

David Doran - Eternity

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The theme text has to do with eternity.

I always feel very different at a memorial pre memorial convention than at other ones because I'm not sure as a time to be analytical, although you have to do some sort of analyses. But let's just chat. Let me first of all read the first three verses of John 17. As Brother Tim said, verse three doesn't stand too well by itself. These things.

Jesus spoke and lifted his eyes to heaven. He said, father, the hour has come. Glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee, even as Thou gave us him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou has given him, he may give eternal life, and this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

John 17 I think we're all pretty familiar with, and I'm sure we've all noticed the fact that it's a prayer almost entirely for others.

It's not Jesus praying a great deal for himself, and I really like that because in the end, I think we see from the parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew 25. In the end, what God is looking for is that community, love, other people are our focus, and that's what this prayer is. Even though it's just before his own death, other people were his focus.

You may have noticed as I was reading, that these first three verses are really about humanity, not about us.

Verse 2, Thou, Jesus, authority over all mankind. This is not about the church, that to all whom Thou has given him, he may give eternal life. So the very opening of the prayer is the restoration of the race.

By the way, Brother Tim mentioned, eternity is a long time, and I know a lot of brethren have trouble with the Word. I really never have, except backwards. In other words, eternity backwards, I don't think we can get because we haven't experienced it. But eternity forward, it's not a problem.

When you go to bed tonight, you expect you're going to wake up tomorrow morning and that's all. Eternity is a series of expectations that tomorrow morning will be there. So eternity is not a mystery for us. It's just tomorrow morning and a whole lot of sequencing of them. Eternity backwards, of course, is a problem because we've never experienced it.

Let me do a little surface analysis here on these three verses.

These things Jesus spoke and lifted up his eyes to heaven.

The. The lesson I get, I don't know how all of you pray. I don't tend to lift my eyes up to heaven. But there's a symbolism here that I think is kind of precious. Wisdom looks up.

And so Jesus, in his very act here of lifting up his eyes to heaven, shows his reliance. If we have any kind of wisdom at all, we look up to something higher.

Matter of fact, this whole concept of lifting up not just eyes, but heads is a spiritual symbolism from the earliest of times in the Old Testament. Lift up your heads, Jesus says, for your deliverance

David Doran - Eternity

draws nigh in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, that famous psalm about drinking of the brook, therefore shall lift up the head.

That is a symbol of take strength, take encouragement. In other words, when the Lord feeds us something, we can lift up our heads. The symbolism is so obvious to us when we start to think about it. When you feel dejected, when you feel depressed, when you feel anything, a loss of communication with God or even with people, what happens to your head? It droops.

So keep it in mind, because certain scriptures will pop into life as we go along when we realize that this whole concept of lifting up the heads, lifting up the eyes, this is all a statement about encouragement. Take courage, Jesus. First word in the prayer is Father.

We use it so frequently that it's a good idea now and then just to sort of step back and realize the relationship.

We are embryos at the moment, but God has in mind a personal family.

And he is an expectant father, so to speak, although some of his sons have been born on the other side of the veil. But this concept of a personal family for him is so immense that we don't want to forget about it, because this is not, you know, Jesus is going to be father of the race. God's going to be father or grandfather of the race. That's fine. But this isn't talking about that.

This is talking about the intimate family.

You remember in Eden, God says just before Eve was made, it is not good that man should be alone.

Now, I don't know whether you've made this connection, but throughout eternity past, before the Logos came on the scene, God was alone.

And we can transfer this idea. It is not good that God should be alone, and he realized that, and that was his entire purpose in the new creation.

Because while he's not alone in the universe, we've got billions of his created intelligent beings and he will be father of them all.

There is something he wants, just like what he wanted for Adam. Adam wasn't alone. He had animals all over the place.

Ah, that's the point. They were not on his level.

And until the day that Jesus was raised from the dead, there was no being in the entire universe on God's level, and that's what the Father here means, and that's what it means to us. God wants a family on his own level.

You remember in Acts, thou art my son. This day have I brought thee to the birth. Not this day have I begotten thee. That's a wretched translation. But God was saying ever since eternity, I had decided I wasn't going to be alone.

I was going to have beings like myself, my personal household, that warm, fuzzy relationship that Paul uses the word Abba to communicate to us, and on that day of Jesus resurrection, God exalted

David Doran - Eternity

in the fact that that for the first time in eternity there was somebody like him divine the beginning of the personal family. Thou art my Son. This day have I brought you to the birth. The first divine being ever to be born after Jesus says, father, he says, the hour has come.

Time is very important in God's plan, and Jesus understood everything about that last week of his experience on earth because of the types and prophecies.

And that's why he gave himself over to the Jews. When Judas gave him up, he knew it was time. Everything is related to time, including this very prayer. Father, the hour has come.

Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee. Now, I am sure that all of us do have and have had problems with the word glory. It is such a generic word with so many different meanings, and, you know, normally we think brilliance of some sort, but it's far bigger than that. It can be a position of honor.

And even that needs some analysis, because what makes something honorable in the divine plan, it's a position of helpfulness. There is nothing more honorable than. Than to be helpful to somebody else. So when Jesus says, glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, in essence, Jesus is saying, put me into a position where I can be helpful and people will understand what you are doing, and what you are doing will finally bring them to positional life for eternity.

Glory even means praise. So you could say glorify.

Just a minute, I lost my place here. Glorify thy Son that thy Son may praise thee, and there again, of course, praise comes about for the very simple reason that we're in a position where we can help others, and that's the objective notice, even as that's it's linked to the glorify, isn't it? Glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify thee even as thou gavest him authority over mankind.

You see, you put him in a position that he can be helpful. His very death is going to be helpful.

Even Ash. Thou gave us him authority over all mankind, and as I mentioned, this prayer is starting with the world that to all of mankind whom thou has given him, he may give eternal life. Well, there's the objective and there's the title of our discourse. Again, it is eternity that is on his mind.

Not eternity just for himself or for his church, but eternity for the only beings who had lost it.

Sometimes we forget that eternity already existed before Adam appeared on the face of the earth and there had been no death to that point. So eternity stopped only when Adam sinned, and Jesus says, let's get them back to that. That's the objective that he may give eternal life.

All right, Verse three.

The objective of eternal existence. Well, Jesus actually sort of states that here, and this is eternal life, and then he uses the word that in other words, he's got an objective for eternal life. You're getting eternal life so that humanity might know God, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

Now, I want to take a brief look at this word. No, because you know you can know something, and you can know something, and you can know something. This doesn't mean information about. That's not the thought. You don't need eternity to get information about God.

David Doran - Eternity

And this particular Greek word 1097 in Strongs has the implication of knowing with understanding. Now, I don't know if you've thought about where that English word comes from, but I'm standing here right now and what's under me, a foundation. I've got a floor under me.

And this is the point. Eternity. So that they may know with understanding. That is, that they can have something to stand on. Mankind has nothing to stand on at the moment.

Consequently, this word means a complete comprehension at the cellular level. In other words, inside of us, inside of every cell. So that every cell of the being works together to know with understanding what God is, and the word also frequently applies to a resulting relationship. In other words, when you know God by the meaning of this word, you'll have a relationship with him.

That's the point. The objective of eternal existence is a relationship with God. From knowing him at the cellular level, it takes an eternity. Well, that they may know the. The only true God.

That word true. You know, we like the word truth. Word truth is very nice. But there again, every word we use on a regular basis starts to lose the impact of its real meaning. True in scripture is used so frequently to tell us that it's Reliable.

There is nothing in this world that is reliable except truth, and when Jesus says, they may know thee, the true God, they have to learn his reliability, and that will take an eternity.

His reliability and what it does for people.

Let me look at Revelation 22:6, which might seem off the subject, but it's related because of this word true. There's all kinds of gods. There's only one true one. This is. Well, actually, in Revelation 22:6, it's Brother Russell speaking.

Unless you've done some study in Revelation, you may have missed this marvelous fact. But Brother Russell's there and he speaks.

Obviously. The first messengers of the church, Paul and John, they speak to us also because they're apostles. But do you realize no other messenger is quoted in Scripture? The first two are because they're apostles. Brother Russell is in Scripture, and he speaks, by the way, if he made mistakes in the studies in the Scriptures, which he did because he was human, he doesn't because it's part of the Bible.

And therefore his words in Revelation are inspired. Now, don't walk out and say David Duran says brother Russell's inspired, because that's got a caveat. He's inspired in Revelation and he is speaking. Here he is, this angel 22:6, he said to me, these words are faithful and true. When.

Well, without getting into the big context, you don't know which word he's talking about, but he's talking about the words of Revelation. Do you realize what a strange statement that is? Why on earth would Brother Russell have to say to us the words of Revelation are faithful and true? They're Scripture. Of course they're true.

But what he is saying, because this is aimed at us who live right now, these words are reliable.

You live in an unreliable world, but these words are reliable.

Okay, back to the John text.

David Doran - Eternity

The only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast been. I don't know whether you've ever done a study on the word sent. It's very important.

Keep it in mind next time it pops up. Question it. Jesus is not the only one God sends, but he's certainly the primary one, and the lesson, of course, is somebody that God sends, probably a good idea to listen to him.

And God sent Jesus virtually what he said in the earlier verse so that he can give eternal life to mankind. So by all means, they are going to learn from him, not just in the mediation, but according to him, in this verse, for eternity. It will take an eternity to know Jesus and his reliability. I'd like to read a couple manners Here, these are both fairly recent. I'm sure brethren who prepared discourses come across man as well.

They're preparing and think, oh, that kind of fits. Well, here's two of them. One from March 20th, and it's from John 8.

If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. I'm sure you see the connection of this to the topic here of eternity. It's going to take an eternity to know the true God.

But as we gain that truth, that reliability, we are set free. Of course, John 8 is to us, the disciples. Please note, and it's one of my soapboxes. If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples, so important that Scripture is the first, the last, the final, the only authority on anything, and I'm mentioning this because we're hoping to gain eternity ahead of the world.

As we study, we can fall into a trap. I have don't think of an idea and then go through Scripture to try to prove it. It's the wrong approach. Go through Scripture and discover something and then grow by it. Let Scripture do the prompting, not our own thought processes.

Let me read brother Russell's comments. Divine truth is never found except in the divinely appointed channels, and those channels are the Lord and the apostles and the prophets.

Notice he doesn't even say the seven angels.

To continue in the doctrine set forth in their inspired writings, to study and meditate upon them, to trust implicitly in them and faithfully to conform our characters to them, is what is implied in continuing in the word of the Lord. If we thus continue in the word of the Lord as earnest and sincere disciples, we shall indeed know the truth. We shall be firm in the faith and able to give a reason for the hope that is in us. To earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, to war a good warfare, to witness good confession, and firmly to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ even to the end of our course.

Okay?

The point of course, for eternity is that the Lord won't want anybody there except those who continue to listen to him. Learning is not going to stop when the little season is over.

And mankind and every other being by that time will of necessity have been brought to that inner strength that the only thing they listen to is the word of God, which will never stop, and growth will never stop and reliability will never stop if you continue in my word. Okay, one other manna. March 16th. This is from First John 3, 14, 16.

David Doran - Eternity

You know it well, we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Now, you may notice the core idea behind that verse is the same as Jesus here with eternity. This prayer of Jesus is for others, and the apostle John is saying, look, it is so important that in our inner being we know that we are there for others. That when we finally realize that, internally we know we have passed from death unto life.

Life, by the way, is the same thing as eternity.

Let me read brother Ostil's comments. One of the final and most searching tests of these brethren and the one under which probably the most of those, once awakened and armed, will fall, will be love for the brethren. Seemingly many will fail at this point and be therefore accounted unworthy of an abundant entrance into the kingdom. On this score, should any be specially weak and liable to stumble, the true soldier of the cross will not despise him, no, revile him, even as the elder brother, the captain would not do so. On the contrary, he will be the more watchful and helpful toward the weaker, even though he most enjoy himself in the company of the stronger.

I hope we get the message.

I. I hope internally we are being transformed by a renewing of our minds, that everything we do is for others. That's what Jesus was doing at that particular springtime in Israel. Everything for others.

Now, just a couple points.

We already talked about the idea of eternity. We have to expand our concept of it before. Whoops. Back down again. Back down.

Thank you. We have to expand our concept before and beyond the chart of the ages. The chart of the ages is a parenthesis in time. It is a time during which some people are not living in eternity. They are dying.

Okay, now one other comment on why eternity? To know God, his very name, the name that he introduced himself to Moses. When Moses said, who are you, Lord? They're going to ask me who you are. Who are you?

And God spoke in the first person. He said, I am, and when Moses went back to the Israelites, he spoke in the third person when they said, well, who is this God? And Moses answer is, well, his name is. He is becoming.

And it is an ing verb.

Yeah. Yahweh introduced himself, moses, as I am becoming. In other words, Moses, you can't possibly get it. I can't contain everything I am in a word. Besides, it keeps changing and growing and it'll take an eternity to know who I am.

And Moses went back and reported that to Israel, and we reported to ourselves, and soon to the world he is always becoming, we will never catch up. It will be an eternity to know him and all other divine beings like Jesus, whom he has sent. So the process of eternity for man and for saints is we learn something now and then we become in mankind will grow too. But like to talk about this concept of gifts in the scope of eternity.

David Doran - Eternity

Sometimes we wonder about the ancient worthies. Bang. There they are plopped into the middle of Ezekiel 38 and 39, and they're supposed to know everything, and most of them virtually know nothing, except they have faith.

Then you think about the saints, you and me, you suddenly wake up on the other side of the veil, duh, I don't know anything. I mean, we think we know a lot, and in terms of human beings, we know a lot. But suddenly you're going to face divine beings and we will be dumb as rocks.

How does God handle that? I am sure you've heard of the gifts of the Spirit. Sometimes we narrow down our concepts about them to Pentecost. But Pentecost is a wonderful example, and the gifts of the Spirit don't stop there.

You know, God said he'd pour out his Spirit on all flesh.

When the ancient worthies return, they will have the gifts of the Spirit just like the apostles at Pentecost had it. They will know miraculously what they need to know. They will be able to speak the tongues of all these modern languages as well as the old ones. They will have everything they need to be princes in all the earth. Transfer that to yourselves as you enter eternity on the other side and you face your brethren there, who are already divine beings plus Jesus and God and angels.

And like I said, if it were up to us, with the development of our minds, we'd be dumb as rocks.

But God will give the gifts of the Spirit to us right then and there. So we will know, just like they knew at Pentecost, everything they need to know for the occasion. Then we grow from there. We outgrow the gifts. Just like Paul said, these gifts have to pass away because they're partial, they're not full.

Gifts are temporary, but they're vital in certain circumstances.

And I want to link the gifts to the Word of God, if I may.

Often misquoted or misunderstood verse. Paul is in the middle in chapter 13 of First Corinthians talking about the gifts, and he says they're partial, they're going to go away because they're imperfect. They're just a trick. They're a magic trick and you need it.

But they don't develop your character. So he finally comes to verse 12. For now, meaning under the gifts we see in a mirror dimly. But then, wow. When's is the.

When's the. Then it's when the Scriptures are complete and you can develop character from the word of God, not from gifts. But then after the apostles have fallen asleep, face to face, that means communication with understanding.

Now I know in part that's that same word he used about gifts. The gifts are partial. But then when I have the Scriptures in my hand, I shall know fully, just as I also have been fully known. In other words, God knows my character, but I don't. But the Scripture is going to let me grow.

And this is part of the point of eternity. Growth and more growth and more growth. Okay, let's go to the next part of the outline, just for perspective.

The experience of mankind is a blurb in eternity.

David Doran - Eternity

Grasp this concept. As I said earlier, we look at the chart and we forget what's on either end of it, beyond it, both directions. There was eternity. Before that, there was no death. There is eternity.

After it, there will be no death. So clearly the chart of the ages period, the parenthetical nature of Earth's permission of evil, is a time, there is a blurb, a time when eternity doesn't exist. For some intelligent beings, it is temporary instead of eternal.

I'm just saying, remember that eternity is not the exception. Eternity is the rule, and the 7,000 years are the exception.

So this lack of eternity, the 7,000 years, ends with the little season. Just a point about it.

The little season isn't so much an event. You know, sometimes we can focus on the thing that doesn't matter quite so much and really talk about it and get it all out of perspective and its appropriate weight and importance.

The little season is not about Satan causing trouble.

The little season is about those who couldn't care less if Satan causes trouble because it won't affect them.

In other words, the little season is not so much as a terrible event as it is a trial, like Eve in Eden. There were two trials in Eden. Only one of them counted. Eve was deceived and nothing happened.

Adam disobeyed and everything happened. But the Lord wants us to realize from Eden that there are two trials the church and humanity have to go through. Number one, are you going to be obedient? That's what the millennium's for is this obedience.

But the little season is specifically for deception. It doesn't tell us what the deception is. It doesn't tell us what the trial is. But it is very much what happened to Eve in Eden. It is about what do you believe?

That's the trial of the little season. Are you going to believe those who say, oh, we need now to establish a people's government, or do you believe? And I'm using the word believe in sense of faith? Everything, Everything. Everything comes down to faith anywhere on the chart of the ages before or after it.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God, and the little season is a test of faith. Those that pass it, when they see something going wrong, after the millennium has turned over, a perfect race to God, when they see something wrong going wrong, they'll turn to the Lord and say, lord, seems like something's going wrong. What do you want me to do? And the Lord will say, you just passed.

Others won't. They will jump in and say, okay, let's fix this.

There's the problem. No faith except himself. Let us fix this.

Faith is the trial that will get you into eternity if you pass it. Okay, the roadblock to eternity.

We get used to talking about Adamic death and second death. Nothing wrong about that. Perfectly fine, but foreign. Let's do a little redefining just for clarity's sake. There is inherited death, that's the

David Doran - Eternity

one we call Adamic.

And there is self inflicted death, that's the one we call second death. There is a problem with the word second death, even though it is scriptural, because we don't comprehend the meaning. I have found sometimes in discussions with brethren, that's the way that you means you got to die twice. Well, it doesn't mean you got to die twice. As a matter of fact, second death is applied to non sentient things like the beast and the false prophet.

Those are institutions, they go into second death. Well, they didn't die the first time. How could they die a second time if you don't die the first time? So there's something wrong with our concept of the term second death. Let me suggest to us, for clarity's sake, two terms instead of Adamic death and second death.

The first death sentence and the second death sentence.

Mankind was sentenced to the Adamic death. That death is temporary, it has an exit thanks to God and Jesus. So that's the first death. That's Adamic death. It's temporary, but it was a death sentence.

I'm stressing the word sentence, not the word death because it gets in the way at the moment.

But having come out of that first sentence, which we have, by the way, it is possible to have a new sentence, a Second death sentence, a permanent sentence slapped on us. That's what second death is. Second death isn't dying a second time. Second death is the sentence to death from which there is no release. The permanent death.

The first death sentence, the Adamic sentence is temporary.

Now on your handout under self inflicted and bringing us to the memorial. This was Jesus problem, Judas problem. It was not Peter's problem. Peter did not plan to deny the Lord. Judas planned to deny the Lord.

And I want to bring it back to that little season concept. People who fail in the little season are going to fail because they plan. They're going to rely on their reasoning. People who succeed in the little season are going to succeed because they have faith in God and nothing will worry them.

Something they see going wrong, they'll say, well, it can't be going wrong. God's in charge. Lord, what do you want me to do?

They won't be like Judas who says, oh, I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to make some money and the Lord can get himself out of the problem anyway, and Judas planned, that is in the end the second death condemnation. Don't plan, let God do the planning. James telling us virtually the same thing.

Chapter 4, 13:15 Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we shall go to such and such a city and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. That's planning, isn't it?

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that.

David Doran - Eternity

James is summarizing the whole little season test there, but he's not applying it to the little season. He's applying it to us. Now, brethren, open your Bibles and listen to the Lord. Don't listen to your own reasonings. Obviously you reason with the Lord on scripture, but you don't reason in your fallen head.

You reason on Scripture and listen to what the Lord says.

Okay? Something else about eternity is found in Luke 20.

And I will confess openly that earlier in my Christian experience, I did everything in my life to change the meaning of this verse.

And I didn't succeed. So now I believe it the way it's written. Luke 20:36. This is speaking of those past the little season, the eighth day when it's functional.

For neither can they die anymore.

They are the sons of God having being the sons of the resurrection.

The power of that verse is enormous. When you get past the little season, there is, honest to goodness, eternity for everyone.

Once you have gotten there, you have eternity by promise, perpetuity by promise, not by divine nature. Divine nature can't die simply because of its nature. But the rest of those who pass the test at the little season cannot die. I tried so hard to find some Greek or something that said will not die, or some variant thereof, or somehow to make an excuse for this verse. But I want us to understand that this blurb where there is no eternity from the fall in Eden until you get past the little season, that blurb in time is temporary.

It's an aberration. It's not the real thing. The rest of God's eternity in both directions is eternity, and you get there in the eighth day, you cannot die because he promised it.

That takes us to John 11.

This is also one that's always fascinated me, and now it makes more sense.

11, 26.

Let me start with 25.

This is Jesus talking to Martha. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Notice those two words. We just saw it in the Luke 20 that people on the other side of the little season, because they are the products of the resurrection, they cannot die, and this is what Jesus is saying, I am the resurrection, which takes you to perfection, which is life.

I am the resurrection and the life. Now, in the gospel age, this applies to us. We're not talking about the world now past the little season. He who believes in me shall live even if he dies.

Wow. In other words, you will have started eternity. The brethren, you know, on the other side of the veil, they started the air to their eternity on this side of the veil.

David Doran - Eternity

He who believes in me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Now, you could look into the future and say, well, that's the case.

Jesus says, do you believe this? Well, think a lot about it. I do believe it.

New creatures don't die, they sleep. If we are faithful, we never die. We sleep in Jesus. By the authority of these two verses.

You know, die is a serious word. Means your eternity is cooked.

I know we apply it to our normal human organisms that die. But they died. When you got dunked, you came up out of the water dead, but your new creature lives on in eternity. Before 1878, of course, New creatures had to do some sleeping, but they didn't die.

Well, Look, I've got 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 texts there about eternal, and you know what? We don't have time for them. So have fun with them, and I hope the Lord blesses your memorial season richly.