

Eternity

Why is it important to prepare for Eternity? The simplest answer is that eternity is a long time, and you must choose with whom you will spend it.

I'll illustrate through mathematics just how long eternity is; or rather, just how short eternity isn't.

First, let's establish that eternity implies "never-ending", or an infinite number of years. Let's start with 10 years. Is 10 years eternity? Hardly. You have been alive at least 10 years now; some of us, two or three times that! Writers have sometimes spent 10 years working on a single novel.

How about 10 to the 10th power (10¹⁰) years, that is, 10 multiplied by itself 10 times, or 10 billion years? A large number, but is that eternity? In scientific terms, the number 10 billion is not even impressive. For example, it is estimated that there are 100 trillion (10¹⁴) cells in your body; multiplying that by the billions of people living on earth right now, you can see that that number is quite a bit larger than 10 billion. But is that many years eternity? No, only a mere drop in the ocean.

How about if we raise 10 to the 10th power to the 10th power again? It would look like this:

$$10^{10^{10}}$$

This is an incredibly large number, represented by the number 1 followed by 10 billion zeros. If I were to type 10 billion zeros on 8½" x 11" paper with ¼" margins using Arial 10-point, it would cover almost 1½ million sheets of paper, nearly 3,000 reams. And if I could type 5 zeros every second, 300 zeros per minute, 16 hours every day, the job would take over 63 years to complete – just to *write* that number!

I could raise that number to the 10th power again, but would that many years represent eternity? No, only the beginning moments. Can you see the immensity of eternity? Jesus said in John 5:24 (HCSB), "I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has *eternal life* and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life."

Eternity is a long time. With whom will you choose to spend it?

Dan Wagner, August 1979
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