


GOD SET TIME AND ETERNITY IN THE HEART OF MAN



*A Theological Meditation on Ecclesiastes 3:11
and the Mystery of Human Temporality*



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DEDICATION

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that man cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”

— Ecclesiastes 3:11

To every soul that has stood at the edge of what can be known and felt the ache of the infinite: this book is written in the conviction that the ache is itself a gift, and that the God who planted it is the God who satisfies it.

Soli Deo gloria.

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Preface

In my years of preaching and teaching I have watched people of every age and every kind of education stand still before something too large to hold. It may be a night sky, the birth of a child, a graveside, or the quiet end of an ordinary day. The mind reaches for an explanation and finds that it cannot close its hand around the whole. I used to think of that moment as a failure of understanding. I now think of it as one of the most honest moments a person can have, because in it the creature meets the limit that the Creator has set.

This book is a meditation on one verse, and it is the verse that describes that moment better than any other I know.

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that man cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”

— Ecclesiastes 3:11

I call the book a meditation rather than a treatise on purpose. A treatise tries to settle a question and close it. A meditation stays with a text until the text has done its work on the one who reads. I have tried to stay with Ecclesiastes 3:11 in that way. I have also tried to keep the doctrines of the Reformed faith in plain view, because I hold that the whole counsel of God, and not a single verse alone, must govern how we read any verse. Solomon’s words are to be read beside the words of Moses, who told Israel that “the secret things belong to the LORD our God” (Deut. 29:29), and beside the words of Paul, who wrote, “For from him and through him and to him are all things” (Rom. 11:36).

The chapters follow the order of the verse. The first considers the “everything” that God has made beautiful in its time, so far as it can be counted, seen, and located: numbers, colours, and directions. The second considers the existence of that everything, in the two great mysteries of

consciousness and matter. The third considers its eventuality, the way all things unfold in time, and the eternity that God has set in the heart of man. Each chapter ends with three Reflection Questions. The book closes with Personal Questions and Challenges that I hope will be used in study groups, in family devotions, and alone. A short Glossary explains the technical words I could not avoid, and the Scripture Index lets the reader find every passage quoted.

I write for the pastor and the elder, and equally for the person in the pew who has never opened a book of theology. If you have felt the ache of the infinite and did not know what to call it, I want you to know that you are not alone, and that the ache has a purpose. Read slowly. Keep your Bible open. Let the questions at the end of each chapter press upon you. And may the God who set eternity in our hearts bring each of us, by His Spirit, to the rest that He alone can give.

Introduction: God Proved Unknowable by Our Own Limits

Text: Ecclesiastes 3:11

The text for this meditation is among the most compressed and most profound statements in the whole of the Wisdom literature: “He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that man cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end” (Eccl. 3:11). There are three movements in this single verse. The first is a declaration of the beauty God has built into creation. The second is a declaration of the longing God has built into the human person. The third is a declaration of the limit that marks the human creature before the infinite God.

Solomon writes these words in the middle of his well-known poem on the seasons of life, which begins, “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Eccl. 3:1). The poem lists birth and death, planting and uprooting, weeping and laughing, and then Solomon asks, “What gain has the worker from his toil?” (Eccl. 3:9). Our verse is the beginning of his answer. The seasons are God’s work, and they are beautiful in their time, yet the one who lives inside them cannot climb to a height from which to see the whole design. A time-bound creature has been given a longing for what is beyond time, and has not been given the power to reach it by his own effort.

God did set these things, time and eternity, within human experience so that it is proven we cannot fully understand Him. I do not mean that the limit is a flaw in the way God made us. I mean that it is the proof He intended. If the human mind could take the measure of God, He would be no larger than the mind that measured Him, and He would not be God. The very ache of our limits is therefore an argument for the God who is beyond them. Only in faith can we believe in Him, and faith is

not an escape from thinking. It is what thinking does when it has gone as far as it can go and finds that Someone has gone farther and has spoken.

Zophar the Naamathite asked a question that every honest student of theology must eventually ask of himself: “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?” (Job 11:7). The question expects the answer no. Yet Zophar was wrong to use the answer as a weapon against Job, and I must not use it as an excuse for silence. The limit is real, and so is the invitation. The deep things of God are beyond our finding out, and the God who is beyond finding out has found us. The rest of this book is written in the space between those two truths.

That last point needs care, because unknowable does not mean unknown. Moses told Israel, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever” (Deut. 29:29). We cannot know God exhaustively, but we can know Him truly, because He has made Himself known in creation, in Scripture, and above all in His Son. The title of this introduction must be read with that distinction in view. God is proved unknowable by our own limits in the sense that He cannot be comprehended, that is, grasped from every side. He is not proved unknowable in the sense that nothing true can be said of Him. Paul, who knew Him as well as any man, still cried out, “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (Rom. 11:33).

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

— Isaiah 55:9

John Calvin opened the *Institutes* by observing that nearly all the wisdom we possess consists of two parts, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves, and that each leads to the other. This meditation walks that road from the side of ourselves. It asks what a human being finds when she examines the world she lives in, the mind she thinks with,

and the time she lives through, and it argues that at the end of each examination she meets a boundary that points beyond itself.

Our highest vocation is worship, because worship is the response of the creature who has reached the limit of what she can know and has chosen, rather than despair or denial, to bow before the One who “inhabits eternity” (Isa. 57:15). The psalmist gives the invitation: “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!” (Ps. 95:6). This volume is a theological meditation on what it means to be a time-bound creature with eternity planted in our hearts.

The plan of the book follows the three movements of the verse. The first chapter considers everything in the space-time continuum that can be counted and measured: numbers, colours, and directions. The second chapter considers the existence of everything, that is, consciousness and matter. The third chapter considers the eventuality of everything, that is, time, eternity, and the seasons of life. A short conclusion gathers these into the single act that the whole verse calls for.

CHAPTER 1

Everything in the Space-Time Continuum: The Quantifiable Creation

“The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them.”

— Psalm 89:11

God has made everything, not some things, not most things, but everything, “beautiful in its time” (Eccl. 3:11). I begin this meditation by attending to the word “everything.” It names the totality of the space-time continuum, the whole stage of space and time on which every created thing exists, with all its quantifiable, colourful, directional, and material dimensions. This is not an abstract philosophical category. It is the actual, experienced, sensory universe in which human beings “live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Solomon does not say that God made a few beautiful things and left the rest to chance. He says that God made everything beautiful, and he says it in the same breath as he speaks of time. The beauty belongs to the thing and to its season together. A seed is beautiful in the spring, a harvest in the autumn, an old man’s white hair in the evening of his life, and each is beautiful because God has set it in its proper time. This chapter looks at the creation as something that can be counted, coloured, and located.

The claim that the whole creation belongs to God is the foundation of the Reformed way of seeing the world. Abraham Kuyper said it famously when he opened the Free University of Amsterdam: there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, “Mine!” The

psalmist said it long before him: “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). If the whole creation is the Lord’s, then no part of it is too small or too ordinary to teach us something about Him.

I take the creation in three of its plainest dimensions. The first is number, the structure by which things can be counted and measured. The second is colour, the beauty by which things can be seen and enjoyed. The third is direction, the order by which things can be placed and found. Each of these tells us something about the Maker, and each of them, followed to its end, leaves us standing at the edge of what we can know.

A. Numbers: The Quantifiable Structure of Reality

The universe is, at its most fundamental level, mathematical. From the constants that govern the atom to the expansion of the cosmos, from the Fibonacci sequence seen in the arrangement of seeds in a sunflower to the prime numbers that protect every digital message, the universe is ordered by number. This mathematical ordering is not a feature that human minds impose upon a chaotic universe. It is a feature that human minds discover in an ordered universe.

That the universe is mathematical, that it can be described by equations, that its regularities can be expressed in formulae, that a human mind can grasp the laws governing the motion of galaxies and the behaviour of subatomic particles, is itself a profound theological datum. Albert Einstein remarked that “the most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.” The biblical answer is that the universe is comprehensible because it was made by a rational Mind, and it is comprehensible to human minds because those minds were made in the image of that Mind.

“He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.”

— Psalm 147:4

The One who numbers the stars is not a mathematician in the way a human being is, learning numbers by effort. He is the source of number, and every equation we discover is a small and borrowed glimpse of the order He built. Herman Dooyeweerd, whose thought has long influenced mine, taught that number is the first of the many aspects in which one created reality is experienced, and that no aspect can be explained by another. I identify four aspects of the numerical structure of reality: whole numbers, fractions of wholes, signed numbers, and infinitude. Each of these is a gift, a dimension of the created order that reflects the precision of the Creator's mind.

1. Whole Numbers

Whole numbers are the integers that count discrete objects: one sun, two eyes, twelve tribes, a hundred sheep. Counting is the first act of science and the first act of worship, because to count a thing is to admit that it exists apart from me and has its own place in the order. Scripture begins its confession of God with a number. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Deut. 6:4). The oneness of God is not a mathematical curiosity. It is the reason the world is a universe, a single ordered whole, and not a heap of rival powers.

Whole numbers also teach me my own smallness. God said to Abraham, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them" (Gen. 15:5), and the old man learned that counting has a limit even when the objects are real. Moses prayed, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). The wise person is the one who has learned to count what is short.

2. Fractions of Wholes

Fractions, which mathematicians call the rational numbers, describe parts of wholes: a half, a third, a tenth. Nothing in creation is only a whole. Every whole is made of parts, and every part belongs to a larger whole. A cell is part of a body, a body is part of a family, a family is part of a people. Scripture uses this pattern to teach the unity of the Church: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members

of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12).

The Lord who made the arithmetic of parts and wholes also attends to the smallest part. “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matt. 10:30). No fraction is too small to escape His notice, and no whole is too large to escape His care.

3. Signed Numbers

Signed numbers are the positive and negative integers, and they describe direction and opposition. On the number line the same distance can be measured toward gain or toward loss, and zero is the point from which both are reckoned. Life is lived on such a line. Moses set the choice before Israel: “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live” (Deut. 30:19).

Paul used the language of the ledger when he wrote of his own conversion: “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ” (Phil. 3:7). The gospel does not remove the line between positive and negative. It changes what we count as positive. Everything that once stood on the credit side of my account is revalued in the light of Christ.

4. Infinitude

Infinitude is the mathematical idea of endless extension, and it points beyond every finite quantity. No matter how large a number I name, another can be added to it. Mathematicians have learned to reason about this endlessness with great care, and yet no mathematician has counted to the end of it, because there is no end. Here the creation itself bends my mind toward its Maker. “Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure” (Ps. 147:5). The psalmist says the same of the thoughts of God: “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they would outnumber the sand” (Ps. 139:17–18).

The endless series of numbers is a created shadow of the endless God. It does not make God a mathematical object. It teaches a finite

mind that what is boundless is not a contradiction, and that the One who has no limit is also the One who made numbers.

B. Colours in the Light: The Aesthetic Dimension

Light is the medium of beauty. The astonishing range of the visible spectrum, from deep violet through blue, green, yellow, and orange to deep red, with its tints (light colours mixed with white), its shades (dark colours mixed with black), its neutrals, and its infinite variations of brightness, is itself a kind of parable of divine generosity. God did not make a monochrome universe. He made a world of colour, and He made creatures with the capacity to perceive and delight in it.

The biblical theology of beauty is grounded in the creation narrative. God saw everything that He had made, “and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). The Hebrew *tov me’od* carries both a moral and an aesthetic connotation: the creation is good and it is beautiful. This is not incidental to the biblical worldview. It is structural. Beauty is not a subjective preference. It is an objective feature of a world made by the God who is beautiful.

“One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.”

— Psalm 27:4

David asked for one thing, and what he asked for was to look upon beauty. The beauty of created things is a preface to that request. Paul says that God’s “invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made” (Rom. 1:20). Colour is one of the ways in which the invisible God makes Himself visible to the eye.

1. The Spectrum of Light

The first thing God spoke into the darkness was light. “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Gen. 1:3). Every colour we see is light divided, as a prism divides a beam of white into a band from violet

to red. After the flood God set a coloured arch in the sky as a pledge: “I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth” (Gen. 9:13). The rainbow is the spectrum used as a promise, and it reminds me that the colours are not only decorative. They are a language by which God speaks. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

2. Tints, Shades, and Neutrals

A tint is a colour lightened with white, a shade is a colour darkened with black, and the neutrals, the greys and browns and blacks and whites, hold the whole palette together. The painter knows that a picture is made as much by what is quiet as by what is bright. Scripture uses colour as moral language, and it uses the passage from dark to light as the picture of forgiveness. “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool” (Isa. 1:18). David prayed in the same language: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps. 51:7). God is able to move a stained life across the whole range of the palette, from the deepest red to the purest white.

3. Brightness and the Glory of God

Brightness is the measure of how much light a colour carries, and its range is without end, from the faintest glow to the glare of noon. Scripture uses brightness as the sign of glory. On the mountain Jesus “was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light” (Matt. 17:2). In the city of God there will be no lamp to measure by, “for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb” (Rev. 21:23). Brightness is where colour becomes glory, and it is the place where the eye, like the mind, reaches a limit. No one can look steadily at the sun, and no one can look steadily at the One who made it.

C. Directions in Space: The Spatial Ordering of Reality

Space is not an undifferentiated void. It is ordered by direction. Lines of latitude (running east and west), lines of longitude (running north and south), diagonal lines, and closed curves such as circles and ellipses are all expressions of the spatial structure God has built into creation. Navigation, architecture, engineering, and geography all depend on the reality of directional space. Even the abstract mathematics of topology, which studies the properties of spaces that persist when a shape is stretched or bent, is a form of attention to the God-given structure of the spatial creation.

1. East, West, North, and South

The biblical use of directional language is theologically rich. God scatters Israel to the four corners of the earth and gathers them again: “I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you” (Isa. 43:5). The forgiveness of sin is measured on the compass: “as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12). East and west never meet, and that is exactly the point. The New Jerusalem descends from heaven and is oriented to all four directions, with “on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates” (Rev. 21:13). The spatial ordering of creation is not merely practical. It is theological, a dimension of the world that God has made and in which He acts.

“If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.”

— Psalm 139:9–10

No direction takes a person outside the reach of God. The psalmist tried them in turn, up to heaven, down to the grave, out to the farthest sea, and found the Lord already there. Directions give the creature a place to stand, and they give the believer the assurance that wherever he is placed, he is not placed beyond the Lord’s hand.

2. Diagonals and Closed Curves

A diagonal joins two points that the straight lines of the grid keep apart, and it is the shortest way across. A closed curve returns to where it began. Johannes Kepler discovered that the planets move in ellipses, and the pattern holds from the orbit of the earth to the path of a distant moon. Isaiah, who knew nothing of Kepler, spoke of the same roundness in praise: “It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers” (Isa. 40:22). Paul prayed that the Ephesians might have strength “to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth” of the love of Christ (Eph. 3:18–19). When Paul wanted to speak of a love beyond measure, he borrowed the language of space, and then confessed that the love “surpasses knowledge.”

Numbers, colours, and directions give me a creation that can be counted, seen, and located. Yet I notice what happens at the end of each. The numbers do not end. The colours cannot all be named. The directions point to a space no explorer has finished crossing. The creation is knowable enough to be trusted and large enough to humble. Solomon would have me hear both at once: God has made everything beautiful, and He has made it beyond my reach. The next chapter turns from the things we count and see to the fact that anything exists at all, and that we are among the things that know it.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 1

1. Einstein remarked that the comprehensibility of the universe is its most incomprehensible feature. How does the mathematical order of creation, which Psalm 147:4 describes as God determining “the number of the stars” and giving “to all of them their names,” strengthen your confidence in the personal, rational Creator who made it?
2. God made a world of colour, variety, and beauty. In what ways do you cultivate the capacity for beauty in your daily life, and how do you

connect your delight in beauty to worship of the God who is beautiful?

3. The vastness of the quantifiable universe, from the subatomic to the cosmological, is beyond any human mind's capacity to fully grasp. How does this quantitative immensity of creation deepen your sense of awe before the God who made and holds it all? This week, take ten minutes to look at the night sky or at one small natural object, and give thanks to God for what you see.

CHAPTER 2

The Existence of Everything in the Space-Time Continuum: Consciousness and Matter

“In him we live and move and have our being.”

— Acts 17:28

Beyond the quantifiable structure of creation, its numbers, colours, and directions, lies the deeper question of existence itself. Why is there something rather than nothing? Why does the space-time continuum contain conscious beings who can ask this question? Why does matter exist at all, and why does it behave according to the regular, knowable laws that make science possible? These are the questions that press the mind toward the edge of what can be known, the edge at which, Solomon observes, man “cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end” (Eccl. 3:11).

I ask these questions as a believer and not as a skeptic. Solomon, standing at the same edge, did not conclude that existence is a riddle without an answer. He concluded that the answer belongs to God. The two great mysteries I consider here, consciousness and matter, are the two poles of that edge: the inner world of the one who knows, and the outer world of what is known. Both come from the same hand. What Paul told the Athenians about the God in whom we live and move and have our being is true of mind and of matter alike. Neither one stands outside the care of the Creator, and neither one explains itself.

There is a second reason to take these two mysteries together. The modern world has tended to choose one and explain away the other. Some have said that only matter is real and that the mind is a by-product. Others have said that only the mind is real and that matter is an

appearance. The Bible refuses both choices. It speaks of a God who is Spirit and who made the material world and called it good, and of a human person who is made of the dust of the ground and who bears the image of God. Mind and matter are neither rivals nor accidents. They are two gifts of one Giver.

A. Consciousness: The Mystery of Inner Experience

Consciousness, the subjective, first-person experience of being aware, is among the deepest mysteries of existence. I know that I exist, that I see, that I grieve and rejoice, and no one else can know these things from the inside as I know them. Yet I cannot put this inner life on a scale or under a microscope. It is the most certain thing I have, and it is the hardest thing to explain.

“Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.”

— Genesis 2:7

1. The Hard Problem

Modern neuroscience can describe the neural correlates of conscious experience with increasing precision, but it has not yet explained why there is experience at all. Why, when certain neural processes occur in the brain, does there appear to be “something it is like” to be the creature undergoing those processes? This is what the philosopher David Chalmers has called “the hard problem of consciousness,” and it remains, after decades of careful investigation, without a generally accepted solution on materialist terms. The easy problems concern what the brain does, how it responds, stores, and reports. The hard problem concerns why any of that doing is accompanied by an inner life.

The question is also a question about trust. If the mind is only the by-product of matter, then the thoughts by which I judge every theory are themselves by-products, and I have no ground for trusting them. The believer has such a ground. He holds that the mind was made by a

rational God to know a world that God also made, so that thought and thing were fitted to one another from the beginning. The fit between the knower and the known is a gift and not an accident.

I do not say this to dismiss the sciences. I say it because honesty requires that we notice where the explanation stops. The believer is free to be curious about the brain precisely because he does not need the brain to be the whole story.

2. The Image of the Conscious God

The biblical account of consciousness is not a solution to the hard problem in the philosopher's sense. It is a reframing of the question. Human consciousness, which includes self-consciousness, awareness of the surrounding world, the capacity for abstract reasoning, moral judgment, aesthetic delight, and prayer, is the expression of the *imago Dei*, the image of God. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). The human person is conscious in a uniquely full and personal sense because she is made in the image of a God who is supremely, eternally, and personally conscious.

The order of the explanation matters. I do not start with unconscious matter and ask how a mind could arise. I start with the living God, who knows and wills and loves, and I ask how He should make creatures who reflect Him. Mind is not the late and surprising arrival at the end of the story. It is at the beginning, in the mind of God, and it is given to the creature as a gift.

Consciousness is also relational. God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18). The image of God is not found only in the solitary mind. It is found in the capacity for fellowship, for speech, and for love, because the God whose image we bear is Himself a fellowship of three Persons who know and love one another. A person is never only a mind. He is a mind made for communion, first with God and then with those who share his nature.

3. The Lamp of the LORD

Solomon wrote, “The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all his innermost parts” (Prov. 20:27). The inner life is a lamp that the Lord has lit, and by it a person is able to search himself, to examine his motives, and to meet his Maker. David worshipped on the strength of this gift: “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well” (Ps. 139:14). John Calvin began the *Institutes* by observing that nearly all the wisdom we possess consists of two parts, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves, and that each leads to the other. A conscious creature cannot examine himself honestly for long without meeting the One who made him.

This is also where consciousness meets its limit. I can be aware of myself, yet I cannot fully see myself. I can know that I will die, yet I cannot imagine not being. Consciousness gives me the horizon of eternity, and it does not give me the power to cross it. The Lord Jesus gave the purpose of a conscious life in a single sentence: “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). To be conscious is to be able to know, and the highest object of knowing is God.

4. Conscience and the Limits of Self-Knowledge

Consciousness carries with it a conscience. Paul says that “the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them” (Rom. 2:15). A conscious creature is not only aware. He is answerable. He knows, from within, that there is a standard he has not met, and the knowledge troubles him in the night. The conscience is one more evidence that the inner life was made for a relationship with a holy God.

It is also one more place where the creature meets a limit. “For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:11). If I cannot fully know my neighbour’s mind, and can only partly know my own, I should not be surprised that the mind

of God is beyond me. What I cannot reach by climbing, the Spirit gives by revealing, and this is why the inner life of a believer is not closed but open to the One who made it.

B. Matter: Forms, Mass, and Energy

The material creation, everything from the leptons and quarks of particle physics to the superclusters of galaxies that make up the large-scale structure of the universe, is governed by four fundamental forces (gravity, electromagnetism, the strong nuclear force, and the weak nuclear force) and described by what physicists call the standard model of particle physics. At the deepest level of physical description, matter is not the solid, continuous stuff of everyday experience. It is a complex of fields of energy, patterns of probability, and energy states.

Mass-energy equivalence, Einstein's famous equation $E = mc^2$, reveals that matter and energy are interconvertible: matter is, in a profound sense, condensed energy. The energy released in nuclear fission and fusion is the conversion of mass into energy according to this equivalence. This is a remarkable feature of the material creation. What appears to be the most solid and permanent aspect of reality is, at its deepest level, dynamic, energetic, and convertible. If the stone beneath my feet is stored power, then nothing in the world is merely inert, and everything depends on a Power greater than itself.

What the physicist finds in matter is not only energy but law. Atoms behave the same way in every laboratory, and the same equations describe a falling stone and a turning galaxy. Scripture says that this reliability rests on the faithfulness of God: "you have established the earth, and it stands fast. By your appointment they stand this day, for all things are your servants" (Ps. 119:90–91). The LORD speaks of "the fixed order of heaven and earth" (Jer. 33:25) as something He has established, as He establishes a covenant. It is no accident that many of the founders of modern science, among them Johannes Kepler and Robert Boyle, were believers who expected nature to be orderly because its Maker is faithful. Science does not threaten this meditation. It is one of the ways in which we are permitted to see how far the order reaches.

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

— Hebrews 1:3

The author of Hebrews says that the Son of God upholds the universe, and the verb is in the present tense. Creation is not a clock wound up long ago and left to run. It is sustained from moment to moment by the word of Christ. I identify three forms of energy in creation: potential energy, kinetic energy, and rest-mass energy. Each is a dimension of the God-given energetic structure of the world.

1. Potential Energy: Energy at Rest

Potential energy is energy at rest, stored in a system and waiting to be released: the water held behind a dam, the stone poised on the edge of a hill, the bow drawn back and not yet loosed. A creation full of stored energy is a creation that holds together by something more than itself. Paul says of Christ, “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). Every atom is a held thing. If that holding were withdrawn for an instant, there would be no stone, no dam, and no hill. The quiet of the world is not the quiet of an empty room. It is the quiet of a power that is being kept.

2. Kinetic Energy: Energy in Motion

Kinetic energy is energy in motion, the force of the river, the wind, and the falling rain. At the first moment of creation, before light was spoken, “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). The Psalmist saw all the moving powers of nature as servants of one voice: “fire and hail, snow and mists, stormy wind fulfilling his word!” (Ps. 148:8). Even the wind teaches the mystery of the Spirit. “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). We can measure the motion and name its laws, and we are still not the masters of it.

3. Rest-Mass Energy: Energy Locked in Matter

Rest-mass energy is the energy locked in the mass of matter itself, which is released in explosion or implosion. It is the most astonishing of the three, because it says that a small piece of matter holds within itself an almost unimaginable store of power, and that this power is present even when the matter is perfectly still. Scripture does not describe the world in these terms, but it says what stands behind them. “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host” (Ps. 33:6). “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Heb. 11:3). What is seen has an unseen origin. The solid world rests on a word.

The more matter is studied, the more it resembles a text that can be read and the less it resembles a riddle that can be closed. “Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them” (Ps. 111:2). The psalmist expects the works of God to be studied, and he expects the one who studies them to delight. But the Lord also asked Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding” (Job 38:4). Both words are true. Study is a gift, and study never ends in mastery. Every answer about matter raises a deeper question, and the believer takes this not as a defeat but as the shape of a creation that was made to be explored by creatures and never exhausted by them.

This creation, ordered, lawful, and revelatory of its Maker’s power, is also a creation that has been touched by the fall. Paul writes that “the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Rom. 8:22). The groan is the sound of matter waiting for its transformation. Even in its present condition, however, the physical world still declares what it was made to declare, and the Christian is the one person who knows why a universe that can be known by a mind is also so large and so strange. Mind and matter, consciousness and energy, come from the same Lord, and both bring me to the same threshold. I know in part, and the part I know is enough to make me bow. The next chapter turns to the dimension in which both mind and matter live: time.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 2

1. The “hard problem of consciousness,” the question why there is subjective experience at all, remains without a generally accepted solution on materialist terms. How does the biblical doctrine of the *imago Dei* in Genesis 1:27, that God “created man in his own image,” provide a more adequate framework for understanding human consciousness?
2. Matter at the deepest level is energetic and dynamic, not static and solid. How does this scientific picture of the material world resonate with the biblical description of Christ, who “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3), and how might your congregation or study group speak of this together as a reason for worship?
3. The universe is both quantitatively vast and qualitatively rich with consciousness, beauty, and order. What is the appropriate human response to this recognition, and how does it lead you to worship? Choose one ordinary gift of this day, such as breath, sight, or food, and thank the Lord for it by name.

CHAPTER 3

The Eventuality of Everything: Time, Eternity, and the Seasons of Life

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man’s heart, yet so that man cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.”

— Ecclesiastes 3:11

The third dimension of Solomon’s observation in Ecclesiastes 3:11 concerns time itself, the temporal structure of created existence. Everything has its time, and everything occurs within the framework of the temporal order that God has built into creation. Solomon opens the chapter with the same thought: “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven” (Eccl. 3:1). But the human person, unlike the rest of the animal creation, is not simply temporal. She is temporal with eternity planted in her heart. She experiences time as something that stretches in both directions beyond her grasp. She can remember the past and anticipate the future, but she cannot step outside the present moment to survey the whole.

I use the word eventuality for this chapter because the verse is concerned with what happens, with the way things come to be, come to pass, and come to an end. Existence is not only a set of things. It is a set of events. A birth, a wedding, a harvest, a death, a coronation, and a cross all happen in time, and each has its hour. The question I ask is what it means to be a creature whose every moment is an event and whose heart is nonetheless tuned to what never ends.

I will take the matter in three steps. First I consider time as the creature knows it, as moments, as a line, and as a cycle. Then I consider

time as God appoints it, in the two Greek words *chronos* and *kairos*. Last I consider the eternity that God has put in the heart, which makes the whole study necessary, and which no study can exhaust.

A. Temporary: The Punctiliar, Linear, and Cyclical Dimensions of Time

I identify three modes of temporality. The first is the punctiliar, the momentary, instantaneous events that punctuate the flow of experience: births, deaths, decisions, encounters. The second is the linear, the directional flow of time from past through present to future, with a beginning and an ending. The third is the cyclical, the recurring patterns of nature and human life, the days, the seasons, and the generations, that give time its texture and rhythm. Each of the three is a created gift, and each, when it is rightly received, teaches the creature to number his days.

“So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.”

— Psalm 90:12

1. The Punctiliar: Moments

The punctiliar events of life are among the most theologically charged: the moment of new birth, the moment of conversion, the moment of death. These are not merely points on a timeline. They are encounters with eternity breaking into time. Solomon sets them first in his poem: “a time to be born, and a time to die” (Eccl. 3:2). Paul speaks of the same suddenness when he says, “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). A person does not drift into the kingdom by slow accumulation. There is a day on which the Spirit gives life, even if the person cannot name the hour.

The last of these moments is the one that no person escapes. “It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment” (Heb. 9:27). I do not mention it to frighten the reader. I mention it because a person who has never faced the final punctiliar event has not yet understood what kind of creature he is. The knowledge that my days are numbered is the beginning of the wisdom for which the psalmist prayed,

and it is the reason the gospel comes as good news. Christ has met the last moment on my behalf, and for the believer it is no longer a wall but a door.

2. The Linear: History

The linear dimension of time is what makes history possible, the sequence of events that constitutes the redemptive narrative from creation through fall and redemption to consummation. Scripture opens with a beginning, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1), and it moves toward an end that God has already declared: “declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’” (Isa. 46:10). The Lord God declares Himself the One who holds both ends of the line: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8).

Oscar Cullmann, who taught at Basel, argued in *Christ and Time* that the New Testament understands time as a line with Christ at its centre, so that everything before Him looks toward Him and everything after Him looks back to Him. I find this a faithful reading. The line of history is not a meaningless road. It has a midpoint, and the midpoint is a person.

3. The Cyclical: Seasons

The cyclical patterns of time, the seasons of nature, the rhythms of work and rest, and the generations of families, are God’s gift of stability and pattern within the linear flow. After the flood God promised, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease” (Gen. 8:22). The moon itself keeps a calendar: “He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting” (Ps. 104:19). The cycles are God’s patience made visible. Every morning is a small promise that He has not forgotten His world. Without the cycle, a line would be unbearable, and without the line, a cycle would be a prison. God gave both, and the wise person lives by the one while hoping for the other.

God built a cycle into the week as well as into the year. “Remember the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy” (Exod. 20:8). The seven-day rhythm of work and rest does not come from the sun or the moon. It comes from the Creator’s own pattern in the first week. Jesus explained its purpose: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). The weekly rest is a reminder, built into time itself, that the creature is not the owner of his hours. Each seventh day he lays down his work and confesses that the world is held by Another. In this way the cycle of the week teaches what the line of history declares: time belongs to God.

B. Temporal: Kairos and Chronos

The Greek language distinguishes between two modes of time that are crucial for biblical theology. *Chronos* is clock time, the measurable, sequential flow of duration. *Kairos* is the appointed time, the right moment, the time of God’s acting. Both are present in the New Testament’s description of Christ’s coming: “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son” (Gal. 4:4), where the word for time is *chronos*, and “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15), where the word for time is *kairos*.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

— Galatians 4:4–5

The relationship between *chronos* and *kairos* in redemptive history is one of the most beautiful features of biblical theology. God is not merely a passive observer of the flow of chronological time. He is the Lord of history who appoints the *kairos* moments, the decisive interventions, within the *chronos* sequence. Daniel says that God “changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings” (Dan. 2:21). Jesus Himself lived by an appointed time. He told His brothers, “My time has not yet

come, but your time is always here” (John 7:6). Paul says that “at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6).

The cross of Christ is the supreme *kairos*, the right moment, appointed before the foundation of the world. Peter says of Christ, “He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you” (1 Pet. 1:20). The fullness of chronological time had arrived, and the Father sent the Son. The two words are not sealed in separate rooms. Paul can speak of “a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him” (Eph. 1:10) using *kairos*, and the risen Lord can say to His disciples, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority” (Acts 1:7), using both words side by side. The point does not depend on a rigid division of vocabulary. It depends on the truth that the clock and the calendar of the world are in the hand of the One who sent His Son.

This truth makes a difference to the believer who is tempted to think that time is only passing. Paul tells the Ephesians to be “making the best use of the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16). Time is not our enemy and it is not our property. It is a trust. Each hour carries a possibility that God has set in it, and the wise person watches for what the hour is for.

Waiting belongs to the believer’s share in the appointed time. Habakkuk cried out to God for justice, and the answer seemed slow. He was told that “the vision awaits its appointed time,” and then, “If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay” (Hab. 2:3). The waiting is not empty. The same God who appointed the hour of Christ’s coming has appointed the hour of every answered prayer, every healed grief, and every promise kept. A person who understands *kairos* does not rush God, and he does not give up on Him either. He keeps his lamp burning and his eyes open.

C. Eternity in the Heart: The Incomprehensible Horizon

The deepest and most mysterious element of Ecclesiastes 3:11 is the declaration that God has put eternity into man's heart. The Hebrew *olam*, often translated "eternity," carries the meaning of that which extends beyond the horizon of what can be known, the far past and the far future that stretch beyond human sight. God has planted in the human person a longing that reaches beyond the horizon of the present moment, beyond the boundaries of death, and beyond the limits of what can be experienced in a finite lifetime.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

— Psalm 90:2

1. The Longing Planted

This planted eternity is the root of all religion, all philosophy, all art, and all human longing for meaning, transcendence, and permanence. Calvin said that God has implanted in every human mind a sense of His divinity, and that no one can wholly erase it. The psalmist put the same longing in the language of thirst: "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Ps. 42:1–2). A creature who was only temporal would never have asked what lies beyond time. That we ask is the evidence of what has been set in us. Augustine knew the longing from the inside, and he gave it its most famous sentence in the *Confessions*: "Our heart is restless until it rests in Thee."

The word heart deserves a moment of attention. In Scripture the heart is not merely the seat of feeling. It is the centre of the whole person, where thought, will, and affection meet. "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" (Prov. 4:23). When Solomon says that God put eternity into man's heart, he means that the longing lies at the very centre of the person, where decisions are made and loves are formed. It is not an ornament on the edge of life. It is the

source from which the rest of life flows, and that is why it cannot be silenced by busyness, by pleasure, or by success.

2. The Limit Set

Eternity in the heart is not eternity in the hand. God who “inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy” (Isa. 57:15) has set the horizon beyond our reach, and He has done it deliberately. “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Cor. 13:12). I would be wrong to treat this limit as a deprivation. If I could survey the whole of time, I would no longer need to trust the One who holds it. The limit is the place where faith begins. Peter reminds us that “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. 3:8), and the believer is content to let the Lord keep the calendar.

Only God holds eternity in the full sense. Paul describes Him as the One “who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:16). The creature has eternity in the heart as a longing. The Creator has eternity as His own life. The gap between the two is not one that effort can bridge, and I would be foolish to try. It can be bridged only from the other side, and that is exactly what happened when the eternal Word entered time. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1), and “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

3. The Rest Given

The limit is not the end of the story, because the One who set the longing has also provided the answer. This planted eternity is also, I hold, the deep structure of the human vocation to worship. Worship is the response of the creature who has felt the pull of the infinite and has chosen to orient that longing toward its proper object, the God who has always been, who always will be, and in whom the time-bound creature finds, at last, her rest. The Lord Jesus gave the invitation to every restless heart: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give

you rest” (Matt. 11:28). David had already learned where the rest is found: “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11).

Paul turned this hope into a way of life: “as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). The believer lives in two times at once. He keeps his appointments, plants his fields, and numbers his days. He also lives with his face toward the horizon, because he knows whose horizon it is.

Time, then, is a gift with two faces. As moments, as a line, and as a cycle it is the stage on which the creature lives. As *chronos* and *kairos* it is the stage on which God acts. And behind both stands an eternity that He has put in the heart and kept in His own hand. The verse ends where it began, with God and what God has done. Solomon does not give us a conclusion that we can hold. He gives us a conclusion that holds us, and I turn now to what the creature does in response.

Reflection Questions: Chapter 3

1. Solomon says that man “cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end” (Eccl. 3:11). How does the acknowledgment of this epistemological limit produce humility in your approach to theology and to life?
2. The distinction between *chronos* (measured time) and *kairos* (appointed time) is crucial for understanding how God acts in history. Can you identify a *kairos* moment in your own life, a time when God acted decisively in the flow of your *chronos* experience, and how might you tell that story to your church family as an encouragement?
3. The longing for eternity planted in the human heart is the root of all human restlessness. Augustine famously said, “Our heart is restless until it rests in Thee.” In what areas of your life do you most acutely feel this restlessness? How does faith in the living God address it?

Write a short prayer this week that names your restlessness and brings it to Christ.

Conclusion: Our Highest Vocation Is Worship

The meditation that Ecclesiastes 3:11 invites us into leads, inevitably, to a single conclusion: the appropriate response of the time-bound creature to the eternity-planting God is worship. It is not the worship of blind deference, as though the limits of human knowledge were simply frustrating. It is the worship of glad submission, the recognition that the God who is beyond full comprehension is precisely the God who is worthy of all trust, all love, and all praise. Solomon draws the same conclusion a few lines after our verse: “I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him” (Eccl. 3:14).

The universe in its quantifiable structure, its numbers, colours, and directions, declares the precision and generosity of its Maker. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). The mystery of consciousness and the energetic dynamism of matter declare the personal and powerful character of the One who sustains all things by the word of His power. The temporal flow of human life, punctiliar, linear, and cyclical, is the stage on which God writes the redemptive narrative that culminates in the fullness of time, when He sent forth His Son. And the eternity planted in the human heart is the invitation to reach beyond all of this, not to despair but to worship.

Worship, rightly understood, is not a mood. It is the offering of the whole person to the God who made the whole person. “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Rom. 12:1). It is also not a matter of place or of ritual alone, for Jesus said, “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). The one who has been brought to the

edge of what he can know has been brought to the right place for it. There the creature stops trying to be God and begins to be what he was made to be.

The psalmist Asaph, who had almost lost his footing when he looked at the prosperity of the wicked, found his footing again in the sanctuary of God, and what he found there is the end of every limit: “Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Ps. 73:25–26). Asaph does not claim that he understands everything. He claims that he has God. That is the posture the verse in Ecclesiastes was written to produce. When the creature can no longer find out what God has done from the beginning to the end, he is left with God Himself, and he discovers that this is enough.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism begins with a question that the whole of this book has been circling: “What is the chief end of man?” and it answers, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” The two verbs belong together. To glorify God is to acknowledge that He is greater than I can measure. To enjoy Him is to rest in the fact that the One who is greater than I can measure has made Himself my Father in Christ. Solomon says, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13).

You were not made to fathom God. You were made to know Him, to love Him, and to enjoy Him forever. And the God who planted eternity in your heart is the same God who, in Christ Jesus, has made a way for you to do exactly that.

Soli Deo gloria.

Personal Questions and Challenges

These nine questions are for private reflection, for family devotions, or for a small group. Each ends with a concrete step, because a truth that is only admired has not yet been obeyed.

On the Order of Creation

1. Choose one ordinary object, such as a leaf, a clock, or a piece of cloth, and study it for ten minutes for its number, its colour, and its direction. What does it show you about the God who made it, and what in it lies beyond your power to understand?
2. God told Abraham, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them” (Gen. 15:5), and Abraham found that he could not. Where in your own life have you tried to count, measure, or control what only God can number? Write down one such area and bring it to God in prayer this week.
3. Jesus said, “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matt. 10:30). Name one worry that seems too small to bring to Him, and bring it to Him today, believing that no part of your life lies outside His care.

On Mind and Matter

4. The “hard problem of consciousness” remains without a generally accepted solution on materialist terms. How would you explain to a thoughtful friend why you hold that the human person is made in God’s image, “in the image of God he created him” (Gen. 1:27)? Write your answer in three sentences and share it with someone this week.

5. Paul said that in God “we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Think through a single day and ask where you acted as though your breath and strength were your own. Confess it, and give thanks for one specific gift of that day.
6. Hebrews 1:3 says that Christ “upholds the universe by the word of his power.” How does it change the way you pray for your church, your family, and your city when you remember that He is the One who holds every atom together? Choose one request and pray it by name each day for a week.

On Time and Eternity

7. The psalmist prays, “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom” (Ps. 90:12). If you knew that you had one year of ordinary life remaining, what would you set right? Choose one thing and take the first step this week.
8. Paul urges believers to be “making the best use of the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:16). Name one person to whom God has given you an opportunity this month, to speak, to serve, or to forgive. Act on it before the month is over.
9. Paul writes that “the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). Where is your restlessness pointing? Write a short prayer that names it, bring it to Christ, and share it with a trusted believer.

Glossary

Chronos: The Greek word for clock time, the measurable and sequential flow of hours, days, and years.

Consummation: The final completion of God's purposes in history, when Christ returns and all things are made new.

Cyclical Time: The repeating patterns of time, such as days, seasons, and generations, that give life its rhythm.

Epistemological: Having to do with how we know what we know, and with the limits of what a person is able to know.

Hard Problem of Consciousness: The name a philosopher gave to the question why physical activity in the brain is accompanied by inner experience at all, so that there is something it is like to be a person.

Imago Dei: A Latin phrase meaning the image of God. It describes the way every human being, male and female, was made to reflect God and to be in relationship with Him.

Kairos: The Greek word for an appointed time, the right moment, the time that God chooses for His action.

Linear Time: Time understood as a line running from a beginning to an end, so that history moves in one direction and events do not repeat.

Mass-Energy Equivalence: The discovery, summed up in the equation $E = mc^2$, that matter and energy are two forms of the same thing and can be changed into one another.

Olam: The Hebrew word translated "eternity" in Ecclesiastes 3:11. It speaks of what is age-long and stretches beyond the horizon of what a person can see.

Punctiliar Time: Time understood as a series of single moments or events, such as a birth, a decision, or a death, each happening at one point.

Redemptive History: The unfolding story of God's saving work, from creation, through the fall and the coming of Christ, to the new creation.

Rest-Mass Energy: The energy that belongs to matter simply because it has mass, even when it is perfectly still.

Space-Time Continuum: The name physicists give to space and time taken together as one framework in which every physical event takes place.

Standard Model: The current scientific theory of the smallest particles of matter and of three of the four forces that act on them.

Temporality: The condition of living within time, with a past that has gone, a present that is passing, and a future that has not yet come.

Tov Me'od: The Hebrew words for "very good" in Genesis 1:31. They describe the creation as good both morally and in its beauty.

Wisdom Literature: The books of the Bible, such as Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, that teach how to live skillfully under the rule of God.

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About the Author

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar is a Pastor Emeritus who holds the degrees of Th.B. (Bachelor of Theology), A.B. (Bachelor of Arts), and D.D. (Doctor of Divinity). He has devoted his life and ministry to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the rigorous theological formation of God's people, and the equipping of pastoral leaders for faithful and effective ministry in church and society.

Pastor Bal served for many years as a pastor and theological educator, and has been a central figure in the work of Holistic Enhancement for Lay-leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.), a parachurch ministry committed to equipping the whole people of God for faithful service across every sphere of life. His monthly theological lectures to the HELP, Inc. fellowship have addressed the most foundational questions of the Christian faith, and these studies, expanded, deepened, and formatted for print, have shaped the theological works he continues to write.

His theological formation reflects sustained engagement with the whole of the Reformed and evangelical tradition. Among those whose thought has most shaped his own are Augustine of Hippo, John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper, Louis Berkhof, Benjamin B. Warfield, Oscar Cullmann, Herman Dooyeweerd, Karl Barth, Paul Jewett, Francis Schaeffer, R.C. Sproul, and Ravi Zacharias. He reads every theological question through the lens of the whole counsel of God, and has spent a lifetime teaching others to do the same.

The present work, *God Set Time and Eternity in the Heart of Man*, represents Pastor Bal's most meditative engagement with the mystery of human temporality and the eternity that God has planted within us. It invites the reader to stand at the edge of what can be known and to bow before the God who inhabits eternity.

Other theological works by the author:

Spiritual Unity and Personal Diversity in Christ · Why God Did Decree and Allow Evil to Exist · What the Christian Church Should Be · The Reformed Theological Paradigm · The Holy Loving Triune Lord God · The Truth of Divine Election · Biblical Christian Cosmology · Cosmological Arguments for the Origin of the Universe · Eastern / Western Thinking and World-and-Life Views · The Epistemological Thinking for Christians · The Progressive Parallelisms in the Book of Revelation · The Seventy Weeks of Daniel · The Five Solas · The Threefold Understanding of Salvation · The Thinking Process of the Christian Mind · Millennium in the Bible · The Seven Loci of Christian Theology · Six Calvinistic Schools on Soteriology · Paul's Summary of His Message in the Ministry · Doctrines of Divine Grace Part II · Biblical Salvation: A Study in Soteriology · The Work of the Holy Spirit · The Reformed Theological Summary of Life · The Five Illustrations of Divine Truths · Our Attitude Towards Wealth · The Main Subjects of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses · The Seven Churches of Revelation · In Everything, Give Thanks to God · Divine Election unto Salvation · Comparing and Contrasting Calvinism and Arminianism · The Athanasian Creed Understood by Faith · Vital Words Related to Salvation · The Seven Loci of Dogmatics

He lives with his beloved wife, Estrella. He is the father of Dr. Ellazar and Zarelle Grace. He continues to preach, teach, write, and intercede for the reformation and renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ, until the day when faith gives way to sight and the knowledge that is now partial becomes the knowledge that is full.

Soli Deo gloria.