

Eddie swung his driver and hit the golf ball right on the button sending it 225 yards straight down the middle of the 6th fairway. He was feeling good as he strode across the freshly cut grass to his ball. The weather was ideal. He was playing with his regular foursome who always provided a good time for him. And he was hitting the ball well. Life couldn't have been better for Eddie.

On this specific hole, there was a horse trail just on the other side of a wire fence which ran alongside the fairway for a while. Eddie noticed a young woman who was wrestling her mount down that trail. She obviously was having a great deal of trouble controlling her horse. After stopping and watching for a short while, Eddie sauntered over to the wire fence, near the trail on which she was riding. He instinctively began to offer some simple suggestions to make her control of the horse much easier and her ride much more enjoyable, but immediately he was cut short. *Listen, Shorty, the woman snapped curtly. Let's stick to what we know. I'll ride the horse and you go hit your little white ball.* With a whirl the woman on horseback yanked the horse around so that her back was to Eddie and she continued to struggle on down the trail.

Eddie just smiled and turned around to walk back to his golf ball. And the woman journeyed on never knowing that she had refused advice from a man who had ridden in over 24,000 professional horse races over a period of some 31 years, winning almost 5,000 of them, finishing in the top 3 in almost half of them, the only jockey to ever win the triple crown 2 times. Many equestrians would give almost anything they owned to hear just one word of advice from Eddie Arcaro, but this novice rider hadn't even considered his words from experience for no money at all.

What a valuable resource it is to have someone who has been there and done that many times before give some words of wisdom or advice. How foolish a person is to ignore such counsel and continue to struggle on making the same mistake over and over again in life. But that is exactly what many people do in life, don't they? How many problems could be avoided altogether or solved much more quickly if we would only trust in one who has already found a solution.

As sad as it is to ignore wise human counsel, it is infinitely more foolish to fail to heed the direction of Almighty God. For God is eternal. He has always been and will always be. There is nothing that is that he has not experienced. Yet how many people blunder on through life failing to even notice the Eternal Lord who is always ready to help them in any time of need.

These past Sunday Mornings, we have been looking at 8 pictures of God that are given by Moses in his

great song of praise and celebration recorded in Exodus 15. The children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea river bed with the walls of water suspended on either side of them. They had just witnessed the annihilation of the Egyptian Army as those walls of water came crashing down upon them when they tried to follow them across. Finally, the Israelites could breathe a collective sigh of relief and go to sleep at night without dreaming that the Egyptians were coming after them. Their ordeal of slavery that had plagued them for several hundred years was finally over. We can understand why they were in the mood to party. And we can also understand why their celebration centered around the person of the Lord for He had just delivered them in a most miraculous way. Let's read this wonderful song that Moses led the children of Israel in singing one last time together. READ Exodus 15:1-18:

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: "I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name.

Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone.

Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy.

In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble. By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood firm like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.'

But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you-- majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

You stretched out your right hand and the earth swallowed them. In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia.

The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moab will be seized with trembling, the people of Canaan will melt away; terror and dread will fall upon them. By the power of your arm they will be as still as a stone--until your people pass by, O LORD, until the people you bought pass by. You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance-- the place, O LORD, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established.

The LORD will reign for ever and ever."

In this great song of celebration, Moses reveals **8 pictures of the Lord** that we have been looking at these past Sunday mornings.

*He begins by speaking of the Lord as the **Saving Lord**. *I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. 15:1,2*

*He then goes on to speak of the **Warrior Lord**. *The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is His name. 15:3*

*The third picture of the Lord that Moses presented was the **Majestic Lord**. *Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power . . . In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. 15:6,7*

*Moses then followed this picture with the **Preeminent Lord**, the God who is greater than all others who would claim the title of deity. *Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? 15:11.*

*He continues his song of praise by portraying the **Leading Lord**, the God who directs and guides his people. *In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. 15:13*

*The sixth picture of God was the **Terrifying Lord**, the God who is to be revered and respected. *The nations will fear and tremble . . . terror and dread will fall upon them. 15:14,16.*

*Last time we looked at the **Faithful Lord**, the God who will accomplish all that he promises. *You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance. 15:17.*

*Now this week, we conclude our series by looking at the **Eternal Lord**. For Moses ends this great song of praise with the sentence *The Lord will reign for ever and ever. 15:17*

Now, very frankly, the eternity of God is one of the most difficult attributes for us to understand. The reason for this dilemma is the simple fact that we all are time-oriented people. We are born at a specific time on a specific day - so we can all celebrate our birthdays. We get up every morning at the time set on our alarm clocks and go to work or school for so many hours. This morning, we have all gathered together at 11:00 am, the time when our worship service starts - and we all expect that it will conclude at noon sharp. Almost everything that we do, we do on a time schedule. Almost our complete life orientation revolves around a time framework. It is almost impossible for us to think of a God who is eternal - who exists outside of the realm of time - for that is really what God's eternity means.

But it is critically necessary for us to attempt this venture together. Not only is it important because it

has been revealed to us in God's word, through this song of Moses and through innumerable other passages, but it is also important for the eternity of God has tremendous practical implications in our lives.

Now as we look at this final picture drawn for us by Moses, I would invite you to ask 2 questions with me. First, what does Moses mean when he says *The Lord will reign for ever and ever*? We have already discussed the Sovereignty of God in a previous message but what does *for ever and ever* mean? What does the Bible mean when it says God is everlasting, eternal? And then the second question is this one - What is the significance of God being for ever and ever? Why is this such an important truth for us to realize?

1. To most people, the thought of God being for ever and ever, being eternal simply means that God has had no beginning and that he will have no end. Most don't go beyond this level in their thinking. And this, of course, is part of God being an eternal Lord.

*animals do not have a spirit - they were not created in the image and likeness of God. So animals have both a beginning and an ending. They are born from a time when they had no previous existence and then they die ceasing to exist.

Now it is not within our purpose this morning to discuss the question of whether there will be animals in heaven or not. We do know that there will be lions and lambs in the Millennial Kingdom for we are told by the prophets that they will lie down together. But the Millennial Kingdom is not heaven. Heaven will be our eternal home after the new heavens and earth are created. And we are not told whether there will be animals there. I like the answer of the famous preacher who was asked by the little girl whether there would be dogs in heaven or not. He immediately sensed her fondness for dogs so wanted to be gentle with her - but at the same time, he knew he had to be truthful and answer Scripturally. So he said, *Honey, if when you get to heaven you want to have a dog there, there will be one.* I think that's a good answer. I've used it on several occasions myself. In heaven, all our desires will be satisfied. So if we desire pets, there undoubtedly will be some. But if it is not God's intent for animals to be in heaven, we won't even think about them there.

*the Bible is clear that the human race is different than the animal kingdom in that people were created in the image and likeness of God himself. Part of being created in God's image means that man was created with a spirit, with an ability to have spiritual relationships, with an ability to know God and have a personal relationship with God. Because of man's spirit, every person who is born will continue to exist somewhere for all eternity after death. This body dies and ceases to function returning to the dust of the ground, but our spirit goes on living. So for every person, there was a time when he or she did not exist, there was that moment of conception and then time of birth about 9 months later, but there will not be a

time in the future when the person ceases to exist. So whereas we might picture an animal's life with a line drawn with a point of beginning and ending, a human life could be represented with a line drawn with a beginning point but an arrow at the other end showing that it continues to go on indefinitely.

*Now in the thinking of many people, the major difference between God and the people that he has created is that God has no beginning as well as no ending. It is interesting that we have more trouble thinking of a being who didn't have a beginning than we have of thinking of a being who doesn't have an ending. It boggles our minds to think of God existing for eternity past, but we can conceive of the possibility of life after death and more existence to follow. That is because every one of us had a beginning, but we have been created to exist somewhere for all eternity. We have had eternity set in our hearts according to King Solomon in Ecclesiastes. But when most think of God, they think of God having 2 arrows on his timeline - one at the beginning of the line picturing his eternity in the past and one at the end of the line picturing his never ending nature.

While this concept is true as far as it goes, and it might help us to understand God compared to us, it does not begin to fathom the depths of God's eternity. For God is still placed on a time line. And the reality of God's existence is that he by his very nature is outside the realm of time. God is infinite in all of his attributes. So when we speak of God's power, we must speak of unlimited power. And when we speak of God's presence, we must speak of his ability to be everywhere in the fullness of his being all of the time. This same infinitude applies to his eternity. God is not limited by time anymore than he is limited in any other area. God is outside the whole realm of time. And this is most difficult for us to comprehend because we are creatures limited to time; we live our whole existence here on this earth in a time warp.

*Great theologians have wrestled with this concept. A.W. Tozer wrote, *God dwells in eternity, but time dwells in God*. God does not dwell in time, but time rather dwells within God.

C.S. Lewis suggests that we think of a sheet of paper that is infinitely extended. This paper would represent eternity. On this paper, we draw a line. This line represents time. As the line begins and ends on that infinite expanse, so time begins in God and will end in Him.

Because we have many deer hunters in our church, allow me to illustrate this concept in a hunting motif. Imagine with me several acres of woods. There is a hunter brightly clad in orange hiding behind a tree. Within that wooded area, there are several deer roaming around. The hunter has limited vision - he cannot see the deer. The deer have much keener senses, but they also have limited vision and smell - they don't know that the hunter is there. But if there were a person in a helicopter hovering over the wooded area, that person would be able to see the hunter and the deer and everything else in the woods all at the

same time. That person in the helicopter would not be limited to the realm of the woods so he could see everything that was happening down there all at the same time.

Imagine with me all of human history represented as a path through that wooded area. Adam and Eve are at the beginning of that path, and then down the road a ways around a bend are Noah and his family, and then further around some more bends are Abraham and Sarah, and down further are the Apostles, and finally here we are. The people that lived in the past could never see us without divine revelation for their scope is limited. We cannot see what lies ahead down the path before us because our vision is limited. But imagine God hovering above the woods in a helicopter. He sees Adam and Eve and Abraham and Sarah and the Apostles and each of us all at the same time - because he is outside of the realm of time. God is not limited by time. God works out his sovereign will within the realm of time - In the fullness of time God became a man - but God in his being is not limited by time. Therefore, he knows the end from the beginning. That is why nothing surprises God - nothing sneaks up on him. For God, everything is present, for he is not limited by time.

2. Now we must quickly move to our second question - how is this great truth of God being an eternal God relevant to us today? What practical applications does God existing for ever and ever have in our daily lives?

This truth of God's eternity is critically important in our lives for it gives to us a foundation for hope in the future. That is the reason for Moses ending his song with these words - *The Lord will reign for ever and ever*. Do you think it was just happenstance that Moses chose to end this great song of praise with these words? No, Moses realized that the Israelites were buoyed by this experience of God's miraculous deliverance at this moment. But they were going to face some difficult situations in the future. Moses had been commissioned to lead them up to possess the land God had promised to them. There would be battles involved. There would be discouraging times. There would be the rigors of a long, arduous journey. Moses knew these people needed to be filled with hope, and he knew that if they ever grasped the significance of God being for ever and ever they would always have a foundation for an undying hope in their lives.

You see, there is another attribute of God that goes hand in hand with His eternity - that is His self-existence. God, unlike every other creature, is not dependent upon anything or anyone outside of himself for life. Every one of us, along with every other living creature, is dependent upon God for life. But God is not - He alone is the only completely independent being. Jesus said as recorded in John 5:26, *For as the Father has life in himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in himself*. That is the reason for Jesus

being able to say to Martha later in this same book, *I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though he dies. John 11:25.* God doesn't only live - He is life. Death is opposite to his very nature.

Now when a person becomes a child of God, a very interesting miracle occurs in that person's life. The person who is born again into God's family actually becomes a partaker of the very life of God himself. We know that when a person is conceived physically, that person receives life from his father and mother - so a new living being is formed. So when a person is born again spiritually, the Bible says that this person is given life from his heavenly father.

Listen to these words recorded by the Apostle Peter. *His divine power has given to us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given to us his very great and precious promises, **so that through them you may participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2 Peter 1:3,4.*

Now it is critically important that we see something of this process that occurs at the time of the new birth for it is the foundation for continuing hope throughout our lives. I can't explain it completely - but then again, I can't explain how physical life starts. These are miracles that defy human explanation. But according to the Word of God, when a person is born into God's family, that person becomes a participant or a partaker (KJV) of God's own divine nature. So God's eternal life becomes part of his or her own nature. That's the reason for the Bible telling us that we have eternal life - we have the very life of God himself within us. That's the reason for Jesus being able to say the one who believes in him will live even though he dies. Even though a person's physical body has to die because of the sinful nature of the flesh which is opposed to God's nature of life, the spirit will live eternally because it has become a partaker of God's own eternal nature.

Now we must quickly close - I haven't forgotten that we still live in the realm of time - but let's put this all together briefly.

*God reigns for ever and ever - He is an eternal Lord - He is an everlasting God. He has always lived and he will always continue to do so. He is not limited by time. He is life itself.

*When we are born again into God's family through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we become a participant, a partaker in this very divine nature - we then possess eternal life, the very everlasting life that God himself has. We could only cease to exist if God ceases to exist. We could only die spiritually if God could die. So just as surely as God will reign for ever and ever, we will also live and reign with him for we have divine life within us.

*And where there is life, there is always hope. And Moses saw that clearly. Moses was a man who

had the privilege of seeing God. Moses was a man who had a closer relationship to God than anyone else who was living on the earth in his day. So when Moses was putting the finishing touches on this great portrait of God, he with the final strokes of his brush, pictures the eternal Lord - the God who has always existed outside the realm of time, the God who is life itself, the God who has imparted His own eternal life to those who are members of his divine family.

Each week, throughout this series, we have used an actual picture taken from the bed of the Red Sea as the background for our PowerPoint slides. These pictures were taken by an evangelical archaeologist named Ron Wyatt in 1978. Wyatt who was scuba diving with his two sons, happened upon these remains. He immediately began photographing as much as he could realizing that this would be a limited opportunity. This area of the Red Sea is controlled by Egypt and Saudi Arabia that border on both sides. It would be wonderful if there could be a thorough archaeological excavation, but that is not possible at this time nor likely will be possible in the foreseeable future. It is doubtful that Egypt or Saudi Arabia would ever allow an excavation that would give credibility to Israel's claim to their Promised Land from God. And this is really too bad, for think of the archaeological treasures that likely lay buried under the silt of the river bed. These pictures have been thoroughly examined by Egyptologists and have been confirmed to be Egyptian chariot parts dating to the 18th dynasty. The mid 15th century BC is the time period that most evangelical scholars believe to be time of the exodus. I have chosen these pictures as the slide backgrounds to be a continuous reminder to us that this song that we have been studying is not just a part of Jewish folklore or legend. Moses was a man who lived for 120 years. He physically led a band of Jewish slaves to their freedom. They literally crossed the Red Sea on dry ground. The Egyptian army perished trying to follow them across and there remains evidence of their demise at the bottom of the Red Sea to this day. The song that we have been studying was a real song composed and led by Moses. And the God that they sang about 3,500 years ago is the same God who is alive and working in our world today. We know this because he is the eternal God.

Do you know this eternal Lord personally this morning? Without God, there is no foundation for hope in this world where we live. But with God, there is a foundation for always having hope in any circumstance of life.