

# IN A BILLION YEARS

## 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

### INTRODUCTION

- “In a billion years from now, will it matter?”
- This is a question that puts things into perspective
- Every person lives their lives according to a “world view” – that is, our conception of existence, reality and life; how we understand the world and our relationship to it
- For most people, they live their lives as if this present life and world is all that is; they are “men of the world, which have their portion in this life” (Psalm 17:14)
- They live according to only what they can see and touch, with no thought to spiritual things
- Very few people live with a view of eternity
- Are you living by what you see, with only this present world in view? Or are you living according to the unseen, the eternal?

### I. OUR OBLIGATION TO AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

- A. It is every man’s duty to prepare for eternity
  1. One of Satan’s greatest accomplishments has been to convince multitudes of people that *this* life in this present world in these mortal bodies, is all there is – that we do not have immortal souls, that we do not face judgment, that there is NO ETERNITY
  2. The most foolish thing a person can do is to fail to prepare for eternity and lose his own soul (Mark 8:36)
  3. As Christians, many of the problems we bring upon ourselves can be traced back to our failure to live with an eternal perspective
  4. Instead we make choices based upon a temporal, here-and-now perspective

### II. THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

- A. It will prepare you for the day of judgment

1. The doctrine of future judgment was preached by Christ and the apostles (Matthew 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; Mark 6:11; John 12:48; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 24:25)
  2. The person who truly understands that he must face God's judgment, and his soul must spend eternity in either heaven or hell, is more likely to flee to Christ for life and salvation than the one who is blind to these things
  3. The true Christian has an eternal perspective that guides his conduct in light of the coming day of judgment
  4. Such a person lays up treasures not down here, where they become corrupted or stolen, but in heaven, where they abide forever (Matthew 6:19-21)
- B. It sustains through suffering
1. It makes our sufferings appear small (2 Corinthians 4:17; Romans 8:18)
  2. It brings peace in suffering (Philippians 4:6-7)
  3. It brings us joy in suffering (Matthew 5:11-12; Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- C. It will make death sweet
1. In the light of heaven, death is precious, and sweet, it is a "going home" (Psalm 116:15; Philippians 1:23)
  2. *And thou, most kind and gentle death,  
Waiting to hush our latest breath,  
Thou ledest home the child of God,  
And Christ our Lord the way hath trod.*
- D. It will change your view of others
1. It will make you view others as souls that will spend eternity somewhere, and to whom you have a duty to rescue with the gospel (Jude 22-23)

### III. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

- A. The obstacle
1. One of the great difficulties every Christian must contend with is that of subduing the powerful influence of the *visible*

2. As physical beings dwelling in natural bodies, the five senses hold immense power over us
  3. This is why there are so many admonitions in scripture to not live by what we see and hear, but by faith in the truth of divine revelation
- B. We must exercise sound judgment according to the word of God
1. “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18)
  2. “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” (Hebrews 11:26)
- C. Fix your eyes of faith on heaven
1. Where you are looking determines how you are living; what you are watching determines where you are walking
  2. Hebrews 11:13-16 describes two different countries, one earthly and temporal, the other heavenly and eternal
    - a. “seen” and believed by faith (13)
    - b. “seek” – not passive looking, but active seeking (14)
    - c. “mindful” – the mind and thoughts are captured (15)
    - d. “desire” – the affections are set on things above (16)
  3. We “look for a new heavens and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:11-14)
- D. Feed your soul on the right things
1. Make your soul’s health the priority, rather than the body
  2. Job esteemed God’s word more than his necessary food (Job 23:12)
  3. Christ’s food was to do the Father’s will and to finish his work (John 4:31-34)
  4. “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14)
- E. Separate from the world and its philosophy
1. “Remove far from me vanity and lies” (Proverbs 30:8)

2. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

F. Redeem the time

1. “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Ephesians 5:16)
2. “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” (Psalm 90:12)

G. Surround yourself with godly people who will provoke you to godliness

1. “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.” (Proverbs 13:20)
2. “I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.” (Psalm 119:63)
3. “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.” (Malachi 3:16)

## CONCLUSION

1. For the unbeliever, this life is as good as it gets; for the believer, the best is yet to come
2. “This world is all the hell that ever a true Christian is to endure, and it is all the heaven that unbelievers shall ever enjoy.” (Jonathan Edwards)
3. Next time you face trouble and trials, ask, “In a billion years from now, will it matter?”
4. In eternity, this former world will not be remembered nor come into mind (Isaiah 65:17)
5. Next time you face a time decision, ask, “In a billion years from now, will it matter?”
6. Sometimes the choice we face is not between the evil and the good, but between the good and the better, or the better and the best
7. And if we are Christ’s, and he is our example, we must always choose the best (Philippians 1:10)
8. *Only one life, ’twill soon be past,  
Only what’s done for Christ will last.* (C T Studd)