

# Deuteronomy 33:27a

## *God is Eternal*

### Open your Bible to...

Deut. 33:27 The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms

### Pray

### Intro

✓ Intro

I have a distinct memory of sitting on my mom's lap when I was very young.

I remember looking back out over the stern of a boat and watching a water skier being pulled behind us.

In my mind's eye I can see the spray from the skis as the person moves back and forth across the wake trailing the boat and feel the warmth of the sun on my face.

My mom tells me that memory is from the time when our little family lived at the Salton Sea in southern California...

...and that I wasn't even a year old at the time!

That's my earliest memory. However, I can imagine events further back in my mind to times before I was born. For example, I've read the history of...

The Battle of Britain and while I wasn't there, I can imagine what it must have been like to fly a Spitfire with the Eagle Squadron against the Luftwaffe, outnumbered 5 to 1, but determined to stop the Nazis.

Or I can read the account of Moses and the liberation of the Jewish people from Egypt some 3,500 years ago, and while I wasn't there, I can picture what it must have been like to watch in awe as Moses parted the Red Sea for God's people to pass.

And if I really concentrate, I can even envision in my mind all the way back to the moment when God spoke the worlds into existence as recorded in Genesis chapter 1.

But if I try to imagine what it was like before Genesis 1 when there was no material universe and no measurement of time I come to a point where I can no longer comprehend the past...a past that has no beginning!

It's just too far back! It hurts my brain!

It's literally beyond the ability of my finite mind to grasp that there is no beginning moment in eternity—an existence that has always been even before time began!

Well, the Bible has a word that describes our inability to comprehend eternity! It is *olam* (o-lawm), which means...

*"Beyond the vanishing point"!*

Tozer describes our intellectual limitation this way, he wrote...

*"The mind looks backward in time till the dim past vanishes, then turns and looks into the future till thought and imagination collapses from exhaustion: and God is at both points, unaffected by either."*

In other words, eternity is something that we time-bound creatures simply cannot fully comprehend because it lays beyond the capacity of our finite minds to grasp...

...all we know by experience is an existence marked by time in seconds, minutes and days, but eternity cannot be measured.

## God is Eternal ~ a definition

✓ God is Eternal

Well, that introduction brings us to the next attribute of God in our ongoing study, and that is His eternality.

By eternality, we don't mean that eternity is something separate from God, rather we mean that God is eternal.

His nature is to be everlasting.

Eternity doesn't exist outside of God, rather it is one of God's divine attributes.

When the Bible speaks God's eternity most often it simply describes Him as the One...

*"Who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." ~ Revelation 1:8*

As such the Bible tells us that God is above & beyond time, He is timeless, He is everlasting, He endures forever, He has no beginning and no end...

...God is eternal!

Additionally, when we say that God is eternal, it's important to understand that we mean that He existed before time began...

...and will continue to exist when He does away with time at the end of this age.

✓ Time

Admittedly it's hard for us to grasp an existence without time.

However, the Bible informs us that time has not always existed. Rather, we're told that time had a beginning.

Where time is defined as...

*"The ongoing sequence of events taking place."*

But in God's existence there are no sequence of events! God has no past, no future, nor is there a now and then in His perspective.

He simply exists in an enduring eternal present, or we might say, all of eternity is today in God's experience.

He does not know a yesterday or a tomorrow—rather God is actively present in all of eternity all at once!

Furthermore, we need to understand that because God is the Creator of all things, He is not subject to, nor limited by, anything that He has created...

...including time!

That's because if God was subject to time, then time would be greater than God...

...but nothing that God created is greater than He is!

Time is subject to the Eternal God and as such time must serve God's purpose and plans.

✓ Time

All of what we just covered can be difficult for human beings to grasp because we live in and are bound by time.

In our experience once a moment has passed, we can never relive it. Nor can we skip ahead from the present to a future time.

Everyone we know and everything in our experience has a beginning and an end.

And no matter how hard we might try to stop the relentless movement of time the reality is that we are slaves to it.

Furthermore, we are powerless to stop the forward march of time so it's difficult to get our minds around the idea that God isn't affected by it.

All that to say that it's hard for us to comprehend that there was ever an existence where there was no time.

But the Bible, scientific observation and logic tells us that time hasn't always existed! Rather, we're told that time had a beginning! Listen to how the apostle Paul communicates that truth...

*“...we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”*

*1Corinthians 2:7 NIV*

He reveals the same reality in his letter to his young protégé Titus where he wrote that our...

*“...hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began...”*

*Titus 1:2*

Which leads curious minds to ask...

*“Well then, when did time begin?”*

To which the Bible informs us...

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” ~ Genesis 1:1*

“In the beginning” of what?

Certainly not God, for He must have existed before He created anything.

So it was at the moment of Creation that time began. Listen carefully to how God describes Creation as a record of sequential events...

*“And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.” ~ Genesis 1:5*

Day One...framed by a sequence of events, an evening and a morning.

Followed by God’s creation of everything else in the Universe over a period six days...

...things happening, being created, moment by moment, day by day...a series of sequential events—which is the very definition of time.

But prior to the Creation event recorded in Genesis 1 there were no mornings, no evenings, nothing at all to mark the passing of time...

There was just eternity where the Eternal God has always been.

So, when we say that God is eternal, we mean that He is everlasting, timeless, the only One who has no beginning and no end...

...an existence beyond the vanishing point of our ability to comprehend!

## The Biblical Foundation that God's eternity

✓ God is Eternal

We want to look now for a biblical foundation of God's eternity. What we discover is that the scripture is rich with descriptions of God's eternal nature.

For example, we can add to our opening scripture the thoughts of the Psalmist as he reflects on the wonder of God's everlasting nature...

*"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever  
You had formed the earth and the world (before time  
began), even from everlasting to everlasting,*

*You are God."*

*Psalm 90:2*

The word "everlasting" is that Hebrew word we talked about earlier—"olam", so a literal rendering of Psalm 90:2 would be...

*"...from vanishing point to vanishing point,  
You are God."*

In other words, far beyond what you and I can imagine—both backwards into the distant past and forward into a future we cannot see, the Psalmist declares...

*“You are God”*

That is, God reigns presently from both ends of eternity beyond the vanishing point because He is God Eternal!

Next, we consider the words of the Prophet Isaiah who declared...

*“Have you not known?  
Have you not heard?  
The everlasting (“olam”) God, the Lord,  
The Creator of the ends of the earth,  
Neither faints nor is weary.  
His understanding is unsearchable.”  
Isaiah 40:28*

Isaiah’s point is that while you and me and everyone else grows tired and continually find that we are baffled by the complexities of life...

God the Creator never runs out of energy nor wisdom because of His eternal nature which can never be depleted or run down...

...for the eternal God is the same yesterday, today and forever!

Then in Psalm 102 we hear the cry of the afflicted who wailed...



*“My days are like a shadow that lengthens,  
And I wither away like grass.  
But You, O Lord, shall endure forever...  
...Of old You laid the foundation of the earth,  
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.  
They will perish, but You will endure;  
Yes, they will all grow old like a garment;  
Like a cloak You will change them,  
And they will be changed.  
But You are the same,  
And Your years will have no end.”  
Psalm 102:11-12a & 25-27*

Did you catch that? The Psalmist says that everyone and everything will change, grow old, and perish...

Except for God Who alone endures, for He has no beginning and no end—He is eternal!

Turning to the New Testament Paul speaks of God’s eternity when he wrote...

*“...and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all  
nations, according to the commandment of  
the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—  
Romans 16:26*

Finally, in case you aren't convinced of God's eternity the Bible unapologetically describes all of God's attributes as everlasting! Here's just a few for your consideration...

His righteousness is everlasting ~ Ps. 119:142

His Word is everlasting ~ Ps. 119:144

His Wisdom is everlasting ~ Pro. 8:22-23

His Strength is everlasting (Rock of Ages) ~ Isa. 26:4

His Name is everlasting ~ Isa. 63:16

His Sovereign rule is everlasting ~ Jer. 10:10

His Ways are everlasting ~ Habakkuk 3:6

It would seem from the abundant testimony of Scripture that God wants us to know that He is eternal...

...in part I would guess so that we might have greater confidence to lean fully upon His eternal promises and live our lives in view of those promises!

## The Implications of God's Eternality

✓ The implication of God's Eternality

With every attribute of God, we want to take a moment to meditate on the implications of His unique divine nature so that we might know what that attribute means, and how it plays out in our daily lives.

1) Because God is Eternal, He is never late!

Taking a cue from J.R.R. Tolkien we might say...

*"God is never late;  
He arrives exactly when He means to!"*

Or more accurately...

*“God is never late;  
He works in our lives exactly when He means to!”*

While we might be tempted to think He’s late, from God’s eternal perspective where He sees our past, present and future simultaneously He is never late.

He will never miss an appointment because He knows the perfect time to intervene in our lives and in world events to achieve the greatest good.

Thus, we can be confident that He will work in our lives at the exact right perfect moment to accomplish His plans in and through our lives.

That should be a great comfort to you and me because as time-bound people we don’t always use the time we’ve been given very wisely!

Sometimes we delay making an important decision because we don’t want to deal with an issue, so we end up missing an opportunity or an open door that God has provided.

Other times, we simply don’t want to wait for God, so we rush ahead into a decision only to end up with regret—sometimes with a lifetime of regret!

And of course we may do the right thing, but at the wrong time, so we don’t get the result that we had hoped for.

But God is not like that! He’s never early, He’s never late...

...He works in our lives at the exact right moment so as to bring about the best results in our lives.

Ex. The birth of Jesus

Have you ever wondered like Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, did when they wrote the lyrics for the rock musical, Jessu Christ Superstar...

*“Why'd you choose such a backward time... If you'd come today, you could have reached a whole nation Israel in 4 BC had no mass communication.”*

But the apostle Paul tells us that Jesus was born at exactly the right time!

*“But when the right [literally at the appropriate/appointed/fullness] of time came, God sent his Son who was born of a woman and lived [born] under the law.”*  
*Galatians 4:4 ~ Wuest*

So too in our lives God knows the perfect and appropriate time to...

Bless us with new job  
Grant us the healing we've prayed for  
Return a Prodigal child to their faith  
Provide us with a spouse  
Endow us with child  
Open a ministry opportunity

As Solomon observed...

*“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” ~ Ecc. 3:1*

The point is that because God is able to see the past, present and future simultaneously...

...He is able to intervene in our lives in time, on time, every time so that we might experience God's perfect and good will for our lives.

Ex. Returning to California in the Fall of 2013

2) Because God is Eternal, He cannot forget the past, nor be surprised by the future!

You have probably heard someone say...

*"If we forget the past we're doomed to repeat it."*

Additionally, since we do not know the future, we're prone to make poor choices today.

But, because God is eternal, He cannot forget the past, because He's there...

...nor is He ever surprised by the future, because He's already there too.

Thus, like a Master Chess player God already knows every free choice and decision that every person will ever make, and every scheme the Devil will try to advance...

...because He's already there.

Therefore, God will always make the right choice, at the right time, and will never be defeated!

So, in a world that is increasingly unstable where the forces of darkness and evil look as if they will prevail, we can soldier on in the confident knowledge that God will...

Defeat Satan and those who follow him.

Establish an everlasting Kingdom of righteousness.

Bring us safely through it all so that we can enjoy the place that He has prepared for us in eternity!

God's eternality reminds me of what we used to say during the Jesus revolution...

*"I read the back of the Book and we win!"*

3) Because God is eternal, the universe cannot be!

Philosophically when we talk about eternity there are only two options...natural and supernatural.

Either the universe has always existed, and it is therefore eternal, the view of the naturalist...

...or there is an eternal God like the One described in the Bible Who created the universe, which would mean that the universe has not always existed because it had a beginning..

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the popular view of physicists was that the universe was infinite, that is, scientists believed that the universe had no beginning...which would mean that universe is eternal.

Thus, they were sure that they could safely comfort themselves and quiet their pesky moral conscience in the confidence that science had finally done away with the myth of an eternal God to whom all people are responsible.

One of those physicists was Albert Einstein who published the mathematical field equations for his theory of relativity which he believed provided the evidence that the universe is infinite...eternal.

He did so because he wanted to show that the universe to is infinite—and if infinite then there would be no personal eternal God like the one in the Bible.

Instead Einstein believed that God is the universe (Panthesim).

But he cheated.

Einstein inserted a function into his algebraic formula and then divided by zero...which even children know you can't do.

But Eistein did so to manipulate his mathematical model to render the universe eternal.

However, in 1922 Russian mathematician Alexander Friedmann discovered and corrected Einstein's error and published his own findings that proved that the universe is not infinite...

Rather, he concluded that the universe had a beginning, and anything with a beginning isn't eternal.

Later Einstein admitted that his "fudge factor" was the greatest mistake he ever made!

Having corrected the math in Einstein's theory of relativity the great physicists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, including...

Edwin Hubble  
Sir Arthur Eddington  
Albert Einstein

...publicly admitted that the universe is not eternal, as they once believed and that philosophically that would mean there must exist an eternal Being Who created the universe!

Since that time every new discovery in physics has confirmed that the universe had a beginning.

Whatever has a beginning isn't eternal.

Therefore, something outside of the material universe had to have created it...

...that something is a Someone, the only eternal being—the God revealed in the Bible!

## The Blessings & Benefits of God's Eternality

### ✓ Blessings & Benefits

Because God is eternal, He is able to provide us who trust in Him with a multitude of blessings and benefits including, though certainly not limited to the following.

- 1) Because God is Eternal, we can be sure that He will never let us down

That's what God had in mind when Moses proclaimed this blessing upon children of Israel...

*"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"*

*Deut. 33:27*

When I read this scripture, my mind immediately drifts back to the time when our kids were tiny.

One of their favorite games was to leap off the stairs or their beds into our waiting arms.

They had no fear at all because they were absolutely sure that we would always catch them.



And of course, when they were less than two-feet tall and under 50 pounds that wasn't a big deal.

I wouldn't try it today!

That's the assurance that God is communicating here in Deuteronomy.

That God's eternity means that no matter how unstable the world around us might be that we can always be confident that underneath everything in the universe is the sure foundation of God's Everlasting Arms!

Therefore, no matter what we face in life we can face it without fear knowing that no matter how far we might fall or how badly we might stumble that God's strong eternal arms will always catch us.

- 2) Because God is Eternal, we can be confident that His love for us will never fade

I've done a lot of weddings for Christians over the years, and I can tell you that without exception every couple who ever said their vows did so with the commitment to...

*"Love the other till death do us part."*

Yet, unfortunately, I've watched the professed love of many of those couples fade over time.

Where they once had a passionate love for each other after a number of years they settled for a cold relationship where they lived as if they were just roommates.

Or they give up on the marriage altogether because they no longer felt love for one another.

The same could be said of the love between a parent and child, and so many other human relationships where the love of people can so easily fade.

All too often we carry the expectation of that unsure and fading love into the understanding of our relationship with God.

We may not even be aware of it, but deep in our soul we live with the anticipation that one day God's love will fade because He's grown tired of us, or become bored with us, or frustrated by our constant failures...

...just like so many of the human relationships we've experienced.

But because God is eternal, so too is His love for us!

That's because all of God's attributes work together in perfect harmony.

Every attribute of God is eternal.

That's exactly what God confirmed to Jeremiah when He said...

*"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love."  
Jeremiah 31:3*

Reminding us that His love for you and me is eternal—He loved us before time began and will love us throughout eternity...

...and there is nothing in all of creation that can separate us from His perfect, unfading, eternal love (ref. Romans 8:31-39)!

## Close

✓ God is Eternal

As we think about the eternal nature of God, and all that we've learned this morning...

...how then should we respond in view of the relatively short time that we have here on earth?

Moses provides us the answer in Psalm 90:12 where he requests of the Lord...

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

Moses' counsel is that since we do not know the number of days that God has allotted to each of us that it would be wise to use each day in preparation for eternity.

That's because the choices we make during our limited time on earth will determine so much of what we'll experience in the Eternal Age.

For example, the Bible tells us that we must make our choice between Heaven and Hell before we die, for...

*"...it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." ~ Hebrews 9:27*

*"Today is the day of salvation."  
2Corinthians 6:2*

For those of us who are Christians we must remember that it's only during this lifetime that we can store up treasure in Heaven. As one missionary put it...

*"Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last."  
C.T. Studd*

So, because you and I are not eternal we should number our days by making the most of this day—the only day we're sure that we have...

...let's use it in such a way that please God Who alone is eternal.

## Ex. Angels

As a side note people often wonder if angels are also eternal—and that's a great question.

The answer is “*no*” because the Bible tells us that the angelic host are created beings (Hebrews 1:7), that is, they *had a starting point, a beginning*.

And whatever has a beginning is *not* eternal.

What is interesting to consider is that angels existed *before* God created the material universe—that is, before time began! For example, when God asked Job...

*“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?...while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”*

*Job 38:4 & 7*

That would seem to imply that the *angels already existed* and were worshipping God as He spoke the material worlds into being.

So, when we speak of angels—both the holy and the fallen, theologians describe angels as *aeviternal* beings.

Not *eternal* like God because they were created by God and therefore had a *beginning*.

But they were created in eternity *before time began*.

So, angels are different than God Who created them...

...for He alone has no beginning and no end, therefore, *He alone is Eternal*.

Ap. That's why the fallen angels cannot repent

Lucifer and the angels that rebelled with him did so before time existed, so their decision is final, their future locked, and their destination in the Lake of Fire determined.

Ex. By way of illustration think about last moment a person can be saved

Hebrews 9:27 informs us that...

*"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."*

Once a person breathes their last breath on earth and moves into eternity, their decision about where they will spend eternity is set.

In like manner the decision of angels who sinned in eternity is eternally set.