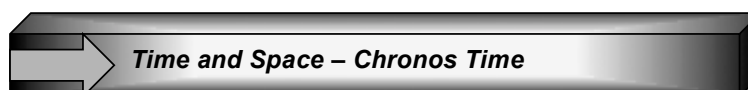


***Just before renowned cosmologist Stephen Hawking died, he released his latest theory on the beginning of the universe.***

- ◆ According to this theory the universe, which began with the “Big Bang”, or singularity, when time, space and matter came into existence, began from a different dimension of time called “Imaginary Time”.
- ◆ Now please don't ask me to explain this, because other astrophysicists and cosmologists have trouble understanding it.
- ◆ This theory of “Imaginary Time” is the latest attempt by Hawkins and others to get around the thorny issue of trying to explain how time, space and matter came into existence at the beginning of the universe.
- ◆ Where did all this stuff that makes up the universe today with all the related forces, energy and matter come from?
- ◆ Especially when there is nothing measurable in the universe that can bring a universe into existence.
- ◆ This has been one of the most difficult and unresolved questions facing the scientific community since the Age of Enlightenment attempted to provide a scientific answer to all of life's questions.

***Rather than speak of an “imaginary time” theory, I would like to talk about a “Divine” or “Eternal Time” theory.***

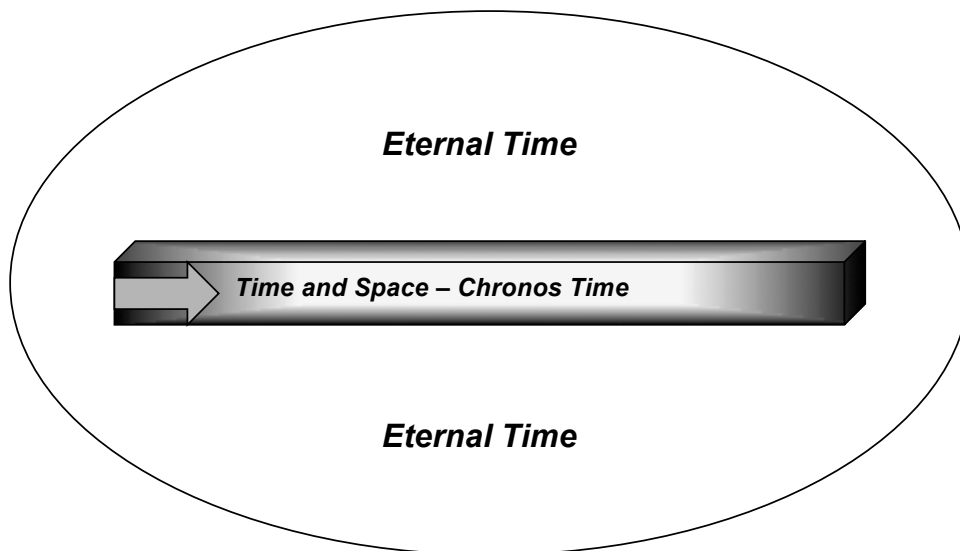
- ◆ This theory has been around long before the Enlightenment and as the title implies, speaks of a dimension that cannot be measured scientifically.
- ◆ This may seem like an unusual way to start this series of sermons on this subject, but it is imperative we understand the differences between the two dimensions we are dealing with when we deal with the subject of God and humanity.
- ◆ This series is entitled, “In His Image” with the emphasis on “His” Image, not “our” image.
- ◆ We have to resist the temptation to create God in our image rather than the other way around.
- ◆ We need to recognize there is a vast gulf between who God is and the dimension He lives in to who we are and our four-dimensional world of time and space.
- ◆ We will deal with God's nature in due course; in fact one of the major goals of this project is to address the misconceptions (usually negative) surrounding humanity's concept of God and His nature.
- ◆ For the time being though, we need to focus on the two different dimensions inhabited by God and humanity
- ◆ We'll start with the subject of time.
- ◆ We will learn there are two types of time, Chronological time and Eternal time.
- ◆ We humans live in a four dimensional world, three of space and one of time – we occupy space and we are moving through time.
- ◆ This is chronological time and looks something like this. (see figure below).



- ◆ As the name implies, chronological time has a beginning and an end.
- ◆ Things get a little more complicated when we begin to talk about Eternal time because our only experience of time is in the four dimensional world in which we live.
- ◆ However, there was a “time” when our four-dimensional world of time and space did not exist
- ◆ This was back before the “Big Bang”!
- ◆ For the Big Bang to happen, three separate components had to come into existence at the same time.
- ◆ These were, chronological time, space and matter. None of these three components along with their various properties could exist without the other two.
- ◆ Outside of a belief in a Creator who was able to create these three components simultaneously, there is no theory that adequately explains how the universe came into existence.
- ◆ All scientific theories about the cosmos, including the one mentioned above start with the universe in existence as though it has no beginning.
- ◆ To admit otherwise is to acknowledge a higher power with the capacity to bring into existence all things including time, space and matter and to bring them into existence simultaneously.
- ◆ This stance however denies the fact that scientists also tell us there was a beginning, the “big bang.”

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 1 – ETERNAL TIME AND CHRONOLOGICAL TIME]

- ◆ The Bible narrative begins with the simple statement, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).*
- ◆ We learn two things from this statement.
- ◆ First, we learn of a Being that has the capacity to bring a universe into existence without working with prior materials.
- ◆ If we are going to make something in our four-dimensional world like a cake, we have to use existing materials, flour, sugar, milk and eggs.
- ◆ Not so with God, He simply speaks it into existence.
- ◆ **Hebrews 11:3** *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*
- ◆ This means there is another mystifying component or force that exists outside of our physical universe that is able to perform inexplicable (from our point of view) events.
- ◆ The second thing we learn from the statement, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”,* there was a time prior to the existence of the universe in which God dwelt.
- ◆ We will call this eternal time and we will represent it this way (See figure below).



- ◆ Unlike our time, God's time does not have a beginning or an end and it encompasses and fills all things including our chronological time.
- ◆ But it is not just eternal time that encompasses all things. Along with time, God's presence encompasses all things.
- ◆ King Solomon at the dedication of God's temple acknowledges this fact.
- ◆ **2 Chronicles 6:18** *But will God really dwell on earth with humans? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!*
- ◆ God doesn't so much as occupy space, but rather fills it with His presence – He is everywhere, He is what makes time, space, and life possible and as scripture tells us, He sustains it.
- ◆ **Acts 17:22-25** *Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”*
- ◆ Again, here we have another reference to a mystifying component or force that exists outside of our physical universe that is able to not only create life, but also to sustain it.
- ◆ Like the men of Athens, we struggle to understand these concepts because they are foreign to the four-dimensional universe in which we live and cannot be scientifically measured or explained.
- ◆ But just because they can't be scientifically measured doesn't mean they don't exist.

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 1 – ETERNAL TIME AND CHRONOLOGICAL TIME]

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- ◆ Closing off the voyage of discovery based on one's preconceptions guarantees we will never learn anything new or unique.
- ◆ We can thank the Enlightenment and empiricist philosophers like John Locke and David Hume for disregarding any knowledge that can't be seen, touched, felt or measured.
- ◆ We will run into similar problems later when we consider the subjects of the appearance of life, the human mind and consciousness, none of which can be scientifically measured or explained; yet we acknowledge they exist.
- ◆ There is a metaphysical component in the cosmos that transcends physical existence.
- ◆ This is the dimension in which God exists and as such He is everywhere, occupying and sustaining both dimensions.
- ◆ **Isaiah 57:15 For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place.**
- ◆ Scripture labels this dimension the spiritual realm and those that occupy this realm are called spirits.
- ◆ God labels Himself this way.
- ◆ **John 4:24 “God is spirit....”**
- ◆ It is a failure to acknowledge this spiritual dimension that has theists and atheists arguing in circles.
- ◆ Unless there is an acknowledgement of this otherworldly component that transcends the physical realities of our universe, theists and atheists will continue to argue past each other as they are operating from totally different premises.
- ◆ Atheists who want empirical evidence reject any extra-dimensional talk and Christians who accept it on faith can look foolish if we try to argue it on their grounds.
- ◆ A more mature approach would be for atheists to admit there is not enough proof to refute the existence of a higher power, and Christians to admit there is not enough proof to prove God exists.
- ◆ Both positions rely to a large degree on faith.
- ◆ So the first thing we need to understand is God and humanity occupy two separate dimensions and as already mentioned, there is a vast gulf between the spiritual and physical dimensions.

### **Living in our four dimensional world has its limitations.**

- ◆ As creatures in the scheme of things we have limitations. We need air, food and water to sustain us.
- ◆ Adam was made from dust showing our attachment to the earth, but this is also a reference to our mortality, **“for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Gen 3:19).**
- ◆ And as to the question, “Were Adam and Eve created mortal?” the answer is, there would not have been the need for the tree of life if they were created with an immortal soul.
- ◆ Everything in the physical world is subject to decay and eventually disintegration (Second Law of Thermodynamics).
- ◆ We have no control over where we are born or who our parents are, we just show up.
- ◆ We have little control over our health. We can do some things to improve our health but sometimes it is just a matter of defective genes, where we were born, or the latest life-threatening epidemic.
- ◆ We live in a world of natural disasters over which we have limited control.
- ◆ We are subject to time and chance, car accidents, terrorist bombings, and the life threatening activities of others.
- ◆ We are subject to the tyranny of time. We can't stop it, we can't go back and undo it, it is relentless – “stop the world I want to get off”.
- ◆ And all the time it is making us look older.
- ◆ Our activities are primarily restricted to this earth – the best we can do is put a man on the moon...forget about the next planet or galaxy.
- ◆ So despite our many achievements, man has his place in the scheme of things and is limited in what He has mastery over.

### **God too has his place but his activities are not constrained by the forces and limitations of the four-dimensional world.**

- ◆ That is because He is the Creator of these forces and not constrained by the created realities because He transcends them as we read in Acts 17.
- ◆ This creative capacity allows God to supersede physical realities in what we call miracles.
- ◆ Even the Devil knew this. In the temptation of Jesus, Satan challenged Jesus to defy these physical restrictions because he knew Jesus could (Matthew 4:1-11).

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 1 – ETERNAL TIME AND CHRONOLOGICAL TIME]

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- ◆ He did have the power to fly. He did have the power to live without physical sustenance. He did have the power to overthrow governments and someday He will, but at his time and choosing, not Satan's.
- ◆ He also showed He possessed the power to harness and control the elements – He stilled the storm (Mark 4:35-41).
- ◆ He showed by His many miracles He was able to control sickness by healing the sick and raising the dead (Matthew 9:18-26).
- ◆ He showed by His resurrection He has the power over death and decay – in other words, He can redeem the damage of the passage of time (John 11:25).
- ◆ Unlike us who inhabit Chronological time, spirits who inhabit Eternal time transcend both dimensions.
- ◆ Jesus demonstrated by His first coming He had the power to move from the spiritual dimension to the physical dimension.
- ◆ However, in our present state we are restricted to the world of time and space (1 Corinthians 15:50).
- ◆ The fact God is not constrained by the forces and limitations of the physical world ought to be good news for humanity.
- ◆ Just as Jesus demonstrated His power over the forces of nature at His first coming, He will perform the same healing miracles at His second coming only this time applying them to the whole cosmos.
- ◆ He also demonstrated by His resurrection and His return to heaven He has power over death and for a human to move from the physical to the eternal realm.

***However, there is one important aspect God has given to humans that transcends both dimensions and that is the capacity for relationships.***

- ◆ According to Paul, despite the limitations of our four dimensional world, God has given humanity the capacity to not only relate to other humans, but to also reach out and relate personally to the one true God.
- ◆ ***Acts 17:27-28 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. <sup>28</sup> 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'***
- We are His "offspring" in the sense we have the ability to relate to one another, as He is able to relate to others.
- Of all God's creation, it is only angels and humans who can "know" and "love."
- ◆ God has blessed humanity with a mind and consciousness which is unique in the four-dimensional world so we can relate to each other and more importantly with our Maker, Creator and Father.
- ◆ As Paul says here, he makes Himself near to all people with the hope we will reach out, to touch him and develop a relationship with Him.
- ◆ So the good news is, this God who inhabits the spiritual realm has taken steps to reveal Himself to us.
- ◆ As mentioned, His purpose is to create us in His image and if He is spirit, that means an eventual movement from the physical realm to the spiritual realm.
- ◆ In other words, we will end up in heaven sharing the spiritual realm in a relationship with God.

***So just in this short analysis we begin to get an insight into what God gets up to each morning in His eternal dimension of time.***

- ◆ We find ourselves involved in something much grander than we can ever imagine in our four-dimensional world because it transcends our limited comprehension.
- ◆ But it is not beyond the comprehension or ability of the God we have just learned about.
- ◆ If He has the capacity to bring a universe into existence out of nothing and sustain it, He will bring to pass His purpose of creating us in His image so we eventually end up spending eternity in relationship with Him.
- ◆ But this fascinating journey is not without pain not only for humanity, but also for God.