

## Forever

### Introduction:

The Word translated “forever and ever” in the Lord’s prayer is translated from the words **εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας** In the original Greek,. It literally means “into the ages.”

Since **αἰῶνας** is plural it is translated “forever and ever.” The singular of this word is found in Matthew 28:18. Here, Jesus says: **“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”** In Mark 10:30, Jesus talks about the age to come, and once more the singular is use

### 1. Forever

When the Bible uses the word forever, it may mean unending. In Psalm 102:27 we read that the years of God have no end. However, the word forever in the Bible does not always mean never passing away. It may mean a very long time, as in the next two Bible verses. **“Then Daniel said to the king, ‘O king, live forever!’” (Daniel 6:21).** And in Ecclesiastes we read: **“One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever” (Eccl 1:4).**

We know that the earth is not eternal, but the Word of God is, because Jesus says: **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35).**

Jesus came to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. The gospel is called everlasting.

**Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6).**

Jesus has given us an everlasting covenant through his death and resurrection. We read:

**Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you complete (Hebrews 13:20 -21a).**

### 2. What else is eternal?

Besides the Word of God, what else is eternal? We have already seen that Psalm 102:27 states that the **“years will have no end.** God is eternal. Psalm 90:2 says **“Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”**

Of Christ we read: **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).**

God’s attributes are eternal. Let us consider his mercy, righteousness and truth. Of them we read:

**But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children (Psalm 103:17).**

**They bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever" (2 Chronicles 7:3b).**

**As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever" (2 Corinthians 9:9).**

**For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever (Psalm 117:2).**

And right here in the Lord's prayer we are reminded that the kingdom, the power, and the glory are God's forever and ever. The church is His. The cause is His. Let us not forget that. It is always His. Not ours. We are only partakers of it. And glory be to God forever and ever, as we also read in Galatians 1:5 to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

### 3. Eternal Life

The best known Bible verse in the New Testament speaks of something eternal or everlasting.

**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).**

Jesus confirms this in John 6.

**This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever (John 6:58).**

Both the righteous and the unrighteous face eternal consequences:

**And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matthew 25:46).**

Horrid is the fate of those who oppose God until the end.

**Then He will also say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41)**

**The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10).**

The good news is that Jesus died for you and if you are not yet ready to inherit eternal life, 1 John 1:9 shows you how you can become ready today. The joy that floods the soul that finds forgiveness and is accepted into the family of God is called everlasting joy. The next verse demonstrates this:

**And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:10).**

#### 4. Eternity

Another word that means unending is eternity. In the English language, eternity and forever can mean the same thing. However, when we speak of eternity, we often mean timelessness. We speak of time and eternity. We say time is a part of eternity, but when time ends, eternity continues. We also speak of those that have died as having entered eternity, because they are no longer living in our time, yet we know that their souls are very much alive. To grasp the enormity of timelessness or our concept of eternity consider the following example.

Suppose there is a huge mountain, and suppose once every 1000 years a bird comes and flies up to the mountain and takes away a grain of earth from that mountain. How long would it take for that mountain to disappear? And when it finally disappears, then the first second of eternity will be over.

So we use the word eternity both to describe timelessness, as well as a place or reality beyond time. In English, the word eternal means unending and shares the same root as eternity. When Christians think of eternity, they will always think of heaven.

#### 5. Heaven

Heaven is called our eternal home. The things of this world will pass away, but we have an everlasting hope, an abode prepared for us with the Eternal Father. Paul says:

**While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 4:15 - 5:1).**

#### Summary

We find in the Bible the terms forever, eternal, and everlasting. God's years are said to be without end. The word forever, when used in the Bible does not always mean eternal. It can mean a long, long time, as when Solomon describes the earth as abiding forever. Christ's gospel however is the everlasting gospel, and his covenant is an everlasting covenant. Heaven and earth will pass away, but not the words of Jesus. Earthly kingdoms have come and gone, but the Kingdom of God remains forever. His is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. The things which are seen are temporary, but we have a home with God, eternal in the heavens.

#### Questions

1. In which contexts does the New Testament use the word age or ages?
2. In which Bible passages does the word *forever* not mean unending?

3. What will never pass away?
4. What are some other words meaning everlasting?
5. Why is the gospel called everlasting?
6. Name some of God's eternal attributes.
7. What is eternal life?
8. How does one escape eternal punishment and gain eternal life?
9. Give two meanings for the word eternity.
10. What do Christians call their eternal home?