

Eternity

Lots of people think about eternity and the possibility, or not, as to whether it exists; “I will love you for ever” is a phrase used by people in their speech, and sometimes in songs. So, from where does the thought, the idea, that things could go on for ever come; the concept that there is something more than just this mortal and time limited life? The thought is also there that if there is more than this life, that whatever is afterwards will not come to an end either, it will go on for ever. People think about life after death, whether it exists or not, and almost every religion in the world, whatever one thinks of its relevance or veracity, has a concept of life after death. It may be reincarnation, Nirvana, purgatory, heaven or whatever, but the idea, and in many ways the hope, is there of something, usually something better, after this life. The idea that there is nothing more than this life, and nothing after it, makes our years on the earth a bit pointless, rather meaningless, as they lead nowhere and give no hope. “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die” is the idea, but even that can be very boring after a while, so a life with no hope is a miserable life. When religions offer the possibility of life after death and of an eternal and meaningful existence, you may say, “Religions provide a false hope to ‘suck people in’ and cause them to be ‘followers’ where in reality there is no hope at all; it is all a ‘con trick’, a deception and there is no eternity and therefore there is no God”. Of course, the world very much believes now in evolution, a development of the species over millions of years. Such a timescale is difficult to imagine when our lives last on average for little more than 70 years. But, evolution does not give the individual any hope for the future, so whether we accept the theory as fact or not does not give us any hope for the future, rather the theory of evolution takes away any hope for any individual as it removes any concept of creation or a creator and, if there is no God, no one greater than this creation, as we shall see, there can be no eternity and no assurance of something after this life. But, if we look to God and therefore a religion, a belief in some sort of God, you may say, “I want more than just a possibility on which to fix some hope, I need something certain which will really give me peace of heart and mind. I need something that will not build up my hopes and yet let me down in the end. I need a religion which can provide certainty for me”. In the Church of England Funeral Service, used day in and day out in this country and with similar versions in other parts of the world and other Christian groups, there is the phrase “In sure and certain hope of the resurrection from the dead”. It goes beyond a possibility; it declares a certainty. Can this really be true or is it just “Pie in the sky”? So, is there an eternity? Is there an existence after this life? Is there something which really is certain and in which I can put my trust knowing that I shall not be disappointed, and what are the conditions, if any, which I need to fulfil? The Church of England service of course is a Christian Service and based on what the Bible says, so if it declares a certainty can this certainty be found within the Bible? Does the Bible really show the way to eternity? Let us look.

One of the most famous verses in the Bible, often found on posters outside churches, is John 3.16 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have **everlasting life**”*. Here is the mention of **eternal life, life through the ages**, and indeed through the whole Bible we are confronted with eternity. We read, *“From everlasting to everlasting you are God”*; *“Underneath are the everlasting arms”*; *“I have loved you with an everlasting love”*; *“Your throne O God is for ever and ever”*; *“A priest forever”*, and *fascinatingly. “Through the eternal Spirit”*. These are just six direct quotations among the very many. We also read *“In the beginning God”* and *“In the beginning was the Word”* and *“That which was from the beginning”*, the implication being that God has always existed, before time was, before the creation of the world, and will exist for ever. The apostle John in his letter, and we have just quoted

the phrase above, *“That which was from the beginning”*, uses the imperfect tense implying eternal existence, indicating that in the beginning there was something before that beginning. It may sound illogical but when we look at eternity and if there is a God who is eternal, that God, must always have been if He is to be for ever. We read also of Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, telling the churches that He was the beginning and the end, *“He that was and is and is to come”*, with the concept that ‘is to come’ means an eternal future because there has been an eternal past and a continuous present; *“Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and forever”* is the famous verse which sums it all up. If this is all true, if Jesus is risen from the dead, then there is life after death, there is an eternity and an eternal possibility for us.

When Moses asked God for a name to describe Himself to the children of Israel, He used the name ‘Jehovah’. The word Jehovah is made up from parts of the Hebrew word for ‘to be’. (The verb in English, I am, you are, He/she is, we are etc, and in French, German, Swahili, Urdu, Arabic and so on). Jehovah is he ‘**that was**’ and ‘**is**’ and ‘**is to come**’, the past, present and future tenses of the verb all rolled into one word. It is very clever, indeed ingenious, and yet its usage was not just being clever but with the very definite purpose to convey to Israel that the God who had sent Moses was the true and living God, the eternal God. This truth complied with their knowledge of God as being the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of their forefathers; the God who had spoken to these patriarchs, who had directed them and through whom the people of Israel had come into being. The nation of Israel depended for its whole existence and purpose on the historical communication between God and these three men; it was at the very root of their whole culture. This God, for Israel the eternal God, the Almighty God, was fulfilling His promise made to Abraham, to bring them out of the slavery of Egypt. This God, as it proved to be so, had the power to do exactly what He had promised, they came out of Egypt; He was the true and living God. When the Jewish leaders demanded answers of Jesus they called God, “The Living God”, and in the prophecy of Jeremiah we read, *“But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an **everlasting** king”*. The concept therefore for the people of Israel, through their history, was of the **true** God, the **living** God and the **everlasting** King. Their belief was that the God they knew is the true God, the living God. He has to be the eternal God; it is just a logical consequence. This concept of course was held by the Lord Jesus coming into the nation of Israel, and His whole thinking would have been taken up in His work to bring in everlasting life and that in doing so He was serving the eternal God: how else would Jesus be able to provide eternal life for us all? Jesus was constantly referring to His Father and that He was sent from the Father to do the will of God. Just 3 quotations demonstrating the understanding of Our Lord Jesus that His Father was God, the eternal God who gave eternal life: -

*“For as the Father hath **life** in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself”* (Life being eternal life, it always is in the Bible in the concept of the life of God)

*“And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at **the last day**”*

*“And I know that his commandment **is life everlasting**: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak”*.

If we really stop and think, if there is a God then that God has to be everlasting. If God was not eternal, then God would be less than God and not in control of the future, neither His future (the Bible uses He for God) nor ours, and therefore God is of no real value to us. If there is no eternal control then everything is a lottery and down to chance: of course, that is the position held by evolutionists. That is very scary and makes us all very vulnerable to fear, to deep insecurity, and is perhaps why the Bible talks about people having a ‘fear of death’ all through their lives. (Is the lack

of such a knowledge, and any concept of God, why so many people in modern times have such a deep insecurity, especially in the western world, where opposition to the existence of God is so strong and prevalent in our society, and why so many young children grow up with many challenging needs in their lives?) In truth, the real issues of this life relate not only to the present time but also to what is after this life, and if God, the God of the Bible, does not exist and does not have eternal life He is really of no use to us now or at any time in the future. The only option, therefore, is that we have to make our own way, we do our own thing, and that does not take us very far; we have so little power to control what happens day by day, let alone our future. Death is there for us all, and however hard doctors try they can't make us live for ever, and scientists cannot create a life which lives for ever.

We really need there to be a God, to have a God who is eternal and has the power of eternity in His hands. Let's look at the Bible and see if it can really show us eternity. If God is an eternal God and He has revealed Himself in the Bible, then there must surely be a revelation of eternity within its pages. A revelation which can show humans, even with their finite thinking, eternity, the certainty of more than this life, and lead us into that eternal life. John the apostle in his first letter talks of handling and seeing and hearing the eternal life which was with the Father, (with God). That to him was through the Lord Jesus Christ, so does Jesus lead us into eternity, is He the key to eternal life, and if so, how does He lead us there? Jesus Himself said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life"*, and also, *"He who believes on me shall live for ever"*. Are His words just fantasy and mere religious claptrap, or a real answer for us that is so straightforward, so clear and understandable that we don't have to look anywhere else? For the Christian who has come to Jesus is there too the direction and understanding which will open up eternity and make it much more real for him or her?

So, let's look at our Bibles and see where they lead us as far as eternity and eternal life is concerned. You may say, "Well the Bible is not true anyway so it can't help us at all". Please just give it a chance, read on; this is not the time for apologetics for the veracity of the Bible, many have done that already, but read on with an open mind; as we look at the truth of eternity revealed in the Bible you may find your scepticism disappears and you realise the Bible is indeed the 'Word of God'.

We start in Romans chapter 1: *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his **eternal** power and Godhead"*. We have already hinted at God as creator, but here is Paul the apostle 'setting out his stall' for God. As a Jew he would have been taught and therefore grown up with a belief in the eternal God and it would not have been a strange concept to him. In this part of his letter Paul is dealing with those who don't believe, those who hold the 'truth in unrighteousness'. In other words, they have got it wrong; they are not right. The Living Bible says, *"Evil men push the truth away from themselves"*. Paul turns to the creation, this wonderful world in which we live; God created it, a thing not believed or taught very much in these times and considered irrelevant today in our society, when we are told the world as we know it just evolved. Paul, however, says that **the eternal power** of God can be seen in the things which He has made; the earth, the sun, moon, stars, sea and so on, they are amazing. Paul says he has his eyes open and can see the eternal power of God in what he believes is a created world. That could be looked at in the larger things of the universe, sun, moon, stars, we have mentioned already, but also in the micro world, the little things from which everything is made up and which all works so well together, even down to every cell in the human body which is an astonishing world of its own and which functions as part of the whole body to cause us to live. For Paul, and for the Christian, and for Jesus too in the words He spoke when on the earth, God made these things, and to have made things He must have existed before the creation of the heavens and

the earth; that is entirely logical. Your parents existed before you did. They must have if they were to produce you. The potter is there before the pot he makes, the artist before the painting he produces and likewise the sculptor before the statue he makes. So, God is there before the universe which He creates; it is actually made by speaking, by the creative word. The eternal power of which Paul speaks is demonstrated in that creative word; there is the power to make, but it comes from eternity, from someone never created but who has always existed and yet within His nature has a wonderful creative ability. (If you don't think words can have power, words humans speak can cause fear, chaos sometimes, look what panic can be created by a news report. Of course humans cannot create matter, but the thought is that if there is the power then things can be created by the word) You may think the idea of the creative word coming from God, "is asking a lot, it is just too much", but it is surely better than the 'big bang theory'. It means there is control and organisation in what is made, not just chaos, and surely that organisation is demonstrated in how wonderfully well the whole universe fits and works together. We could spend hours looking at the fact we can see with our eyes and hear with our ears and breathe with our lungs; that our bodies can walk and run and leap and dance and how really amazing it all is; however, we must move on and yet note that Paul tells us it is an eternal power which has done this. Surely it is not too hard to accept when we look at what is made, and if it was made by the word of God then the creative power comes from something much greater than the creation itself, even an eternal power; from a power/ability which always has been and from which a creative power can come. Paul mentions 'Godhead' which means 'divine nature' and in so doing links the eternal power with God, and God being God.

So, we have eternity stated very clearly to us in the truth of 'God made the heavens and the earth'. Creation itself and the reality of it begins to introduce us to eternity. The Bible tells us that if we look we can see it clearly, it is only blinded eyes and minds which cannot see that in all the amazing creation around us there is a wonderful eternal power which put it all together and makes it work.

That is a fairly good start to our quest to find eternity but is there anything which we can find which takes us back before the foundation of the earth? Isaiah 46 says, "*For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done*". So, we have God telling us what will happen in the future, right up to the end, from the beginning of time; tells from those 'ancient days', earliest eternal times, the things which have not yet taken place. If true that is amazing, meaning that God can take us backwards into eternity and forwards into eternity too. "*From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.*" Therefore, it must be possible for God to tell us what is going to happen before it happens, and show that to human beings in a way which they can understand, in order to make it clear to them and so introduce them to eternal life and demonstrate the eternal life of God. Old Testament prophecy is where we need to look and see. We will focus on the death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus, He is central to all Christian faith, to see if God really has been able to set out what was to happen, and even how it was all planned and agreed before the world came into being.

We have looked earlier at the first chapter in the book of Romans, but these are the last 3 verses of the whole letter, in chapter 16, which in some ways is a summary and very much helps us with our understanding of the everlasting God. The God whose eternal power and Godhead are seen in creation we now see at work revealing 'the mystery of Christ unto all nations for the obedience of faith that all those who believe may receive **everlasting life**'. It is clear that Paul in his writings, as did all the writers in the New Testament, had a real awareness of eternity; this is in many ways the hallmark of true Christianity, providing a guarantee of eternal life for all those who believe on the Lord Jesus. Here are the three verses, they may not seem much and are quite

involved but in their summary of the whole book of Romans they do help us with our search for eternity.

*“Now to him that is of **POWER** to stablish 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 the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ **FOR EVER**. Amen”.*

We first have the word power, put in a different font. We have seen God’s eternal power in creation, now we have the power being exercised in another way; it is still eternal power as it leads to eternal glory.

We also have that which was, and is, and is to come again. We have ‘since the world began’, ‘now’ and ‘for ever,’ and involved in it all ‘the everlasting God’. This theme is constant in so many ways through the Bible and supports our original precept that God is eternal and can show Himself to be eternal.

You can see the three highlighted sections in the different font, and all are different ways of translating the same word in the Greek language; the word is **aion**. **Aion** is the noun and **aionios** is the adjective which means eternal. We have the same word in English, ‘aeon’, though usually more familiar with the spelling ‘eon’. It means ‘perpetual’, ‘age-long’, and therefore practically eternal, unending; partaking of the character of that which lasts for an age. Some translate it to mean without beginning or end, in other words eternal and everlasting, always having been and always will be. In Ephesians chapter 2 we have in the KJV *“According to the **course** of this world”* where ‘course’ is really **aion** and means age, so the age of this world, showing us that this world has an age it has a beginning and has an ending. Later in the chapter we have, *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the **ages** to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ”*. The implication being that we have this age, it is the one where the prince of the power of the air is the spirit which works in the children of disobedience, but there are ages to come in which the exceeding riches of God’s grace will be shown and known to all who have been made alive and raised up and seated in heavenly places in Christ. This is the eternal life which can be provided by an eternal God, and takes us through all the ages to come, in other words it gives us everlasting life.

As we have said, in the verses quoted in Romans 16 we again find that ‘which was’ ‘which is’ and ‘which is to come’, relating to the eternal nature of God. We have the ‘revelation made secret from since before the world began’: Thomas Newberry in his ‘Newberry Bible’ margin says, ‘in eternal times’. In other words, in the time or in the **ages** before time began and this world ever came into being. So, the revelation was there before time began, back in eternity, but we are told is manifest ‘**now**’ in this current time/age through the scriptures of the prophets. It is the same revelation; it has not changed. It never could change, as this is the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, the ‘Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world’. The revelation is always the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s answer to provide salvation for all humans. God saw sin before it ever came into the hearts of men and provided the answer for that sin by His Son Jesus Christ by whom God made the world. The now is now, in this present time; that time was then but continues now until the return of the Lord Jesus and the end of this world. Then we come to *“God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ **for ever**”*, in the ages to come after this world has come to an end. The ‘for ever glory’ is

through Jesus Christ and the glory is for ever from 'age to age', from 'aiōnōn to aiōnōn'. The glory has to be by Jesus Christ. So, we have the revelation of the mystery in the eternal past, the present and the eternal future, it is all by Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, He that was, and is, and is to come, the eternal God.

Paul understood this, as we read in Philippians chapter 2, "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of **Jesus** every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the **glory of God the Father***". This then is the full revelation of the mystery, which gives all the glory to God through all the ages to come and shows God's exceeding kindness to us through all those ages; indeed we are to share in that *glory*, *"*That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ*". Here is the church glorifying God as the body of Christ. We should therefore find in the 'scriptures of the prophets' the declaration of the mystery of Christ before the foundation of the world, the work in our time and age, and that in the ages to come.

We see too that the prophets provide a promise of that which God would do. The God of the Bible is a God of promise. We don't have time to look through His promise to Abraham and the provision of Isaac, and the many promises fulfilled to the people of Israel, but we can see "*All the promises of God are in Him (The Lord Jesus) yes and amen to the glory of God by us*". In other words, all God's promises come to fruition in Jesus Christ, and as we respond 'let it be so' we are to be to the glory of God, in Christ Jesus, throughout all ages. This supports the verse we have just quoted from Ephesians above* So we also can put God to the test, not only whether eternity is found in the prophets but also whether all the promises which God makes in the prophecies He keeps and fulfils.

In Titus 1.2 we read, "*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, **promised before the world began**,*" and in 2 Timothy 1.9 and 10 .., "*Was given to us in Christ Jesus **before the world began** But is **now** made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ*". Before the world began is **Pro Chronon Aionon** in the Greek, before the age began, (in other words in eternity), These promises from God were made, we are told, before the world began but had been kept secret until the times when the prophets began to declare them. They began to make manifest the revelation of the mystery of Jesus Christ so that it is no longer a secret but there for all to see and understand. This provides huge reassurance in that God had a plan even before sin entered the world, and wants to make it known for us all to understand.

We read in Ephesians chapter 1, "*We were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world*", so in the scriptures of the prophets these eternal things are set out. Peter in his second letter mentions a "*More sure word of Prophecy*"; 'more sure' than even his own remembrance of events in the life of the Lord Jesus, to which he was an eye witness. This shows the very high value and trust placed on the prophetic word, and when written down to be the word of God. Any prophecy, of course, is only as good as its outworking, and back in Old Testament times it was clear, as it is now, that false prophets were to be removed from society; they were the ones whose word did not come true. There is not time here to go through the statistics of the fulfillment of prophecy, but they are quite remarkable, and show God to be God. There can be no other possibility than that an all-seeing, all-knowing being has spoken these things, and also that the revelation of Jesus Christ, the true gospel, is contained in those writings of old. We see God's love in it all, which leads to the obedience of faith among all nations, God's perfect way of salvation taking it out of the hands of men and planting it in the capable hands of His Son, Our Lord Jesus. It is clear too that as we have seen everything which was made was made by Jesus Christ, 'the Word,' so, as there was total collaboration between Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the creation, so will we see that there was such

collaboration before the foundation of the world in planning our redemption. We see that the gospel was always in God's heart, indeed it was preached to Abraham who is the father of faith.

So, let's look into the Old Testament prophecies, go back into eternity and see what we can find, and see if God really did make decisions and set things in motion long before this world was made. It is important to remember that in the days of the early church and the letters written by those early apostles, there was no New Testament and therefore the scriptures relevant to them, and indeed to us even 2000 years later, were the Old Testament Jewish writings which were declared to be the word of God. In fact, in terms of eternity those writings, although centuries old now, are all within a very short time frame.

This is what the apostle Peter understood, writing this in 1 Peter 1. 12, *"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified **beforehand** the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"*. This means that the Spirit of Christ was in those prophets, the spirit of the faithful and true witness, testifying of His sufferings and His glory. This was done, at least from a human point of view, before any of the events actually took place. In the world, with its time scales, testimony can only be given after the experience has taken place. We are familiar with courts and people giving evidence, giving testimony, being a witness, telling of what they saw or heard after the event has taken place. John in his first letter says, *"That which we have seen with our eyes, have heard with our ears and our hands have handled, we declare to you"*. They are declaring that which had already taken place, but Peter tells us the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets declared it **beforehand**. This is only possible with God, who as we have seen, knows the end from the beginning, and Christ the Son of God, equal with the Father and knowing all things, testifying of His life on earth long before He became the baby in a manger. In the prophecies, the psalms in particular, we really get very much into Jesus' feelings, challenges, battles, sufferings, triumphs, faith and love, which will give us an understanding of His cross; how He submitted to His Father's will, knowing the victory which would come as a result and the salvation which He would bring to His people, whom He loved. We read this even before it took place, seeing in that His willingness to comply with His Father's will.

Although there are many passages of the Old Testament we could look into, one of the most compelling is Psalm 118. It is copied in full, apart from the first few verses, yet it is good to interlink this psalm with other prophecies so as to add substance and confirmation to the truth which this wonderful psalm tells us. There is the section which is in 'bold' to make it clear as Jesus quotes this phrase in Matthew's gospel chapter 21, Mark's chapter 10 and Luke's 20, thus identifying Himself with being the stone which the builders rejected, just as He did when reading Isaiah 61 in the synagogue.

PSALM 118

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore, shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. They compassed me about like bees: they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song and is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is

*exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. **The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.** This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord. God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endures for ever”.*

Jesus had learned as a young man in His studies in the synagogue these scriptures, and in the wisdom and revelation of God had realised that they referred to both His earthly and heavenly ministry. *“He now appears in heaven for us.”* Jesus, while on the earth, directs us to look into the prophecies and know that the stone the builders rejected is actually Him, and these prophecies speak of the coming Messiah. We can look in detail at what they say, the stone rejected **has** become the head of the corner; that is the stone on which the whole building is formed. This statement says that it has already happened, but it only happened, in one way, when Jesus returned to heaven and became Lord. His rejection was by the people of Israel in the first century AD, *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not,”* and yet the prophecy by King David spoken in psalm 118 was written about 1000 years earlier, looking and seeing not only the rejection but the resurrection and instalment of Our Lord Jesus on the throne of heaven. Psalm 2 says *“Yet **have** I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said unto me, you are my Son; this day have I begotten you”*. Psalm 2 tells us of God’s response to the rebellious action of the ‘nations’, the whole world, to throw off God’s authority; He makes Jesus Lord and gives Him total authority. Again, psalm 2 has it in the past tense *“Yet **I have**”*, saying it has taken place, and yet pointing to the resurrection which was yet to take place. We can see, therefore, that psalms 2 and 118 take us to a place in eternity, before the sufferings of Our Lord Jesus took place and yet looking at them as if they had already happened, ‘from the ancient of days seeing the things which have not yet come to pass’. The spirit of Christ, there in heaven before the foundation of the world and yet to come as a human being, gives testimony in the prophets of that which He sees and knows. The prophets therefore speaking the truth can rightly tell us what God’s plan is and its outworking and begin to reveal the mystery of Christ.

The whole statement. *“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. **This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes”**, adding the wonderful extra little phrase, *“This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes”*. Who then is the ‘we’ who have ‘our’ eyes? It is the spirit of Christ testifying, so one of the ‘ours’ must be the Lord Jesus. If we look through the psalm we find the ‘Lord’. *“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly”*, for example. This clearly refers to the Father as Jesus’ ‘Lord’ when on the earth. The Lord has ‘thrust me sore’ clearly conforms to *“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him”* and *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted”* from Isaiah 53. The Lord there is God, His Father, so one would suggest that the ‘our eyes’ is the Father and the Son looking together from eternity and seeing the sufferings of Christ and the glory which would follow, and is therefore it is ‘marvellous in their eyes’. Again., in psalm 118 we have the ‘gates of righteousness’, into which of course only the righteous may enter. This again confirms psalm 24, *“Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord”* and *“Lift up your heads O you gates; and be lifted up you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory”*. Again, it is*

the Lord Jesus, entering into heaven with clean hands and a pure heart etc. *"He who was made sin for us, who had no sin"*. This was all foreseen by the prophet David declaring the testimony of Jesus Christ of His entering into glory. Here are the Father and Son, by The Holy Ghost, working together in perfect harmony to make Jesus 'the head of the corner' They saw it all, it was marvellous, and they rejoiced. All before the world began; it had been secret but has been revealed by the prophets. They take us into eternity, and in psalm 24 into eternity in the future as Jesus enters into the everlasting doors. We have that which was, and is, and is to come, all shown to us.

Psalm 16 helps us too with the testimony of the Lord Jesus, *"I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore"*.

We see the hope, the faith, the trust which was in Jesus' heart when believing that His Father would raise Him from the dead, and therefore He could submit Himself to such a death. Even on the earth we have the words, *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again"*. But David prophesied 1000 years before Jesus was born. So, *"I have set the Lord before me"* is the statement of that done before the foundation of the world, and therefore the outcome of the resurrection is sure and certain.

All these lead us to the comment in psalm 118, *"Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar"*. It could be suggested that here Our Lord Jesus, seeing the stone becoming the 'head of the corner', seeing how marvellous it was and would be, willingly agrees to become the sacrifice for sins. Back there, before time was, there is the willingness to become the *"Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world"*. We read in Revelation 13, *"in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"*. So in the book about the end we see the beginning; no wonder in psalm 40 and Hebrews 10 we see the testimony of the Lord Jesus, *"Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will"*. It is written everywhere; everything is about the Lord Jesus and His sacrifice to redeem us from our sin.

Paul writing to the Philippians says this, *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"*.

We have Jesus as He was before ever He came to the earth, equal with God, emptying Himself, which is what 'making Himself of no reputation' means. He laid aside all that He was to become a servant, he took on Him the form, shape, the spiritual shape of a servant. He was that totally in His heart. God the Father in Isaiah says, *"Behold my servant,"* and the servant is a constant theme running through that section of Isaiah's prophecy. So, Jesus the servant in heaven, was ready to come and be shaped like a human being. The Greek word means there was nothing from the outward appearance to show that Jesus was not a total human being. He becomes a baby and grows up as a man, and then is obedient to the death on the cross: *"Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar"*. It is the fulfillment of Jesus' willingness back there in eternal times. God then of course 'highly exalts' the Lord Jesus. The stone which the builders rejected becomes the 'head of

the corner' and is given a Name above every name. It is the one name under heaven by which human beings can be saved, and the name with all power and authority. It is marvellous, it was marvellous in the eyes of God the Father and God the Son in eternal times, and is marvellous to them now. In Revelation chapter 5 all the host of heaven rejoice when they see the Lamb on the throne. *"You are worthy"* they cry, and the word to the Son, *"Your throne is for ever and for ever, from the ages to the ages"* in psalm 45 is fulfilled.

We then find we have eternity ahead, from the ages to the ages, from 'aiōnōn to aiōnōn', we have seen how the eternal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit have declared their work back in eternity, before the foundation of the world and then as a result of its outworking from then have secured eternity in their own power. It guarantees salvation, eternal life, for all God's people and it is marvellous in their eyes, and so it is in our eyes who see the eternal purpose of God in His church. *"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages."* It shows for those chosen in Him before the foundation of the world the certainty and truth of that choosing, and the certainty too of eternal life. It shows for the chosen ones who are the church of Jesus Christ that through Him the church will glorify God in the ages to come and throughout all eternity.

No wonder that in the book of Revelation those who see the 'stone made the head of the corner', who see the 'Lamb on the throne', who appreciate His worthiness respond in this way and attribute the glory to Jesus Christ for ever and ever

*"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb **for ever and ever**. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that lives **for ever and ever**".*

Finally, back in Psalm 118 we read *"This is the day the Lord has made"*. It was the day when the rejected stone was made 'head of the corner'. It was a day a time, a day is usually defined as 24 hours. There is clearly a time within eternity when this event happened. The day which the Lord had made. It had been foreseen, Father and Son saw the day, so it was there in one sense, before the foundation of the world, it was a day which happened in time and yet God says to the Son *"Your throne O God is forever"*. So the day is forever, Jesus continues in the continuous present to be the head of the corner and whether in this age or that which is to come, Jesus will still be the head of the corner, the day the Lord has made will continue, the day which was seen and rejoiced in before the foundation of the world. Have we found the eternal day, the day which shows us eternity? If the Father and Son rejoice in that day, so should we, His sons by adoption, knowing that in this day lies our eternal life and eternal salvation.

God can truly show us eternity in the Bible. There is so much more we could add, showing us the now, as we have seen the past and the future in eternity, but that is perhaps for another time. If God could not show us that he would not be God, but He is. *"I am He and there is no other."* As John says in his letter, *"This is the true God and eternal life."*

Praise the Lord

To know eternal life, you must receive the Lord Jesus. To do this confess your sin, your wrong doing. The greatest wrong is that you have not, to this point believed on Him. Then ask Him to take your sin away and enter into your life as your Lord and Saviour. You will then belong to Jesus, have eternal life and no one will ever take you out of God's hands in this world and that which is to come.

