

Question: "Please explain the following terms: eternity, eternal, everlasting and forever?"

These words are often used in our translations to convey the thought of that which has no ending. The following verses describe God, the Christian's reward, the kingdom of Christ, and the word of God in these terms.

- For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits **eternity**, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa 57:15).
- The **eternal** God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; he will thrust out the enemy from before you, (Deu 33:27).
- So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come **everlasting** life" (Lk 18:29-30).
- Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things (read vs.5-9, bj) you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the **everlasting** kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 1:10-11).
- "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures **forever**." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you (1Pe 1:24-25).
- The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring **forever**; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether (Psa 19:9).

Everlasting and forever may mean an extended period of time.

In one passage, the scripture speaks of the earth lasting "forever", yet in another passage it says the universe will "pass away...melt...be burned up...be dissolved."

- One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides **forever** (Ecc 1: 4).
- But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will **pass away** with a great noise, and the elements will **melt** with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be **burned up**. Therefore, since all these things will be **dissolved**, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be **dissolved**, being on fire, and the elements will **melt** with fervent heat (2Pe 3:10-12).

The priesthood of Aaron, under the old covenant (testament), was called an "everlasting priesthood," yet we are told that his priesthood was "changed...of necessity" when the new testament came into affect after the death of Christ.

- You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an **everlasting** priesthood throughout their generations (Exo 40:15).
- For the priesthood being **changed, of necessity** there is also a change of the law (He 7:12).

How can we know when the words *everlasting* and *forever* mean "that which has no end, and when they mean "an extended period of time"? The safest way to understand these terms is by following the pattern used in this article, i.e., examine the terms in light of their context and in view of related passages of scripture.

One thing for sure, the destiny of your spirit will have no end. Do you serve Jesus Christ with your spirit? Is He your Lord and do you want to do His will? Jesus calls you to believe and put your trust in Him, to repent and turn to Him, to confess your faith and be baptized into His body for the forgiveness of your sins (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:44-47). Have you done these things, why not now? Give us a call.

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