

REDEEMING THE TIME “The End from the Beginning”

Introduction

Isaiah 46:9-11

- 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:
11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. KJV¹

He declares the end from the beginning. It is His intimate knowledge of history, past, present, and particularly future, that the Lord uses as proof of His unsurpassed divinity.

Isaiah 44:6-8

- 6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.
7 And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them.
8 Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

He is the first and the last. He knows what has happened since the establishment of the ancient peoples, what is coming to pass and what shall surely come to pass. There is no god besides Him! He uses His ability to tell the future to try all those that are called gods.

Isaiah 41:21-24

- 21 Produce your cause, saith the LORD; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.
22 Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.
23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.
24 Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.

“Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods,” the Lord says, throwing down the gauntlet before the idols of man. Godhood is proven through thorough and accurate prognostication. If what we are serving cannot tell us about tomorrow, we come to naught and are considered an abomination. Why serve anything or anyone else but the Living God? He knows the end from the beginning. He can lead us in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

¹ All references are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

Since the Lord uses His knowledge of time and the future as proof that He is indeed God, isn't it incumbent upon us to understand how it is that He relates to time? If His relationship to time is a central claim of His true divinity, then our understanding of that relationship should be foundational to our faith.

Isaiah 45:20-23

20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.

21 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

He declared it from an ancient time that unto Him, a just God and a Savior, every knee would bow and every tongue swear. This is a foundational statement of our faith and it comes on the heels of another challenge to false gods to tell the future! The Lord is the one who told it from ancient time, thus it is to Him we should look and be saved.

Philippians 2:9-11

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

That every knee will bow and every tongue confess is an established reality that shall come to pass. Our choice is not in the event, but in how we approach the event. That we shall bow is inevitable. Why we will bow is up to us. And that why determines our forever.

How do you think of God in time? How we think of God and His relationship to time profoundly influences our theology and the practice of our faith. It may be a sign of the times that it is easier to give negative examples of this than it is to give positive ones.

- God's sovereignty – Are we bitter towards God because He knows all things? Have you ever heard “Why didn't He stop it? He knew it was going to happen, couldn't He have intervened?”
- Fatalism – God knows what is going to happen, so my choices don't matter at all. It's going to happen anyway, so what's the use?
- God, the Divine Watchmaker – He created everything and set it in motion and simply allows it to run on its own momentum with no direct intervention. In this view, God is totally transcendent because He is no longer involved in His creation at all.
- If I am predestined in God's foreknowledge, do I have freedom of will?

These are the types of questions and conclusions about God's relationship to time that deeply impact how we practice our faith. Time is also the realm from which our greatest tests of faith come. "How long, Oh Lord?" we cry with the souls under the altar.² How long before it stops? How long before it comes? How long before I change? How long? How long? How long?

*And that is not all. The science of our generation has caused many to doubt a literal Bible. How do we hold faith in a universe created out of nothing 6,000±years ago with galaxies that are 15 billion light years away? In the face of this challenge, many have sadly exchanged their Biblical faith for "science falsely so called" and a mythological interpretation of Scripture. "The story of the creation and Adam and Eve," they say, "is just an allegory to teach us moral lessons and inform us **that** God created the universe, but not **how** He created it." Since this challenge is so prevalent in our society and educational systems, let us deal with it first.*

I. And Old Universe?

1. 15 Billion Light Years

A. General Relativity and the Big Bang

Most modern cosmologies assume as a primary condition of the big bang that the universe had no edge or center. This implies that although time may be affected differently in various areas of space due to matter clumping, overall the universe is homogenous and has roughly the same age.

If this assumption is exchanged for the biblical model of a starting condition that did have an edge and a center (the deep of Genesis 1) and we dump this into big bang theory, General Relativity begins to affect time dramatically. At the center (where Earth is located) much more mass was present and thus "slowed" time down. Conversely, at the "edge" time would move faster. In this paradigm, from earth's perspective one gets 6,000 years, but at the edge of the universe one gets 15 billion years (remember, time as a physical property is relative).³

B. Is the Speed of Light Constant?

Much, if not all, of modern physics is based on the assumption that the speed of light (the C in $E = MC^2$) is constant.⁴ There is a big problem with thinking that anything of this creation is constant.

2 Peter 3:4

And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

We know that all things do not continue as they did from the beginning. Why should we assume that light is any different?

² Rev. 6:10

³ This is a gross oversimplification of D. Russell Humphreys work. See D. Russell Humphreys, Ph.D., *Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe*, © 1994 by Master Books, Inc., Green Forest, Arkansas. He calls it a "White Hole" cosmology.

⁴ This not only means that light has always gone at the same speed, but that its speed will be determined to be the same regardless of one's frame of reference.

Barry Setterfield is a scientist who has analyzed all the data available regarding the speed of light.⁵ Over the past 300 years, the speed of light has been measured 164 times by 16 different methods.⁶ The analysis of the data indicates that the speed of light has been degrading (i.e. slowing down) noticeably even in the past 300 years. What has been the affect of 6,000 years of a universe in entropy?

Physicist João Magueijo, in his book Faster than the Speed of Light, speculates that the speed of light might have been 10^{32} times faster in the “early” universe than it is now.⁷ He credits the slow down in the speed of light and the resultant discharge of the vacuum energy with the appearance of matter in the universe.⁸ In other words, light slowing down caused the creation of matter.⁹ In any event, if light were that much faster, there would have been plenty of time for the light of distant galaxies to reach us.

2. The Chances of Evolution (a.k.a. The life of a snowball in Hades!)

Evolutionary theory is perhaps the largest mental stronghold in the arena of the sciences today. What began as a biological theory on the origins of life has bled into the paradigm of virtually every other discipline. Not only biologists, but cosmologists, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, philologists, and even economists begin with evolutionary assumptions (and not without dire consequences).

If we were to simplify the argument of creation versus evolution down to two words, they would be design and chance. A logical formula for design would be as follows:

$$\text{Matter} + \text{Energy} + \text{Information} = \text{Life}^{10}$$

A similar formula for evolution would look like this:

$$\text{Matter} + \text{Energy} + \text{Chance Chemistry} = \text{Life}^{11}$$

Since evolutionary theory is based on chance combinations of different elements over time, what are the chances that life could develop by happenstance?

What are the chances?¹²

Chances of a free-living, single-celled organism (i.e. bacterium) resulting from chance combinations of preexistent building blocks: 1 in $10^{100,000,000,000}$

⁵ In collaboration with Trevor Norman.

⁶ Chuck Misler, *Supplemental Notes: Stretching the Heavens and the Dilation of Time*, © 1999 Koinonia House Inc., p. 7.

⁷ João Migueijo, *Faster than the Speed of Light: The Story of a Scientific Speculation*, © 2003 by João Migueijo, Perseus Publishing, Cambridge, Mass., p. 160.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162

⁹ We would say that our Superluminal Creator spoke a word more powerful than light, which brought about the creation. Everything we know of the physical universe followed after “Let there be light.”

¹⁰ Chuck Misler, *Supplemental Notes: The Creator Beyond Space and Time*, © Koinonia House Inc., p. 10

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 15 for both estimates of the odds.

Of only the proteins of an amoebae developing by chance: 1 in $10^{40,000}$

“[The chance of spontaneous generation] is about the same as the probability that a tornado sweeping through a junk yard could assemble a 747 from the contents therein.”
Sir Fred Hoyle¹³

Any event with an improbability greater than 10^{50} is considered absurd from a mathematician’s point of view. In other words, it would take a miracle for it to happen. And a miracle is just what the scientists who hold to evolution are trying to avoid!

The mathematical implications against the probability of evolution doesn’t just impact the earth. It also sheds light on the possibility of life on other planets. Physicist Frank J. Tipler states:

“The consensus opinion of the evolutionary biologists is that the evolution of intelligent life is extremely improbable, so improbable that we are most likely the only intelligent species in the visible universe, quite possibly the only one in the entire universe!”¹⁴

This statement by an atheistic, evolutionist scientist is startlingly candid. In essence, he is saying that the chances for evolution are so low that if you believe in evolution, that it happened at all means that it only happened here! “There is no E.T.,” he is saying, “our existence and the numbers prove it!” I suppose we could have saved him the trouble of the math by one simple question: on how many planets and for how many species does the Bible say Christ died?¹⁵

3. Not Enough Time!

If the probability of chance combinations of preexisting building blocks developing a single-celled organism is only 1 in $10^{100,000,000,000}$, how much time would we need to make that happen? Or better yet, how many combinations? One would almost assume that you would need the $10^{100,000,000}$ chance collisions to happen to be assured of a positive result. If we had a chance combination every second of the history of the universe (presupposing that it is 15 billion years old), that should do it, right? Wrong.

- Even if we concede to a 15 billion year old universe, that would only give us 10^{18} seconds in the history of the universe. That leaves us 1 (write out 82 billion zeros) seconds short of our one combination every second. But wait a minute, what if

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 15-16

¹⁴ Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality*, © 1994 by Frank J. Tipler, Anchor Books, New York, New York, p. 351.

¹⁵ I am not being simply facetious. I have met plenty Christians who are captivated by the science speculation and science fiction of our time to the degree that they want to believe in extraterrestrial life. If by extraterrestrial life we mean free will moral agents deposited in living clay jars, such a position is not scripturally tenable. If one must have aliens from outer space, there are enough of them in the Bible to satisfy any E.T. fan. Jesus said He came from outer space (John 6:38; 8:23). Father God is in heaven. The angels (both standing and fallen) are from heaven as well. And if you are born again, you are an alien too – just one more happy planet pilgrim (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11)!

every particle in the universe bumped into every other particle in the universe every second of the universe. That should do it, right? Wrong.

- There are only 10^{66} atoms and only 10^{80} particles in the universe. If every particle had a chance combination every second of the life of the Universe, that is only 10^{98} combinations – far short of the necessary opportunity for it to happen by chance.¹⁶

Not only is there not enough time, there doesn't seem to be enough raw material for life to have happened by chance either. It reminds me of the story I heard about a group of very talented genetic engineers. Once they figured out the process of cloning large mammals, they moved on to make other animals through spontaneous generation using basic raw materials. Sure they had the answers to life, they called God and informed Him that He and His creative power were no longer needed. They the scientists had figured it all out. They could take over from here. God could move on to bigger and better things.

God wasn't so sure. He wanted proof that these scientists were able to do what they claimed, so He called them to a challenge. "What do you want to do," they asked. "Make frogs," God said. "No problem," the crack research team replied, "we'll meet you on the school ground at three o'clock."

The hour came and the parties faced off. "Are you ready, boys," God asked kindly. "We're all set," they said. God nodded and bending down picked up a handful of dirt. The scientists smiled. They had this one in the bag. Two of them stooped down to gather some earth. "Uh, uh, uh," God said, waiving His finger at them, "get your own dirt!"

The one thing evolutionary theories never deal with is: where did it come from to begin with?

II. Foreknowledge + Predestination ≠ Fatalism

*Unfortunately, for many Christians, if even only on a subconscious level, foreknowledge plus predestination does equate to a fatalistic faith. This is exhibited primarily by a deadly passivity that usually comes to flower at times of crisis. For instance, Cousin John is in a terrible car accident that leaves him paraplegic. After the pain and the trauma, he and his family come to the conclusion that it must have been God's will for his life, otherwise why would He have allowed the accident to happen? So, Cousin John develops a testimony that centers on all the wrong things he did when he had legs, why God was forced to take them from him, and how much he is doing for the kingdom of God now **because** he has no legs!*

You may laugh or sneer, but this sort of thing happens all the time. For some unknown reason, nobody asks questions like: why was Cousin John going 30 miles over the speed limit and driving without his seat belt on? If God wanted John paraplegic, why not have him born that way (he could have avoided all those evil things his legs got him into)? How

¹⁶ Adapted from Chuck Misler, *Supplemental Notes: The Creator Beyond Space and Time*, © Koinonia House Inc., p. 8.

much more glorified would God be if Cousin John's testimony was about God supernaturally healing him and his new, God-given, ability to walk again? And the list goes on.

How is it that the calamity and evil in our lives winds up being blamed on God (even if we are praising Him for it and not bitterly accusing Him of it)? At its center is an incomplete understanding of God's sovereignty and the impact of foreknowledge and predestination on our free will. Though an examination of the Lord's Sovereignty over the universe is somewhat out of the purview of this study¹⁷, the impact of foreknowledge and predestination on our free will is basically a question of the nature of time and our lives in it.

Theologically speaking, John Calvin (b. 1509 – d. 1564) and his followers introduced into the Protestant Church the most standardized and long lasting view of the affect of foreknowledge on the free will of the believer. Collectively, this theology is known as Calvinism after its founder, even though all its nuances may not have been specifically stated by him. The basics of this system is often referred to by the acronym TULIP. Let us examine it and its impact on our faith.

1. Calvin's T.U.L.I.P.¹⁸

In examining these "five points of Calvinism," I feel that we must ask ourselves some key questions: does this system of theology encourage me to be an active participant in the story of redemption or does it consign me to be a passive recipient? If this theology were a conscious cornerstone of my faith, would my faith (as exhibited by active works) be encouraged or discouraged thereby? Is this theology totally consistent with the Biblical record?

Total Depravity – Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe in the Gospel. The unregenerate sinner is totally bound to evil and has no will (free or otherwise) to choose neither can he choose good over evil. Because of this, the Spirit has to regenerate the sinner to the point that he can believe and be saved.

Unconditional Election – God's choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely on His sovereign will. It was not based on any action of the sinner whatsoever. It is God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, that is ultimately the cause of salvation.

¹⁷ God's Sovereignty and man's freedom of will are age-old and deep theological issues. I would not presume to put these questions to bed even with a full work devoted to the subject, let alone a paragraph. But for the sake of brevity, following is the paragraph:

God is sovereign in that He is the ultimate authority in the universe. In His wisdom and sovereignty, He has given freedom of will to His sentient creatures and freedom of motion to the material creation. Both freedom of will and freedom of motion were designed to follow His plan (i.e. His ultimate authority). Whenever a person or a particle in their freedom move outside of His plan (whether by will or coercion) calamity occurs. This calamity often impacts those who have not moved outside of the plan. Does this mean that God isn't Sovereign? No, this means that He has truly imparted freedom into His creation. His sovereignty is ultimately vindicated in that He is able to repair the damage deviation from the plan causes. As a matter of fact, He is so good at it that many default to blaming Him for the plan deviation in the first place!

¹⁸ The summary of each of these points are taken from H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theology & Doctrine*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, © 1992 by H. Wayne House, p. 99-100.

Limited Atonement – Christ died only for the elect whom God, in an act of His sovereign will, predetermined would be saved. In other words, He did not die for everybody. He only secured salvation for the elect.¹⁹

Irresistible Grace – The proclamation of the Gospel extends an external general call to salvation to all who hear. Since it is only the elect who believe, God extends to them an internal call via the Holy Spirit which they cannot refuse. This inward call always ends up in salvation for the elect cannot refuse it. Thus, this grace is called irresistible.

Perseverance of the Saints – All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved.²⁰

Has your faith or your fatalism been encouraged by this fine discussion of theology? The only room for freedom of will in this system is a mere pretense. Man willingly believes in God's saving grace because the Holy Spirit leaves him no other choice! If this is indeed the case, on what basis does God judge the rest of mankind? Is it any wonder that with such a theology at its foundation, it took the Protestant church three hundred years before it got serious about world missions?

We need a clear and demystified understanding of foreknowledge, predestination and a transcendent God outside time.

2. What Is Foreknowledge?

Romans 8:28-30

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

As stated in verses 29 and 30, foreknowledge precedes predestination. And predestination precedes the call. This is from God's perspective. What do we experience? We experience the call through the hearing of the Gospel (2 Thes. 2:13-14)²¹ first. It is only after we answer it do we understand that He chose us from the

¹⁹ There is a logically polar theology known as universal salvation or eschatological universalism. In this theology, since Christ died for everybody, everybody gets saved (whether they believe or not). This opinion is as passivistic as Calvinism. In light of these two extremes, the universal redemption (Christ died for everybody, but one must accept His atonement through faith) of Arminianism seems very scripturally clear headed.

²⁰ This is popularly known as "once saved, always saved." With reference to the salvation of the spirit of man, I would not disagree. For further nuances regarding the salvation of man, see "Life in the Age."

²¹ A study of Matt. 22:2-10 in view of Rev. 19:9 and 22:17 gives one an interesting twist in contradistinction to the popular view of foreknowledge and predestination. In the wedding parable, those for whom the feast was intended refused the invitation causing the Father of the groom to extend an invitation (a call, if you will) to any who could be found. In this parable one moves from a specifically foreknown and predestined and called group to a general invitation to the feast to any who would hear and respond.

beginning (foreknowledge) to be saved by the sanctifying work of the Spirit (predestination).²² We become aware after the call. God has been aware all along. This is the basic nature of foreknowledge.

A. Definition

The noun in the Greek is prognosis. The verb form is prognosko. Simply put, it means to know before hand. Now, many argue that God's knowledge beforehand of what we will do limits our free will. Let me ask you, does God's knowledge of what you are currently doing limit your free will?

Perhaps if we had retained the Greek transliteration in more popular usage we would not have gotten so mystified by the concept of foreknowledge. Doctors give patients a prognosis all the time. Their prognosis, their forecast on what track a disease or treatment is going to take, is based on their diagnosis; which is a thorough examination of the facts involved in the case. Through knowledge (diagnosis) comes foreknowledge (prognosis). In the case of human agents, this process has much room for error. In the case of an Omniscient God, since His gnosis is perfect, His prognosis is always 100% accurate.

*Where we get into problems is when we want to tie God's knowledge to a time frame. In actuality, it evidences more a misunderstanding of the nature of time than a misunderstanding of the nature of God. We say, "Since God knows what is going to happen in the future, then the future must exist. All time, past, present and future, must lay before Him as a static whole any part of which He may examine at will." We forget that God calls those things which **are not** as though they **were**.²³ Simply because He calls them and knows them does not mean that they have actual, tangible existence. It means that He knows the existence that they **will** have **when** they come to be. The future as a static time frame in which I could visit myself from the past does not exist.*

B. God's Foreknowledge

Acts 2:23

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

God was not surprised by Adam's transgression. Through determined counsel and foreknowledge, the sacrifice was prepared and presented. Did Pilate have to crucify Jesus? No. He was given plenty of options out, but chose not to take them. What would have happened if Pilate had freed Him? One could be sure that Jesus would still have been crucified and slain. God's foreordination of the sacrifice of the Son did not doom Pilate to the blunder of sentencing the Innocent One.

C. Our Foreknowledge

²² Saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thes. 2:13) is to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

²³ Rom. 4:17

2 Peter 3:13-18

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, **seeing ye know these things before**, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

The words “seeing ye know these things before” in verse 17 are a translation of the single Greek word proginosko, to foreknow. God gives us foreknowledge to aid us in our daily walk and decisions, not to hamper our freedom of will. Knowing the future educates our choices so that we can make wise decisions. For instance, if you had foreknowledge about which stocks would soar tomorrow, would you feel that your freedom of will had been constrained and forced to buy the good stocks? No, you would be a fool not to buy the good stocks (insider trading aside). But you could still choose to disregard your foreknowledge.

God has given us foreknowledge through the Scripture of what He is absolutely going to bring to pass. It isn't going to happen because it exists already. It is going to happen because He is going to bring it to pass. Much of God's foreknowledge is in this category. He lovingly lets us in on what He going to do so that we can wisely order our lives accordingly.

3. Understanding Predestination

The word “predestinate” in Romans 8:29 and 30 is a translation of the Greek word proorizo. Proorizo is a compound word made up of pro meaning “in front of or fore” and orizo meaning “to mark out or bound.” We get the word horizon from it. Thus, to predestinate means “to mark out the boundary or limit ahead or in front.” That I am predestined means that my limitation or boundary has been set in advance. It doesn't mean, “You will absolutely do thus and so.” It means, “You can go or should go thus far” or “further than this you may not go.”

A field colonel gathers his captains. “Jim,” he says, “I want you to take Hill 138 and stay put. Bill, you and your boys flank west by southwest two clicks and take the bridge by the river. Josh, once Bill's boys have the bridge take your troops across and push into the west bank. Jim's crew will cover you with artillery from the hill.” Now, once this plan was conceived (note, once it was conceived – which usually happens long before it is communicated) Jim was predestined to take Hill 138, Bill was predestined to take and hold the bridge, and Josh was predestined to occupy the west bank. Their

boundaries and limitations were set in advance. But they still had to move forward and fulfill their destiny!

What were we predestined for? Romans 8:29 tells us that we were predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. That is our destiny! It not only involves our active will and participation in this life (a la Rom. 12:2) but also a decisive exercise of the power of God in the life to come for “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2)

What else does Scripture say we have been predestined for?

Ephesians 1:3-14

- 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
- 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
- 5 **Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,** according to the good pleasure of his will,
- 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
- 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
- 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
- 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
- 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:
- 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, **being predestinated** according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
- 12 **That we should be to the praise of his glory,** who first trusted in Christ.
- 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
- 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

*Verse 5 tells us that we were predestined unto the adoption of children. Our appointed boundary or limitation, the room we were to fill if you will, is to be adopted as children of Father God by the redeeming work of Jesus Christ and all of this according to what seemed good to God. In other words, it seemed good to God (foreknowledge) to have children by adoption (predestination). This condition, the adoption of children, is entered into by an act of the will on the part of the repentant sinner. It is a **pre-destiny** because access to the Father’s house and the kingdom is laid **before** us.*

Verses 11 and 12 tell us that we were predestined to be to the praise of His glory. Note how this is going to transpire: “according to the purpose of him who worketh all things

after the counsel of his own will.” In other words, the fulfillment of our preset boundary condition takes place in accordance to the plan that God actively implements in agreement with His will. It is an active process, not a passive fatalism. God had the plan (foreknowledge) and set the boundary for the place (predestination). We choose to live in accordance with His plan and He works to bring about His predetermined counsel. Thus, to fulfill my destiny is to walk into the plan that God has set out for me. This is the essence of predestination.

III. The Beginning and the End

1. אה – ΑΩ

Rev 1:8

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Most Christians are familiar with the title “the Alpha and Omega” for Jesus Christ. But you might find it surprising how early this appellation for God appears. Following is an interlinear representation of Genesis 1:1 with the Hebrew words on the top line, their transliteration on the bottom line, and the corresponding English words in the middle line.

אֶת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
	God	created	In the beginning
'eet	Elohiym	baaraa'	B ^a ree'shiyt
		וְאֶת	הַשָּׁמַיִם
		the earth	the heaven
		haa'aarets	hashaamayim

Note the one Hebrew word that has no corresponding English word beneath it. How often have you read or quoted Genesis 1:1 not knowing that you were missing a word? The untranslated word is 'eet (or 'et). Following is its definition:

An untranslated particle in Hebrew often described in grammars (somewhat superficially) as the sign of the direct object after a transitive verb. Its origin is unknown. The prevailing view is that 'ēt was originally a noun meaning "essence, substance, self," a significance which it subsequently lost in the historical development of the language.²⁴

This word is used 5,000 times in the Old Testament, making it a fairly common term. But its first use in Scripture is profound. The word is of an extremely simple composition, being made up of only two letters: the א (aleph) and the ט (tau). These two letters happen to be the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are in

²⁴ from Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Copyright (c) 1980 by The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

Hebrew what the alpha and omega are in the Greek. Taking this into account, one could translate Genesis 1:1 in the following manner:

“In the beginning created the Elohiym, the Aleph and the Tau, the heaven and the earth.”

From the very start, the Elohiym²⁵ informed us that They were the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Aleph and the Tau, the Alpha and Omega!

2. He Has a Plan – We Can Be a Part of It

The time in which we are born and live is one of the great unchangeables of life. But regardless of what age we live in, there is a part we can play in God’s plan of redemption (remember, time is the unfolding of God’s redemptive plan). This is part of the lesson Mordecai imparted to his cousin Hadassah, better known as Esther.

Est 4:1-9

- 1 When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;
- 2 And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.
- 3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.
- 4 So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.
- 5 Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.
- 6 So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate.
- 7 And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.
- 8 Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.
- 9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

Evil Haman, motivated by pride and hatred, had received permission from the king to destroy all the Jews. Mordecai donned sackcloth in despair and sent word to Esther that she must plead the cause of her people before the king.

²⁵ Elohiym is the plural appellation for the Godhead entire: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Esther 4:10-12

10 Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai;
11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.
12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

Upon hearing Mordecai's words, Esther informs him that protocol prevents her from petitioning the king. Indeed, to go to him would put her very life at risk. His reply was not only an eye opener for Esther; it is an education for us all.

Esther 4:13-14

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.
14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

*"Don't think that this decree doesn't threaten you," Mordecai tells her. "If you hold your peace, deliverance will come for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will be destroyed." What a statement! She was in fear for her life and he tells her that her life is already in jeopardy. The only thing that would seal her fate would be **not to act!** Passivity is the great waster! Notice that Mordecai doesn't believe that God's plan of redemption for the Jews would be derailed by Esther's inactivity – only her own salvation would be forfeit. God would raise up a deliverer from some other place. But then Mordecai drops the mother load. "Who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*

God's plan is to save the Jews, Mordecai is saying to Esther, you can be a part of it and walk in the purpose of your destiny or you can avoid it and be destroyed. Either way, God will work out His plan of deliverance. Our choice in this day and age is no different. We were born, we were "come into the kingdom", for such times as these. Will we rise up to our God ordained destiny or shall we fall while He brings deliverance to a dying world through other agents? The choice is ours.

3. He Inhabits Eternity

Isaiah 57:15

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

The Lord declares that He resides in continuous and unbounded time (eternity – Hebrew 'ad, meaning the unforeseeable future; it is also a synonym for 'olam). In strict

vernacular, we would say that God lives in the future. Meditation on this truth can lead us to some startling concepts.

The ideas that follow are most easily conceptualized by using space as an analogy for time. Indeed, General Relativity has shown us that in the physical universe, time and space are two sides of the same coin much like energy and matter. So let us conceive of the future, which is an extension forward in time, as an extension in space. In this framework, the future can be likened to a space as of yet unoccupied by us but whose shape, intended inhabitants and their foreseeable actions God knows.

This concept allows for a couple of nuances of God's foreknowledge:

- 1) Allowance of unencumbered free will. Man is moving toward the "space" of the future²⁶ and his choices dynamically impact the "shape" the future will take.*
- 2) God is omniscient and knows (present tense) the heart of man²⁷ and thus the decisions he will make. Knowing the decisions is equivalent to knowing the outcome (future). That being said, knowing the decision doesn't hamper man's ability to make a free will choice.*

The future is there – God dwells in it. But we haven't arrived. The present is the filling up of the room of the future and the past is its old furnishings.

*As created spirit, free will moral agents, we have endless time ('olam) set in our hearts (Eccl. 3:11) but not the breadth of God's duration in the creation ("the work that God does from beginning to end"). He has invested in our hearts an eternal nature but not an eternal presence. We do not have the grandeur of being to inhabit the future. He does. The spirit of man (his "heart") is an eternal spirit in that it is meant to endure from its creation onward. But we are not substantial enough in ourselves to **inhabit** time in the present and the future **simultaneously** (something that can be done "in the Spirit" – Rev. 1:10).²⁸*

The experience of the children of Israel coming to the Promised Land is a good spatial illustration of this temporal ideal. In Canaan there were cities the Hebrews did not build and vineyards and olive groves they did not plant and wells they had not dug (Deut. 6:10-13). But it was all there for them to possess. These things were there for them on the east side of the Jordan while they wandered in the western wilderness. The Lord went "before" them (Deut. 9:3) and knew what was (present tense) in the land and who would (future tense) occupy it.

Take as another spatiotemporal example God's omnipresence. Omnipresence is generally construed as spatial – God is everywhere. When we speak of God being present in all of time (past, present, and future), we say He is omnitemporal. If space and time are two sides of the same coin, then there should be a rough equivalence

²⁶ Or, more literally, the "space" of the future is being poured over man moment by moment.

²⁷ 1 Sam. 16:7 and John 2:25 among others.

²⁸ It is possible that in this sense, "in the Spirit" holds the same relationship to "Spirit upon" that "Spirit upon" holds to "Spirit in."

between the Lord's omnitemporality and His omnipresence. The following table gives some examples of this equivalence.

Omnitemporal (Ps. 90:1-6; Is. 57:15)	≈	Omnipresent (Jer. 23:23,24; Ps 139:7,8)
“Who was, and is, and is to come” Ex. 3:14; Rev. 1:4	≈	“Who fills everything everywhere with Himself” Eph 1:23 AMP
“Before Abraham was, I am” John 8:56-58	≈	“that He...might fill all things (the whole universe, from the lowest to the highest).” Eph 4:10 AMP
God interacts with His people now (objective time). (Ex. 3:7; 2 Cor. 6:2)	≈	God may fellowship with His people in manifest presence (e.g. the Pillar of Cloud) which can be objectively witnessed.
God intimately fellowships with us in our perceived [psychical] time (subjective time). (Job 7:4-6; Heb 13:5)	≈	God fellowships with His people with an abiding presence (i.e. the inward anointing – 1 John 2:27) which is a subjective experience.

The language of Isaiah 57:15 puts the unbounded future (‘olam – eternity) in a realm beyond or outside this space-time continuum. The Lord says that He inhabits eternity and dwells in a high and holy place, thus correlating the two ideals. No space ship can reach the holy of holies in heaven, God’s dwelling place (Ps. 11:4; Is. 66:1). Nor can it reach the eternity over which He reigns. He truly is a transcendent God – One who deals with His creatures yet dwells in a dimension they cannot attain without Him.

The universe feels the flow of time (its speed increased or dilated by the stones in the space-time continuum, i.e. matter), but its fabric does not contain the future. This comes from the Lord for He it is that dwells in eternity and keeps the cosmos going (gives it duration and thus the passage of time) by His powerful word (Heb. 1:1-3).

Conclusion

We serve a God who has shown us the end from the beginning. He said “Let there be light” in Genesis 1:3 and in Rev. 22:5, there is light! In His love, He made man to fellowship with Him. The story of redemption is the story of His longsuffering; arranging time through the ages that He might bring man back to Himself. In due time, Christ died for the ungodly. At the appointed time, He was resurrected. In the fullness of time, He shall return to judge the quick and the dead. Seeing we know these things before, beloved, we should live in all holy conversation and godliness, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, redeeming the time for the days are evil.

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

1 Tim 1:17