I may seek to hide from the light of His countenance, not realizing that there isn't anything that I can hide from God. "Thou has set our iniquities before thee." Do you know that there is not a thing sinful about you or about me but what God sees it exactly as it is. And those sins which you and I may feel that we have successfully concealed from others, are completely known to God. In fact I would go so far as to say that you and I will never really understand the sinfulness of sin until we see it in the light of the eternity and the

unchangeableness of God Himself. *John 1:1-3* *1 John 1:1-3* *1 John 1:1-3*.

This inevitably leads to two other things. And you see it in verse 11. "Who knoweth the power of thine anger even according to thy fare so is thy wrath." And this is a subject that we hear practically nothing about these days. There ought to be with every child of God a sense in which there are certain things that you know are displeasing to God and you don't do them because you are fearful of the consequences of doing them. Solomon in all of his wisdom said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." But not only that in verse 12 you see that there is a new prayer upon the heart of Moses when he says, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." I remarked to a person the other day that it's hard for me to believe that it is August already. And you know it won't be long till it is Christmas. Do your shopping early. And then it will be next summer and the time just seems to fly doesn't it. And I look back on the years of my life and it just seems like such a short time and yet when you look at most of us. We live as though we are going to be here forever and as though we had forever to do everything that needs to be done. When Moses saw the eternity of God and realized how bound to time he was and was here in the morning and gone in the evening, that a thousand years in the Lord's sight are but as yesterday when it is passed and as a watchman in the night. Moses cried out when he understood these things, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." So you see there isn't anything that is going to cause me to treasure time and to value time and make the best use of my time and seek to glorify God with every day that I have like seeing that in the light of a God Who is from everlasting to everlasting and a God Who never changes in contrast with all that you and I are. *1 John 1:1-3*.

And then I notice as I look at the end of this prayer there are two more things that

need to be mentioned in closing this morning. He says, "Return oh Lord how long and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto their children." Now here is the 6th thing that I want to mention. Evidently when Moses saw the glory of God and realized the eternity of God and the unchanging character of God, that He was One Who lived from generation to generation without beginning and without end it made him realize more than ever before how the Lord was the only One Who was able to satisfy him and the Lord was the only One Who was able to deliver him from affliction and that the word that God was doing in Moses was far more important than any work that Moses might apparently do for God. You see when I see the Lord and I understand the Lord and I realize something of His majesty and His greatness and His eternity and His unchanging character, then I begin to talk less and less about what I am doing and more and more about what the Lord is doing. And that's the only thing that is worth talking about anyway. Because my works and your works are never worthy of Him. But oh when you think of His work in our behalf. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants and thy glory unto thy children."

But finally he does mention his own work, and this is what he says. "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea the work of our hands establish thou it." This makes me think of a New Testament verse. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples when He had gathered them in the Upper Room. "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." Don't you get tired of results that come and then go just as fast as they have come. Don't you love to see fruit that remains, fruit that abides, a work that continues. Now the word beauty here is a word which could be translated favor. "Let the favor of the Lord

our God be upon us and establish the work of our hands upon us, yea the work of our hands establish thou it." You see when we come to understand the eternity of God and the unchanging character of God and all of the glory and majesty that goes along with it, not only do I talk more about what He is doing than what I am doing, but when I talk about the work that He has appointed for me to do I realize that nothing that I ever do will remain, will be established unless it is done with the blessing of God upon it. I mentioned to some of you before that Lucille and I have a poem on the wall of our home. I read it many, many times, I need to read it every day, sometimes many times a day. But let me close with just a part of it.

It begins:

In the sweet fear of Jesus let me begin this day,  
fearful lest I should grieve Him,  
fearful lest I should stray.  
Fearful lest earthly longings  
ever my heart should share  
taking away the name of Jesus  
and placing an idol there.

And then the poem concludes with this expression talking about serving the Lord:

That we serve the Lord with the remembrance present  
that Jesus must not be grieved.

I wonder if that has been my purpose this morning in speaking to you. You Sunday School teachers, did you teach this morning with that in mind. That the most important thing for us to be concerned about is whether the Lord Jesus is pleased with our ministry and so His favor is upon us and the work of our hands is established. All this makes me want to go back to those first two verses of Psalm 90, and say, "Lord teach me what you taught Moses that from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." And let me by thy grace see the results in my life and my understanding that Moses saw when he understood these truths.