

The Inscrutable Question: Logical Differences between Time & Eternity

10. Thus the knowledge of God does not change and is therefore immutable, absolute, and eternal.

Isaiah 40:8 - The grass withers and the flower fades but the word of our God stands forever.

11. From this we may conclude that the principles found in Scripture are absolutes and do not change regardless of the vacillations and oscillations of human viewpoint.

Isaiah 55:8 - "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways," declares the Lord.

v. 9 - "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

12. Human viewpoint is developed from the confines of man's limited environment of time and space. Such ideas are not attuned to the immutable divine will and therefore constantly change.
13. Man may discover things that are true, such as the physical laws of God, which he arrogantly classifies as scientific laws.
14. The laws of physics are the mechanics that control time, space, matter, and energy. Since they were applied to the universe to insure order of movement they may be discovered by inquiring minds.
15. However, truth is the thinking of God in the field of divine thought and these ideas cannot be comprehended by the finite minds of man.

John 1:17 - The Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

16. Truth is an absolute because of divine immutability and veracity. The creation of the universe was the decision of divine sovereignty. And the power to create found its source in divine omnipotence.
17. The issues involved in distinguishing time from eternity are addressed by:

Charnock, Stephen. *The Existence and Attributes of God*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), i. 280:

Time has a continual succession. We must conceive of eternity contrary to the notion of time; as the nature of time consists in the succession of parts, so the nature of eternity is an infinite immutable duration. Time began with the foundation of the world; but God being before time, could have no beginning in time. Before the beginning of the creation and the beginning of time, there could be nothing but eternity.

18. Early church father, Augustine of Hippo, wrestled with the distinctions between time and eternity in his fourth-century book *Confessions*.

Tenney, Merrill C. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Vol. 2. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 383:

Augustine asked how God could create the world, time, and change out of nothing, though He Himself is immutable. God must be immutable because if He changed He would become either better or worse, and both are impossible for a perfect being.

19. If God existed before the creation and that creation contains the concept of time and change, then God must be eternal.
20. Genesis 1:1 indicates that the universe had a beginning and its environment was time and space in which are found matter and energy in constant movement therefore constant change.

21. Space is the medium in which movement occurs and time is the means by which that movement is measured.
22. Time could not have existed before the creation since it would have required God to select one time over another for the act of creation.
23. However, the Scripture is clear that God is immutable and unchanging in an eternal state. For God there is no past, present, or future.
24. Consequently, since immutability means that there is no change in the thinking of God, then He never learns, never forgets, and doesn't require a memory. Augustine elaborates:

Tenney. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. (1976), 383:

An omniscient Being could not have a series of perceptions one after another, for such a series implies that the mind does not know something and later perceives and knows it. But omniscience means that the divine Mind is never ignorant of anything. He neither loses an idea He once had nor gains one He previously did not know. Therefore, there can be no temporal succession in God's knowledge. Finite beings, who know and do not know, are temporal; but the infinite and omniscient God is eternal.

25. Since God is not growing in knowledge but knows all things simultaneously then in eternity past He knew all about human history.
26. Theology refers to this body of His knowledge as the Divine Decree. This decree will be accomplished because of His omnipotence.
27. Man is trapped in time and space. Each person has a beginning, life proceeds in stages, and then it comes to an end.
28. Man can have no confidence in the love of God unless He is confident in the components of that love. Righteousness, justice, grace, and omniscience are immutable.
29. Righteousness is the divine standard that has revealed to us through Scripture that God intends to grant eternal life to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ.
30. Justice vindicates each believer through the imputation of divine righteousness at salvation.
31. Grace accepts this believer into the family of God as an expression of the personal love of God for him.
32. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a divine demonstration of the future resurrection of all who believe in Christ.
33. But the resurrection body is designed for the eternal state. Therefore, the believer could have no confidence in the love of God or His promises were He not outside of time possessing eternal life.