

The Infinity of God#2—God’s immensity

Intro: Last week we talked about the infinity or transcendence of God. God is limitless and boundless. He possesses inexhaustible resources. God’s infinity of seen in His eternal nature. God’s infinity can also be seen in His immensity. Eternity expresses God’s infinity with reference to time; Immensity expresses God’s infinity with reference to space.

The World’s immensity—a frame of reference

We live in a tremendously large Universe.

If we drew a map of the Milky Way galaxy, and represented the Earth and Sun as two dots one inch apart (thus a scale of one inch equals 93 million miles—the distance between the Earth and the Sun), we would need a map at least four miles wide to locate the next nearest star, and a map 25,000 miles wide to reach the center of our galaxy.

The Milky Way galaxy in which we live contains over 100 billion stars, and is so large that even traveling at the speed of light would require 100,000 years to cross its diameter. Light travels in one year approximately 5.87×10^{12} miles; in 100,000 years, that would be 5.87×10^{17} miles, or 587 quadrillion miles just to cross the diameter of a single galaxy.

There are an estimated one billion galaxies in the Universe (Lawton, 1981, 89[1]:98), and an estimated 25 sextillion stars.

While its outer limits have not been measured, it is estimated to be as much as 20 billion light years in diameter (i.e., the distance it would take light to travel across the Universe at a speed of over 186,000 miles per second; see Lawton, 1981, 89[1]:105).

God’s Immensity (Infinity with reference to space)

God is without extension.

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable. (Psalm 145:3)

“Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? “They are high as the heavens, what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? “Its measure is longer than the earth, And broader than the sea. (Job 11:7-9)

God greater than the created universe.

Thus says the Lord, “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? (Isaiah 66:1)

Who is like the Lord our God, who is enthroned on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? (Psalm 113:5-6)

God is not subject to limitations of space; but is the cause of space.

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built! (1 Kings 8:27)

Space is an intuitive extension of existing things. Space does not exist by itself; but is the accompaniment of the existence of things. Thus, just as God created the earth, He created space.

We live in a spacial world. We are on earth; God is we say “in heaven” (our way of describing God’s transcendence in terms of space). More accurately we could say “we are on earth in God”. who “above all, through all, and in all!”

God’s involvement in the world reveals His immensity.

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance, And the hills in a pair of scales? (Isaiah 40:12)

Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless. (Isaiah 40:15-17)

It is He who sits above the vault of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. (Isaiah 40:22)

Implications of God’s immensity

God’s immensity should cause us to serve with fervor and faithfulness. The fervor and faithfulness of our worship will depend upon the “size” of our God.

Are “big godders” or “little godders”? If we see the true greatness of God, we are more humbled to do his will. If not, then we are stubborn and resistant. Stephen reflected upon the Jewish ancestors of his audience in Acts 7 and God’s message through Isaiah in chapter 66. They rejected God’s word because their concepts of God were too small. Thus, Stephen could see the same in their descendants.

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.” (Acts 7:51, NKJV)

God’s immensity will cause us to be penitent in our sins and respectful of His word. There are no favors we can do for God; but there is something that God clearly seeks from us! Isaiah 66 makes this clear:

“He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog’s neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine’s blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations, ” (Isaiah 66:3, NKJV)

“For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist,” Says the Lord. “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word. ” (Isaiah 66:2, NKJV)

We demonstrate our view of God by the humility and fear we have for God's word and penitence we experience for sin.

*"Lord", I said, "I want to be your man, not my own,
So to you I give my money, my car, even my home."
And, smug and content I relaxed with a smile
And whispered to God, "I bet it's been a while
Since anyone has given so such much, so freely."
His answered surprised me. He replied, "Not really;
Not a day has gone by since the beginning of time
That someone hasn't offered meager nickels and dimes,
Golden altars and crosses, contributions and penance,
Stone monuments and steeples. But why not repentance?
The money, the statues, the cathedrals you've built,
Do you really think I need your offerings of guilt?
What good is money that's meant only to salve
The hurting conscience that so many of you have?
Your lips know no prayers; your eyes no compassion.
Oh, but you go to church when church going is in fashion.
Just give me a tear, a heart ready to mold,
And I'll give you a mission and a message so bold
That a fire will be stirred where there was only death,
And your heart will be flamed by my life and my breath.
I stuck my hands in my pockets and kicked at the dirt.
It's tough to be corrected; I guess my feelings were hurt.
But it was worth the struggle to realize the thought
That the cross isn't for sale and Christ's blood can't be bought.*

God's immensity will cause us to wait upon Him in times of weakness and discouragement.

Why did Isaiah seek instill within the people of God a sense of His greatness? Because they thought God had forgotten them; they thought He had fallen asleep.

"Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the Lord, And my just claim is passed over by my God"? " (Isaiah 40:27, NKJV)

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Thus, He strains metaphors to communicate the greatness of the Lord. And then applies His message!

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall

run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:28-31, NKJV)

Conclusion: So, how big is your god? The user-friendly god is apparently not very big, because those who serve Him feel free to change His will at their discretion and offer to Him worship that pleases and entertains them! They live like they want to and get encouragement from the pulpits to do so.

Is our God big enough to cause us to want to please Him in worship? Is He big enough to cause us to put off our stubbornness and obey Him? Is He big enough to cause to mourn our sins? Is He big enough to cause us to respect every commandment He gives us?