

Eternity: Answers about Heaven, Hell, and Eternal Judgment

Four Facts About Forever

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Series Introduction:

Psalms 90:12 NKJV

So teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Psalms 90:10 NKJV

The days of our lives are seventy years, or if by reason of strength they are eighty years.

Four Facts About Forever

1. We are eternal beings created in the image of an eternal God.

God is Eternal.

Psalms 90:2 NKJV

Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You *are* God.

Exodus 3:13–14 NKJV

Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What *is* His name?’ what shall I say to them?” And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

We are Eternal.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 NKJV

He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

Matthew 25:46 NKJV

And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

2. How we live our lives on Earth determines where and how we will spend eternity.

Matthew 25:31–46 NKJV

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.

Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?”

And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.” Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”

Then they also will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not

minister to You?” Then He will answer them, saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.” And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

Joel 3:1–3 ESV

For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it.

Joel 3:14–16 ESV

Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

Genesis 12:3 ESV

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

3. The most important issue in eternity is our acceptance of Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

John 3:14–19 NKJV

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. “He who believes

in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 14:6 NKJV

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Romans 10:9–10 NKJV

...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

4. It is never too late to change your eternity – until it is too late.

Luke 23:39–43 NKJV

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Small Group Guide: Four Facts About Forever

Opening Question

When you think about eternity, does it make you feel more sober, more hopeful, or both?

Eternity is a Present Reality, Not a Future Problem

We tend to live as though eternity is a topic for later; it's something to think about when we are old, or sick, or when someone we love dies. But Scripture treats eternity as the most clarifying lens available for the present. Psalm 90 asks God to teach us to number our days so that we gain a heart of wisdom. The implication is that an accurate sense of how brief life actually is — and how long forever actually is — produces a fundamentally different way of living. A heart of wisdom is the ability to see reality and respond accordingly. Our days on earth are numbered, and they matter for the “forever” of eternity.

The first and most foundational reality is that we are not temporary beings. God placed eternity in the human heart, which is why every civilization across history, without exception, has had a concept of the afterlife. We are made in the image of an eternal God, and that image does not fade when the body does. Jesus was explicit: there are only two destinations (heaven and hell), and both are permanent. This is not meant to produce fear but to remove the illusion that our choices here carry no lasting weight. They carry eternal weight. The dot versus the line, as Pastor Jimmy framed it in the message — we are living in the dot, but we are headed into the line.

How we live in the dot matters enormously, as the parable of the sheep and goats illustrates. Take a moment to read it again (Matthew 25: 31-46). The basis of judgment in that passage is not what people believed in the abstract, but what they did with the people in front of them — specifically, how they treated the vulnerable, the outcast, and the Jewish people, with whom God remains in covenant. Jesus identifies personally with each of them: what is done to them is done to Him. This means that small acts of generosity and compassion are not small at all. A cup of water, a visit, a meal — these are the currency of eternity, and what we fail to do carries just as much consequence as what we actively do wrong.

And yet for all its weight, eternity is never beyond reach. The thief on the cross had no good works to offer, no religious history, no time to make

things right. He had one moment of turning toward Jesus, and it was enough. That is the grace of God on full display: salvation is not earned, it is received. But, banking on a deathbed conversion is gambling your eternity, wasting the life God gave you, and testing a God who owes us nothing. The window is open. The question is what we are doing with it today.

For Discussion

1. Psalm 90 says that numbering our days produces a heart of wisdom. Honestly, how much does the brevity of life shape the way you are spending your time right now? Where is the gap between how you are living and how you would live if eternity stayed in clear view?
2. The sheep and goats passage shows Jesus personally identifying with how we treat people — especially the vulnerable and the overlooked. Is there someone in your life or community right now that God may be calling you to see and serve? What has kept you from moving toward them?
3. The goats in Matthew 25 are not condemned for anything they actively did against the Jewish people — they are condemned for what they failed to do. How does the idea of sins of omission — the things we don't do — sit with you? Is there an area of your life where inaction has become its own kind of answer?
4. The thief on the cross received paradise with one honest prayer and no opportunity to live it out further. What does that tell us about the nature of salvation — and about the God who offers it? How does that grace motivate you rather than give you permission to delay?
5. If someone looked at your life from the outside — your time, your generosity, your relationships, your priorities — would they conclude that you are living with eternity in view? What is one concrete thing you could do differently this week that would reflect that eternal perspective?

Closing Prayer

Father, You are the God who was, and is, and is to come — the eternal I AM in whom time itself finds its meaning. Forgive us for living as though the dot is all there is, as though our choices here carry no lasting weight, as

though eternity is someone else's concern. Teach us to number our days. Give us hearts of wisdom that see clearly what matters and what doesn't, and give us the courage to live accordingly. Jesus, thank You that the door to eternity is not closed to anyone — that Your grace is wide enough for thieves on crosses and for every broken thing we bring to You. Holy Spirit, make the reality of eternity feel as present to us as the week ahead — so that how we treat people, how we spend our time, and how we hold our lives reflects a heart that knows where it is going. In Jesus' name, Amen.