

TIME

What is time and when did time start? Many think that time started when the God created the world. It is true that the way that man keeps track of time is based on the physical universe. Minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years are all related to the earth's rotation around the sun. This does not mean that time did not exist before the creation of the world.

For a proper understanding of time, a person must understand that God is both an uncreated eternal being and a creator. He has many natural uncreated attributes or characteristics. These attributes exist out of necessity because they are part of God's uncreated eternal being. God has always existed; He has no beginning. God did not create Himself nor did He create any of His natural attributes. For example, God did not create His power. His power, like Himself, has no beginning. His power has its foundation in God's uncreated essence.

God has many uncreated natural attributes some these are:

1. He is an uncreated eternal being.
2. He has all possible knowledge. There is no knowledge that God lacks. There is nothing knowable that He does not know.
3. He can be in all possible places at once.
4. He has all possible power. There is no greater power than God. God can do all things that are possible.
5. He has all possible wisdom.
6. He has a will and the freedom to make choices.

God is also a creator. The things He creates exist out of His free choice. Some people get upset when they hear that God has limitations. They fail to understand that God did not create any of his natural attributes. These attributes are part of God's eternal make-up. He can not change the facts of these natural attributes any more than he change the fact that He exists. For example, God cannot change the fact that He has all power. He can choose how He uses His power but He cannot choose to have less power. God also cannot change the fact He has all knowledge. He can not choose to have less knowledge.

God is both uncreated and a creator. To help clarify this idea, study the following charts.

CHART ONE

God's natural attributes	God's creations
This is God's uncreated and eternal being. God has no free choice over having these attributes. They exist out of necessity because these must exist since God Himself exists.	This is what God freely chooses to do with His natural abilities. These are the result of His own free choice and not just the result of uncreated fact.

CHART TWO

God's eternal uncreated being. His natural attributes. ----- God's free will

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This is what God chooses to do with His Natural attributes.

God's natural attributes exist out of necessity. God's creations exist out of free choice. God's real value and worth are not judged just by the facts of His natural attributes. The fact that God is an uncreated eternal being and has all power does not give Him any praise worthiness or value. What if God chose to use His power for selfish reasons or in some inappropriate way? It is what God chooses to do with what He has that gives Him true value and praise.

Time is also a natural attribute of God. God did not create time. Time is apart of God's eternal uncreated essence and make-up. Just like the other natural attributes, God cannot control the fact of it. He can not be outside of it nor separate Himself from it. He is time and nothing that He ever does will change this fact. Time, like God, has no beginning or end.

God is a eternal being that has an active intelligence. Isaiah 55:9"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your

thoughts." He is always thinking. It is impossible for Him not to have any active thoughts at all. Before He created the world the passage of time was marked by different thoughts and ideas. Time is the succession of duration. This means that time marks the passage of ideas, thoughts and events. God may think a thought for some interval and then think a different thought.

Time must be linear. Once God thinks a certain thought He cannot somehow go back in succession. He can create something and then destroy it, but it did exist for some interval or duration. He can not travel back in time before he created it. No matter what God did He could never undo any of His actions or thoughts as though they never existed. God cannot think a thought and then unthink it. God can think a different thought and change His mind, but He can never go back in time or the series of events. God is very personal and active. He has made many choices and will continue to make many more.

God has a free will. His thoughts are really his own creation. God is part of an endless and continuous sequence of thoughts, ideas and actions. Once God thinks a thought it becomes forever embedded in the essence of time.

Thought-1

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Thought-2

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Thought-3

If God is at thought-3 then no matter what He does, He will never undo thoughts 1 and 2. Thoughts 1 and 2 are now totally out of His control. He may think thought 4 that is 180 degrees opposite of thought 2, but He may never change the fact that thought 2 existed.

It is not possible for God to go into the future in the series of events.

The future does not exist yet. Every thought of God is His own creation and must be a part of His endless duration. Every idea, thought or action of God must of necessity have some duration or interval of existence. In the sequence of events there is some interval before a creation, the creation itself and the interval after the creation. Each creation or thought of God must have these three basic truths. Every creation of God must take place within a series of events. It is impossible for any creation not to have these three truths.

God created man because he wanted intelligent creatures that he could share His love with. God created man in His own image, after His likeness. This refers to man's moral make-up, not his physical design. God has free choice and has created man with the freedom of choice. God has given man the ability to determine and create his own character, either good or evil. God has given each person the power and freedom to create

their own thoughts ideas, and actions. Each person creates his own moral character. This means that any person has the freedom to become evil, rebellious and wicked or holy, obedient and righteous.

There are two types of law, physical necessity and free action. For example the law of gravity is a physical law. If you hold up a brick and then let go, it must fall. You will always get the same result no matter how often you do this. Physical law is a course or rule of action that has a fixed and certain result. There is no free choice involved and no other course possible. God's natural attributes are under physical law because they exist out of necessity and not free choice.

True freedom must involve choice. The choices any person makes are not fixed or certain. Freedom of action implies different responses to the same effects. The future resulting actions or choices of any free being are not certain or fixed. These future choices have not been created and in the series of events do not exist yet. Since future choices do not exist until they are made, the knowledge of result cannot exist until the choice is made. This means that the future choices of a free being cannot be known. No one can know them including God.

Animals do not have a free will and their actions and course are certain and fixed. They are governed by physical law. God created them with instinct. They do not have the power or ability to create any new thoughts. They are not moral creatures.

Genesis 6:5-7" And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

If God knew all the future choices of man He could not have been sorry or grief for what he knew would take place. It is not possible for God to be sorry for something that He knew for a fact that would take place.

When God told Abraham to slay his son He was not certain in advance if Abraham would be willing to kill his son.

Genesis 22:12" And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

God did not know the evil that certain people would do. In fact the idea of this evil happening never even came into God's mind.

Jeremiah 19:5 "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind."

Jeremiah 32:35 "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

God did not know of Saul's future disobedience. If God knew in advance that Saul would turn against Him, why did He appoint him as king and then regret it?

1 Samuel 15:11 "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night."

Prayer can change God's mind and plans.

Exodus 32:9-14 "And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people."

2 Kings 20:1-6 "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

Jonah 3:4-10 "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. So the people of Nineveh believed

God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

If all the future choices of man were knowledge this would set aside free will. The only way God could be certain of the future choice of a free being is if He forced it. If God ever causes an individual to do something then God is truly responsible for this person's actions whether good or bad. If God really knew for a fact all the future choices of Adolf Hitler then He would be partly responsible for his actions. God could have easily prevented him from being born. Adolf Hitler had freedom and created his own evil character. Even our law would find a person guilty if he had the knowledge of an future evil act and then did nothing to prevent it. The law would hold him responsible for this knowledge and not doing anything about it. God is never responsible for any future created choice a free being makes because it is a free choice and not knowable in advance.

Each person has the creative ability to bring forth thoughts, ideas and actions that have never existed. Sin, it self, is a person's own creation. A person does not sin until they choose selfishness over God's will. God did not create sin nor did Adam's fall create sin in every born baby. The reason why sin is a crime worthy of eternal punishment in hell is because each person is fully responsible for it.

God has many future contingencies based on what you do or do not do. Prayer can really change God's mind and plans. You can go to God and change His plans concerning you or your surroundings. Your future choices are not knowable because you have yet to create them. Your present decisions, thoughts, ideas, and actions are beginning to form your future. If you change them now, you change your future.

Some people believe that the past, present and future are ever present with God while others believe that God lives outside of time. These ideas are completely absurd. It is impossible for God to leave time as much as it is impossible for God to leave himself.

Other impossibilities

1. God can not create a rock so heavy that He can not throw it.

2. God cannot create another being like Himself. He is uncreated. God cannot create an uncreated being.
3. God cannot be in a place that does not exist.
4. God cannot cease being God.
5. God cannot think any thought that does not have a certain duration or interval. His mind is always active. He cannot stop thinking.
6. God cannot travel forward or backward in time. He cannot undo any past event or thought of any being including Himself. Once a sequence of events or thoughts takes place nothing can ever alter it.

Study questions

1. Explain the difference between God's natural and his creations.
2. Did God choose His natural attributes? Why?
3. Name some things that God cannot do.
4. What is time? When will time end?
5. Can God travel backward and forward in time?
6. What does the future depend on? Why?
7. Can God somehow escape time?
8. Where does a person's sin come from? Why?
9. Can God ever be held partly responsible for any beings sin? Why?
10. What law are animals under? Why?
11. Who is responsible for forming your future?
12. What are two kinds of law?
13. Is it possible for man to have true freedom and his future choices knowable?
14. What three truths must always comprise every creation or thought of God?