

The Natural Attribute of God's Eternal Existence Either Linear or Still-Standing

By Jesse Morrell

*Two Fundamental Reasons for Rejecting the Platonic/Stoic/Manichaeism/Augustinian
"Eternal Now" view of God*

The "Eternal Now" View Explained From Original Sources:

Heathen Philosopher Plato taught that God experiences no "before" and no "after" but experiences all of time in a single, changeless, eternal moment.

Eastern Cultist Philosopher Enneads of Plotinus :

"We know Eternity as a Life changelessly motionless ... not this now and now that other, but always all; not existing now in one mode and now in another, but a consummation without part or interval. All its content is in immediate concentration as at one point; nothing in it ever knows development; all remains identical within itself, knowing nothing of change... What future, in fact could bring to that Being anything which it does not now possess ... as it can never come to be anything at present outside it, so necessarily it cannot include any past; ... futurity, similarly is banned; nothing could be yet to come to it. ... one which never turns to any kind outside itself that has never received any accession that is now receiving none and never will receive any " (Third Ennead VII,4-5, p.120-121)

Augustine in "The City Of God" -

"... It is not as if the knowledge of God were of various kinds, knowing in different ways things which as yet are not, things which are and things which have been. For not in our fashion does He look forward to what is future, nor what is present, nor back upon what is past; but in a manner quite different and far and profoundly remote from our way of thinking. For He does not pass from this to that by transition of thought, but beholds all things with absolute unchangeableness; so that of those things which emerge in time, the future indeed are not yet, and the present are now and the past no longer are; but all of these are by Him comprehended in his stable and eternal Presence. ... nor does His present knowledge differ from that which it ever was or shall be, for those variations of time, past, present and future through they alter our knowledge, do not affect His... Neither is there any growth from thought to thought in the conceptions of Him in whose spiritual vision all things which He knows are at once embraced." (City of God XI Ch. 21 p.333)

Augustine in his "Confessions" -

"...in the Eternal nothing passeth, but the whole is present; whereas no time is all at once present: and that all time past, is driven on by time to come, and all to come followeth

upon the past; and all past and to come, is created, and flows out of that which is ever present... see how eternity [is] ever still-standing, neither past nor to come." (Confessions Book XI p.262)

Augustine in a sermon -

"Eternity is stability, but in time variety; in Eternity all things stand still, in time one thing comes, another succeeds." (Nicen and Post-Nicean Fathers, Volume 6, Sermon LXVII, p.)

In other words, "eternity" according to this philosophical view is not time "forever and ever" but eternity is rather the absence of time, a stagnant stand-still without any succession, duration, chronology, or sequence; from which God looks upon and dwells in all of time - past, present, and future simultaneously. God is not "everlasting" in the sense of never ceasing duration, but God is at a "ever stand-still" in the sense of absent of the succession of duration, dwelling in the past, present, and future all at once.

1. "Eternal Now" Renders Creation Impossible

The creation of something presupposes that it was not in existence before hand. You cannot create that which already exists; you can only create out of nothing that which was nothing, therefore the creation of something presupposes the non-existence of something.

For God to have created duration, sequence, chronology, or succession, which is to say if God created time, you must presupposes that time did not exist. But such a creation, going from non-existence to existence, is itself duration, sequence, chronology, and succession. Without the existence of succession, it is impossible to create succession when succession did not exist. For such a creation requires succession. God could not speak the sequence of, "let there be time" before the existence of time in any sort of chronological fashion, and then create time when it did not exist, because such would require time, sequence, and chronology to pre-exist. A pre-requisite to the activity of creating is unavoidably time, which is also called duration, sequence, chronology, and succession.

The omnipotent creating power of God would be rendered useless and unusable in a stand-still realm. If it is a stand still, passive realm, you cannot have active creating motion. Unless time already existed before creation, God could create nothing at all. The creation of all things, even that of the creation of time, would require succession in order for a thing to go from non-existence to existence. Without time being a natural and eternal attribute to God's existence (time caused by necessity of His eternal self-consciousness), God could be the Creator of nothing, for creation of a non-existing thing to an existing thing requires the sequence of time, the succession of events, the chronology of creation. Such a time requirement would be upon the creation of time itself. The creation of anything requires the existence of time or else nothing cannot go from non-existence to existence. Going from a non-existence to existence is a

chronological sequence. You cannot chronologically create chronology without the existence of chronology. The creation of time is a natural impossibility given the nature of creating. If time did not exist, time could never be created. Creating time is a self-contradiction, a natural impossibility, a logical absurdity.

Time is the necessary framework in which all successive action, all creation, can take place. Sequence is an unmovable condition for the creation of anything, including the hypothetical creation of time. The creation of a thing requires a preceding state and a proceeding state; the preceding state of non-existence succeeding to the state of existence and the state of existence proceeding from the state of non-existence.

In the creation of anything there must be an antecedent and a consequent. "Proceedings", "precedings", "antecedents" and "consequents" all require duration or sequence as a necessary condition to render their own very existence possible. Duration is a necessary condition of creation since duration is a fundamental element of the nature of creating. In which case, if time did not exist, time could not be created.

Creation by nature is a change in reality. And change in reality requires duration. The nature of creation requires change, and the nature of change requires duration, so you then cannot have the creation of anything without the precondition of existing duration.

The existence of duration is required in the creation of that which is non-existing, to take it to a state of existence; therefore duration, sequence, chronology, succession, or "time" cannot be created, for such is an obvious absurdity, being a natural impossibility.

Just as creating without creating is absurd and impossible, or as changing without changing is absurd and impossible, so is the creation of time absurd and impossible, for such would require creating without creating it would require changing without changing. The premise of creating, without duration, in order to achieve duration, is a premise which is self-refuting, it is reduction ad absurdum.

The truth of Genesis 1:1 is the ultimate presuppositional starting point of all systematic Christian thought, being universally presupposed by the intuitive reason of all. But "Eternal Now" is fundamentally destructive to all Christian thought, rendering Genesis 1:1 completely and utterly impossible, though Genesis 1:1 is an uncompromising fundamental truth to all Christianity explicitly taught in scripture and automatically assumed by the universal consciousness of all. "Eternal Now" inevitably violates both the explicit teachings of scripture as well the intuitions of the reason, being contrary to Divine Inspiration and the Universal Consciousness of all.

2. "Eternal Now" Renders All Things Eternal

If God's eternal being means that He lives in the past, present, and future simultaneously, and there has never been any change or sequence in which the presence of God has been subjected, then the past, present, and future must be as eternal as God is. The past,

present, and future, with all that it contains, could not be any younger than God and God cannot be any older than it. They all must be co-eternal if "Eternal Now" is true.

The past, present, and future must have always existed, (along with all those beings which dwell in the past, present, and future) if God has always been there, if God has never experienced sequence or change to His presence. God can only eternally dwell in an eternal dwelling place. If God never started to dwell in the past, present, and future, and never ceases to live in the past, present, and future (for such starting and endings are sequence and change), then the past, present, and future has always, still does, and will always exist (thus never truly created in God's reality).

For God to create the Heavens and the Earth, implies that God's being was not there to dwell in the uncreated. If uncreated, then naturally God could not dwell there, and if He once did not, but now does dwell there, what is this but sequence or change to the presence of God? Therefore, if God's Being experiences no sequence or duration, but is an "eternal now" or at an "eternal stand still", if God's presence dwells in the past, present, and future eternally, then the past, present, and future must be as eternal as God is. Therefore there was never a time in God's reality in which the past, present, and future did not exist and were created. For by necessity, they must have existed eternally in order for God to eternally dwell there. For God to have eternally dwelt in the past, present, and future, the past, present, and future must be eternal as well. And therefore the past, present, and future was never created in the reality of God.

Simply, if God's presence is not subjected to change, and God's presence has dwelt in all of time, then God must have eternally dwelt there, and therefore all of time must be eternal for God to have dwelt in all of it eternally, or else God's presence has been subjected to change. If God's presence never goes through change of sequence, if His natural attributes experience no succession or duration, then where God's presence has dwelt He must have eternally dwelt, or else His presence has been subjected to change, sequence, succession, and duration.

God cannot be a Creator if He does not live in time, if His being has no natural attribute of succession or duration. God could not create anything, if God eternally experiences all things. God's eternal experience of all things necessitates the eternal existence of all things. Because God's eternal experience of all things necessitates the eternal existence of all things, then all things and all people have always existed and will always exist, if God's eternal experience has always and will always experience the past, present, and future. If God does not always and will not always experience the past, present, and future, then there is change to the experience of God which is contrary to the "Eternal Now" position, contrary to the philosophy that God experiences no "before" and no "after" but is at an "eternal stand still". But if God eternally experiences past, present, and future, then all of the past, present, and future, with all of those in it, are eternal as well.

If all things are experienced by God eternally, then all things (including time) must be eternal. If God eternally experiences time, then time must eternally exist, and is therefore not created. Therefore if "Eternal Now" is true, time could not have been created, since

time has been eternally experienced by God. This again is self-contradictory to the point that the "Eternal Now" view attempts to prove, i.e. that time was created and eternity is the absence of time. If time has been eternally experienced, then time must eternally exist. Therefore time would have no beginning or end since God's experience would have no beginning or end, and according to this view, God's experience goes through no successions or changes. But this is completely self-contradictory to their "Eternal Now" position.

In essence: Eternally experienced = eternally existent = uncreated = eternally existent. If God eternally experiences all things, in one changeless moment, then all things eternally existent, and if eternally existent then uncreated, and if uncreated then eternally existent. This is inevitable if all things are eternally experienced by God in one changeless, stand-still moment.

Conclusion: the Natural Linear Attribute of God's Eternal Existence

There is abundant scriptural evidence for:

1. God being the Creator of the universe, the Creator of things that are external to His own natural and eternal attributes.
2. God alone being eternal, while everything else being temporal, that God alone is infinite while everything else is finite.

Based upon these two undisputable scriptural truths, that God is the Creator, and created things temporal and finite while He alone is eternal and infinite, the ancient pagan philosophical view of "Eternal Now" or "eternal still standing" being a natural attribute to God's existence should be utterly rejected as sheer non-sense, being absolutely and utterly recognized as an absurdity. An understanding and acceptance of the view that time itself is grounded in the succession of God's eternal consciousness, in His perpetual existence, and is therefore a natural, internal, and eternal attribute to God's existence, is a vital perception requisite to a proper theology.

God is the God that dwells in the "now". He is not at a "stand still" or an "eternal now" but rather God is eternally in a progressive "now". The past is no more except in the Divine Memory. The past does not exist and is not still occurring in some alternative dimension. And the future is not yet, it is not occurring in some alternative dimension. Only the "now" is actual reality in all of reality, only the "now" is occurring. The omnipresence of God includes only realities; it does not include unrealities or anything that is non-existing; but rather the omnipresence of God reaches to the length and breadth and height of all of reality, of all of the "now"; which "now" is what constitutes all of actual reality.

God is everlasting from everlasting, dwelling in never ceasing, never ending present time. He has always existed and will always exist in the now. God's experience of now is eternal. And the saints spending eternity in Heaven and the sinners spending eternity in

hell will not experience a "stand-still" joy or a "stand-still" torment but will experience never ceasing, never ending duration of pain or pleasure; an eternal succession of bliss or an eternal succession of misery. Such is the nature of "eternal life" and "eternal damnation" presented in the scriptures - perpetuation of consciousness.

Eternity is never ceasing experience, the never ending consciousness of an onward, perpetual, forward, linear motion without termination. Respecting the Being of God, His "years shall not fail" (Heb 1:12), His years will continue on and on forever, experiencing an "endless life". (Heb 7:16) Eternity is eternal time or time perpetuating eternally, "forever and ever" which consists in never ending "day and night" (Rev 14:11) Eternity is years without end, life without termination. And such is a natural, eternal attribute of God's very being, because of the eternal self-consciousness of the Godhead.

Since time cannot be created, being a contradiction and requiring a natural impossibility, then time must be an internal, eternal attribute to the being and existence of God Himself, since God alone is eternal, and anything eternal must be internal to God, since all things external to God were created by God. I propose that eternal self-consciousness of God is the foundation for time, from which time is derived from; which attribute of self-consciousness we were made with, being made in His image. Thereby God is naturally experiencing duration, as we are naturally experiencing duration, since God is eternally self-conscious and we were created self-conscious, made in the image of His own existence.

God's nature or natural attributes are never changing; His nature is eternal, it is immutable. The personality of God is made up of Intelligence, Sensibilities, and Free-Will; and such are the eternal elements of His personality. But God's personality has succession of experiences. God is a God who experiences succession of reality, the successions of events, who has succession of emotions, thoughts, and decisions. "Eternal Now" or "eternal stand still" is contrary to the very nature of God's personality, contrary to His active linear existence of being. His eternal attributes essentially require that He be in the progressive now. The faculties of His personality simply could not function, or would be nonfunctional, if they were at a "stand still", for what is at a "stand still" cannot be considered active, and what is not active cannot be considered functioning.

The personal God of reality is not the impersonal god of Philosophy, but is the personal God of Scripture, whose likeness and image we ourselves resemble. God is not a stagnant, passive, frozen Being outside of our realm of personal experience; but He is a dynamic, active, creative, personal God, which created our own being and our own existence in the very image of His own. And all who have a personal relationship with Him, and expect an eternal relationship with Him, consciously or subconsciously affirm the existence of God as being such, and do not at all affirm the existence of God as an "eternal stand still".

Scriptures attributing succession to the experience of God; actively creating that which previously was non-existent, experiencing the sequence of emotions, making

new plans, changing old plans, not hearing then succeeding to hearing His people, etc:

Gen 1:1-31, Gen 6:6, Gen 22:12, Exo 32:14, Num 11:1-2, Num 14:12-20, Num 16:20-35, Num 16:41-48, Jud 2:18, Jud 10:13-16, 1Sam 8:18, 1Sam 15:35, 1Sam 23:10-13, 2Sam 24:12-16, 2Sam 24:17-25, 1Kings 21:21-29, 2Kings 13:3-5, 1Chron 21:15, 2Chron 7:12-14, Isaiah 46:9-10, Isaiah 38:4-5, Jer 7:5-7, Jer 26:19, Jer 38:17-18, Jer 38:21, Eze 20:5-22, Eze 33:13-15, Hos 11:8-9, Jonah 3:10, Amo 7:3-6, Job 35:13, Ps 7:11, Ps 40:5, Ps 66:18, Matt 25:41, Acts 15:7, Acts 21:10-12, 2Pet 3:8