

Is God Timeless?

Not all think that time is real. Time is like a journey from past to future. The meeting point between them is the present.

McTaggart argued that time becoming past and then present and future is contradictory so time is unreal.

If time is unreal then so is eternity. Eternity is like time but there is no past and future. You just have the present moment with no past and no future. It is static.

There are two possible concepts of God.

One that he is outside time and is timeless. In this view he is in a present but there is no past or future and he sees all our past present and future for it is all present to him. It is like there is one moment of time which doesn't have a past or future. In that moment of time, God creates the year 1AD at the same time he creates 2AD and so on possibly ad infinitum. In this view, God cannot see the future for there is no future. All moments happen at the one time but he is somehow able to make it seem to us as if they happen one after the other. He doesn't see the future because the future is only in our imagination and there is no future. Read page 134, GOD A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED Keith Ward, OneWorld, Oxford, 2003.

CS Lewis writes in Mere Christianity: But suppose God is outside and above the Time-line. In that case, what we call "tomorrow" is visible to him in just the same way as what we call today. All the days are "Now" for Him. He does not remember you doing things yesterday, He simply sees you doing them: because, though you have lost yesterday, He has not. He does not "foresee" you doing things tomorrow, He simply sees you doing them: because, though tomorrow is not yet there for you, it is for Him. You never supposed that your actions at this moment were any less free because God knows what you are doing.

The other view is that God is everlasting, that is he has a past that never had a beginning and his future will never end so he is in time. The first view says that God never changes while the second says he does. Whatever is subject to time is changeable. Timeless and eternal mean the same thing. We often use eternal as another word for everlasting but they are not the same.

Let us examine the timeless God. This means that right now it is true to say that Hannibal is crossing the Alps. This event is present to God. Its eternal in itself though it is a past event in time. It is like eternity popping into time. A God who is not in time or who is timeless can act in time. But that would mean that there is something eternal about everything he does. It implies he does nothing except for serious reasons. In a sense what he does is as eternal and divine as what he is. For many, his creating of useless planets makes no sense so their existence refutes his!

Timeless God is implied by such ideas as God being the uncaused cause of all things or the unmoved and unmoving mover that is the being that doesn't move but which caused the first movement for nothing moves by itself. These say that nothing causes itself but is caused by something else. And that nothing moves itself but is moved by something else so there must have been a first cause and first mover. Another way of putting this is to say that God is the being that must exist for things to exist so he is the necessary being. The idea is that this God caused time and motion implying there must have been no time but just timelessness. Now we know that these arguments are sheer nonsense for Timeless God is nonsense.

The objection to the Timeless God is that we are confusing our perspective with God's. To God it looks as if it is all happening in the one present. To us it is in the past. The objection is invalid because we are not talking about perspectives. We are talking about a state of being in which the past and present and future are all one and happening at the same time and another state of being in which the three are separated. Obviously the past cannot be the future and the present can't be either of them. The idea of timeless God is incoherent. This is not a God but an absurdity.

Another way to defend timelessness is to say that events may be separate in one way but simultaneous or happening at the one time in another. In time one event is replaced by the next while in eternity it all happens at the one not time but now.

They use examples to show this is possible. An example is a circle with a point in the centre drawn with a compass. The circle was started at one moment and completed the next. But all the points at its diameter are simultaneous being the same distance from the point. So the sameness is like eternity and the differences in time in creating the diameter are like time. A variation of this proposed by the two mad saints St Thomas Aquinas and St Augustine was how you could be standing on a hill and see so many perspectives at the one time from that one point in one moment. You see that one space is different from another and has something different in it but at the same time you are watching from the one perspective or point, its all one to you but many in itself.

Neither analogy works. Both just focus on perspectives while perspectives have nothing to do with this issue. It is possible to imagine there being no timelessness and some being seeing the past and present all at the one time. We have to leave the future out for it cannot see the future for it hasn't happened yet but it makes no difference. The point is that perspectives should be left out of the problem. If there was nobody in eternity to perceive eternity it would still be true that in timelessness all events are present.

In both cases there is nothing like two or more events happening at the one moment but just a perspective of several things happening at the one moment. For example with the circle. Each point making up the diameter is made in a separate moment from the previous one. But you see the diameter as being the same distance from the point. Also the perspective only sees the results not the moments in which the points were created for they are past. For the analogy to work you need several different moments to exist together at the one time.

And as for Augustine and Aquinas, they say there is only one perspective that sees several events happening at once. There is only one perspective but as we can only concentrate on one thing at a time it follows that you are not taking in more events than one at all. You are focusing on one thing and then another so fast that you think you are focusing on more than one. You do not perceive several events at the one time.

Let's forget about perspective – its only a conjuring trick by philosophers and theologians to trick people into believing in their timeless God who is the God of Roman Catholicism in particular. What about the idea how you can have several events happening in the one moment and yet there is only one moment and yet several events? Why then can't eternity exist and all events be happening at the one moment in it?

In eternity they can't be several events for if the past and the present and the future are all one moment in eternity then how did Hannibal cross the Alps when a week before he wasn't near the Alps? How could he not be near the Alps which was necessary for him to go to them and cross them? How could both these happen at the same moment when the former had to happen before the latter for the latter to happen?

Timeless God is living in the original state. That is, timelessness is the best state if he is perfect. So how could an all-good God create imperfection? He might make time for us but unfortunately time existed long before we appeared. So what was he doing making the imperfect and keeping it in existence for so long? The Christian will answer that we must just accept the will of God humbly. In other words, be unscientific and ask no questions. Why should we refuse to ask questions out of deference for a belief or assumption?

So time is inferior to eternity and God made time. But how can change which is the essence of time come from what is not changeable for it is always there and has no past or future? Is it not like saying that in an infinite ocean of pure water gold might appear or be made by the water? It is not pure water if it can make gold or gold can come out of it. How can the water which is so great produce the gold or how can the gold come out of it for it is nothing compared to the water. Time is nothing compared to eternity which holds all events in all time at the one moment.

You can't say eternity contains time so that is how time is able to appear. Remember only what happens or has happened or will happen is present in timelessness. If nothing happened and time was never made there would be nothing present in eternity just eternity - there would be no events.

Time must have come out of eternity.

To say the first movement of time was created by what doesn't move is to say that all things move so there must have been a first mover that wasn't moved or doesn't move. But that contradicts what you just said. You said all things move and then you deny it by saying that what caused the first movement doesn't move. Christians answer, "True, true. But the first movement was a miracle and a supernatural event. The rule is that nothing moves by itself. But that is only a natural law. A supernatural force can break this law and make something move."

We cannot understand the supernatural then. To us it is suspiciously like $0=1$. God turning nothing into something. A contradiction.

So eternity and time contradict each other. Eternity says there is no motion and time has motion happening in it – that is what time is for. To say as eastern mystics do that eternity is what is real and time is an illusion solves nothing for we still experience a past and present and future so there must be such a thing as time.

If time comes from eternity what makes time? Is it God or eternity? It can't be God for eternity would exist if God existed or not so eternity is independent of God. So God cannot control eternity for it is logically impossible for God to control that which he never created and that which he cannot create for it exists independently of him and he wouldn't exist if it didn't

exist. So eternity then made time. It is impossible to see how God then could make time run at different rates which from science and physics we know it does. Eternity does that. It seems then that eternity is the creator and designer of all things for all things are governed and produced by time. For example, if there hadn't been a moment for an egg and sperm to unite you wouldn't exist. We can be totally sure that if there is a creator and designer it is not God. There is no need to assume there is a God at all.

Is it absurd to say that timelessness can create all things? It is strange but not absurd. We know that timelessness cannot be created so we are forced to this conclusion by logic. What logic forces us to accept cannot be illogical but it may be paradoxical. Is it not strange and seemingly absurd to say that timelessness being nothing is able to make every moment of time present? Yet we all say that.

To say that God is timeless does not solve the problem of how God knows the future. The Bible God claims to know the future with total accuracy. But God could be eternal and timeless but not aware of the events that are present in eternity. God does not create eternity. It would exist if God never existed supposing it could exist. How do we know this? Because what exists logically has to be either timelessness or time. But time is change and eternity or timelessness is not and it just is. Time is not just is. So God didn't make eternity and so he is subject to its laws not his. For God to be all-knowing, he would have to be in control of eternity but he can't be so he is not all-knowing. The idea of a Timeless God is incoherent for if God is not all-knowing he is not almighty either and so he is not God.

God cannot make a square circle so perhaps it is impossible in some way for God to see what is in the timeless state as well.

Timeless God is not personal he is not a person. When he does not forgive and when he forgives you it is all one act to him – the same act for he is not in time and there is no changing in timelessness. He doesn't love people who don't exist for they don't exist and once you and I didn't exist but he loves us now. This not loving us when we didn't exist and loving us when we do are in conflict for he only commits one act!

The Christian reply to this is that this is true but we are in time and we know that first God does not forgive us or love us before he does. That is the way it happens with us. But this reply, indeed the only possible reply, does not work. They accept the objection as right when you look at timelessness. And it is timelessness the objection to divine personhood is about and to their solution has nothing to do with it. It is just an answer for the sake of looking like they can answer the objection. The flaw is that we experience it as if God is not forgiving or loving and then forgiving or loving but in reality there is no before and after with him for he is timeless so as far as God is concerned he is forgiving and not forgiving at the same moment. You don't answer a problem about reality by answering about how things look. That doesn't help for in relation to eternity we are saying that things are not what they seem.

Some would say that time is complicated and requires a designer but eternity is also complicated and needs a designer. They think that because everything that happens in time, past, present and future, is in the now of eternity all moments rolled into one unchanging now that eternity is complex. Eternity is not complicated for the events are presences in eternity not components. You don't say a mirror is complicated because it has a complicated reflection. There are complicated images present on the mirror but they don't comprise the mirror or make the mirror complicated.

If a designer had to make eternity then he had to exist before it. That is impossible for there is no before in eternity. If eternity needs a designer then there is no God and the design argument, the design of the universe shows there is a designing God, is conclusively refuted. It would mean that the design in the universe cannot be explained.

The designer would need to exist in time or eternity. It has to be one or the other. It cannot make eternity. So does it exist in time? Time would be a part of eternity and inferior to it so we cannot get away from a designer who is in eternity not time.

There is no evidence at all that that eternity or timelessness is coherent and plenty to suggest that it is not. Thus there can at best be no way of knowing if Timeless God exists.

If science finds marks of eternity, then eternity is scientifically relevant. Then as God is basically about eternity, science can speak about it which amounts to speaking about God. So then God can be refuted by science.

Those who believe in Timeless God are atheists without knowing it for a God that is not a personal being is not a God. It's a thing.

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