

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical and Southern Studies

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SBSS

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1 Great God, how infinite art Thou!
What worthless ones are we!
Let the whole race of creatures bow,
And pay their praise to Thee.

2 Thy throne eternal ages stood,
Ere seas or stars were made;
Thou art the ever-living God,
Were all the nations dead.

3 Eternity, with all its years,
Stands present in Thy view;
To Thee there's nothing old appears;
Great God, there's nothing new.

4 Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares,
While Thine eternal thought moves on
Thine undisturbed affairs.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

The Majesty of God's Eternality

"Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One?"

Habakkuk 1:12

Here Habakkuk began to contemplate or meditate upon who his God was and what He was like. Yes, the extraordinary nature of his majestic God. Here Habakkuk goes back to the basic truths of who God is and He is eternal! He reflects that God is "from everlasting." The Psalmist does a similar thing when he wrote, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. 90:2). What does God's eternity mean? God has always been and will always be, or God had no beginning or end. We are reminded "His being never had a beginning: for had there ever been a time when the First Cause was not, nothing could ever have existed" [R. L. Dabney].

Habakkuk observes essentially, “Jehovah, you are from everlasting!” This majestic God is shrouded in the profound mist of eternity as its sole inhabitant. Before a planet or star appeared, before an angel brushed its wing amongst the heavenly hosts—God is, was, and ever shall be. He fills eternity but manufactures time. The eternality of Jehovah is a ground of confidence for the Lord’s people; and the prophet is asserting a basic truth about his God. “Art thou not from everlasting?” The first mention of the eternity of God was, “Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God,” or literally, “the God of eternity” (Gen. 21:33). God is the eternal One who exists by Himself in eternity! Our everlasting God is thus “our dwelling place in all generations” (Ps. 90:1). God has no beginning or ending for He is “from everlasting to everlasting ... God” (Ps. 90:2). He was God before time, during time, and after time for He is eternal! We must remember that since God is eternal, he never began to exist but created all that exists in time.

In verse 11 the heathen enemy ascribed their power to their god; basically, they were saying that their own strength was their god, which means they essentially were trusting in themselves. As the prophet thought of their god, he remembered the certainty of his God who was eternal. Our God is “from everlasting” or literally “from before” that is, you look back as far as you can and that which was before is still before. In eternity there is only an everlasting “now” with our God. When God speaks with human reference, He says He is “the Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9) and He is “from of old.” He is “the God of before” because He was eternally before all things which He created. We are reminded that eternity belongs to God and not God to eternity. Words are inadequate to express the infinite One. From everlasting to everlasting, He is God in contrast to the gods of their enemies that is of their own creation. Our God is outside of history for He created it and He is above it and He acts in history. He rules and reigns in eternity. “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter” (Ps. 45:6). Lloyd-Jones remarked, “God is eternal, and the time process does not affect Him. He is above it and beyond it. He has brought it into being and though independent of it, He is behind it and at the back of it. God the eternal one. Do let us remember, therefore, as we feel immersed and engrossed in these things of time, that we are related to one who is above it and beyond it all and who, whatever may take place in the realm of time and of the world, can never be affected by it and can never be changed by it. He is ‘the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.’”

Habakkuk spoke of the Lord not only as everlasting but as “O LORD” or “Jehovah” the self-existent God. This is the God who was, is and is to come, who has always been (Gen. 21:33). This is the eternal I AM. “I AM that I AM” means “I am the Absolute, the self-existent One.” This is the second basic truth that the prophet remembers, for his God is not in any way dependent upon anything that happens in the world for He is self-

existent. He is reassured that his Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in one Godhead can be depended on in this world; for Jehovah will never leave nor forsake His own. Habakkuk's problem now begins to recede. This is Jehovah "my God," said the prophet. Elohim is God, God the Son became the living "Word" in a Divine form to create; "In the beginning God" and "in the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1; Col. 1:15-17), and He not only creates but He redeems (John 1:14).

Habakkuk said that Jehovah his eternal God is his "Holy One." This is the third basic truth about God—He is eternally holy! Not only is Habakkuk's God eternal, self-existent, but He is independent or wholly set apart in His purity and righteousness. He noted that Jehovah was his God, and he added "mine Holy One" who is his sanctification and sanctified in his heart. The holy God will do that which is pure and right. "God is immaculately holy" [Dagg]. This is the attribute that is used in a distinct way by being used in a triple way, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty" (Rev. 4:8). He is of purer eyes than to behold evil. The triune Godhead cannot be unholy. God in His person and work is eternally holy! Yes, He is the "Holy One" toward Habakkuk and His people.

Consider the account of the man who asked his neighbor one day, "What are you doing here by yourself?" He replied, "I am reading a book that has only two pages." The other replied, "Then it won't take you long to read it." Months passed and they met once more. "Well, what are you doing now?" "I am still reading my little book." "What! and only two pages in it?" "Yes; a white page and a red one." "I don't understand you," noted the neighbor. "Well, the white page is the holiness of God, and the red page is the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. When I study the white page and see my sin in the light of God's holiness, I am glad to turn to the red page and rest my eye on the blood of Jesus. And when I realize the preciousness and efficacy of the Saviour's blood, I feel a longing for holiness, and turn again to the white page. The little book will occupy me all my life, and I expect it will be my joyful meditation through eternity."