

ETERNITY IS NOW IN SESSION

A RADICAL REDISCOVERY OF WHAT JESUS
REALLY TAUGHT ABOUT SALVATION,
ETERNITY, AND GETTING TO THE GOOD PLACE

JOHN ORTBERG

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: ARE WE THERE YET?

1. Bobby Azarian, "Apeirophobia: The Fear of Eternity," *Atlantic*, September 1, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/09/apeirophobia-the-fear-of-eternity/498368/>.
2. Brenda B. Colijn, *Images of Salvation in the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 88.
3. *Ibid.*, 96.
4. J. W. Roberts, quoted in Colijn, *Images of Salvation*.
5. Stephen Prothero, *God Is Not One* (HarperCollins, 2010), 65–66, 72–73.
6. See, for example, Ali Hasan and Richard Fumerton, "Knowledge by Acquaintance vs. Description," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, March 10, 2014, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/knowledge-acquaintandescr/>.
7. Dallas Willard, *Renewing the Christian Mind: Essays, Interviews, and Talks*, ed. Gary Black Jr. (New York: HarperOne, 2016), 307.
8. John Calvin quoted in Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 157.
9. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 32.
10. Huston Smith, *The Soul of Christianity: Restoring the Great Tradition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 77.

CHAPTER 1: BREAKING NEWS

1. Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 108.
2. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: HarperOne, 2001), 141.

ETERNITY IS NOW IN SESSION

3. John Henry Newman quoted in Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 37.
4. Fleming Rutledge arranges her magisterial work *The Crucifixion* around these two dynamics: sin is guilt for which atonement must be made, and sin is an alien power that must be overcome. See Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 189.
5. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 302.
6. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 130.
7. Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 51.
8. See, for example, Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14-15. Jesus announces the Kingdom, teaches about life in the Kingdom, and heals because the Kingdom (the range of God's effective will) is what prophets called *shalom*. See also Luke 8:1; Luke 9:1-2. The disciples were on the same mission with the same message as Jesus. In Matthew 6:10, Jesus says we are to pray for the Kingdom to come, for God's "will [to] be done on earth as it is in heaven." In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says to "seek first his kingdom." In Matthew 13:44, Jesus describes the Kingdom as treasure in a field, worthy of selling all we have to possess. And in Acts 28:31, at the very end of the book, Paul is proclaiming the Kingdom.
9. Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 21.
10. Dallas Willard, personal communication with the author. See also Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 399.
11. Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 10–11.
12. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 298.

CHAPTER 2: THE MINIMUM ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), 18–19.
2. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
3. *Ibid.*, 20–21.
4. "Bible Lacking Sinner's Prayer Returned for Full Refund," *Babylon Bee*, August 16, 2016, <http://babylonbee.com/news/bible-lacking-sinners-prayer-returned-full-refund/>.

JOHN ORTBERG

5. George MacDonald, “Wisdom to Live By” from *The Writings, Spiritual Vision, and Legacy of George MacDonald & Michael Phillips*, 2006, <http://www.macdonaldphillips.com/fromtheheart.html>.
6. Rankin Wilbourne, *Union with Christ: The Way to Know and Enjoy God* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2016).
7. George MacDonald, “Justice,” *Literature Network*, <http://www.online-literature.com/george-macdonald/unspoken-sermons/31/>.
8. Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 122.
9. G. K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930), 60.
10. Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, vol. 1, *The Christbook: Matthew 1–12*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 31.
11. William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying: The Corrected Text* (New York: Vintage International, 1990), 176.
12. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, volume 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 168.
13. Cornelius Plantinga Jr., “Sin: Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be,” Christ on Campus Initiative, 2010, <http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/ccii/Pantinga.pdf>.
14. Patrick Ramsey, “Union and Communion,” *Meet the Puritans* (blog), March 30, 2017, <http://www.meetthepuritans.com/blog/union-and-communion>.

CHAPTER 3: FOLLOW ME

1. Laura Hillenbrand, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* (New York: Random House, 2010), 376.
2. Michael Burkholder, *Lincoln’s Christianity* (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2007), xi.
3. Huston Smith, *The Soul of Christianity: Restoring the Great Tradition* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 84.
4. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), 258.
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 51.
6. See Matthew 22:34–40; John 13:35.
7. Tim Harmon, “Who’s In and Who’s Out? Christianity and Bounded Sets vs. Centered Sets,” *Transformed* (blog), January 17, 2014, <https://www.westernseminary.edu/transformedblog/2014/01/17/whos-in-and-whos-out-christianity-and-bounded-sets-vs-centered-sets/>.

ETERNITY IS NOW IN SESSION

8. See Joshua 2:1; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25.
9. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980), 209–10.
10. Simon Sinek, “How Great Leaders Inspire Action,” filmed September 2009, at TEDxPugetSound, video, 17:58, https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action.
11. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 46, 56.

INTERLUDE: THE GREAT JOURNEY

1. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 275.
2. *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001), 88.
3. Martin Luther, quoted in James Arne Nestingen, *Martin Luther: His Life and Teachings* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 38.
4. Linda Stone, “Continuous Partial Attention,” <https://lindastone.net/qa/continuous-partial-attention/>.
5. *Union* has been used in different ways by different writers. For instance, the Puritans would often distinguish between “union” and “communion.” They used the word *union* to describe the unchanging love God has for us when we enter into his family. It is objective and stable, like my being the son of my parents, and we treasure it because it never varies. *Communion* was used to describe our often-changing experience of this relationship with God—much closer to the way we’ll be using the word *union* in this book.
6. See Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York: New Directions, 2007), 237.
7. Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, vol. 1, *The Christbook: Matthew 1–12*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 83.
8. Benedict J. Groeschel, *Stumbling Blocks or Stepping Stones: Spiritual Answers to Psychological Questions* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 108.
9. Benedict J. Groeschel, *The Reform of Renewal* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 199.
10. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 32.

CHAPTER 4: AWAKENING: SEEING GOD EVERYWHERE

1. Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1977), 75.

JOHN ORTBERG

2. M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, expanded by Ruth Haley Barton (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), chapter 8.
3. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 66.
4. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (The Modern Library, 1902), 8, quoted at Bill Leonard, “Dull Habit or Acute Fever? William James and the Protestant Conversion Crisis,” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, Summer/Autumn 2015, <https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/articles/summerautumn2015/dull-habit-or-acute-fever>.
5. Leonard, “Dull Habit or Acute Fever?”
6. James L. Crenshaw, *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions: Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995), 292–93.
7. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), chapter 15.
8. *Ibid.*, 5.
9. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: HarperOne, 1980), 31–32.
10. Gloria Steinem, “Anne Lamott Talks to Gloria Steinem about Writing, Kindness, and Making Sense of the Universe,” *Cosmopolitan*, April 3, 2017, <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/lifestyle/a9224345/anne-lamott-gloria-steinem-hallelujah-anyway/>.
11. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002), 176.
12. Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 61–62.
13. Alcoholics Anonymous, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (New York: The A. A. Grapevine and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1981), 106–7.
14. See chapter 7 in Bill J. Leonard, *A Sense of the Heart: Christian Religious Experience in the United States* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014). Emphasis added.
15. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 36, 42–43.
16. Thomas Merton, “The Night Spirit and the Dawn Air,” in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Image Books, 1968), 167.

CHAPTER 5: PURGATION: LEAVING BAGGAGE BEHIND

1. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition of Edification and Awakening by Anti-Climacus* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 84.
2. *Ibid.*, 126.

ETERNITY IS NOW IN SESSION

3. Ibid., 109 (emphasis added).
4. Ibid., 115.
5. Quoted in Terre Spencer, “It’s Hard to Get Enough of What *Almost* Works,” <http://www.jungatlanta.com/articles/summer11-hungry-ghosts.pdf>.
6. Kent Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue: Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 186–87.
7. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Boston: C. H. Simonds Company, 1892), 49.
8. David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (New York: Random House, 2015), 6–7.
9. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2001), 122–24.
10. Cornelius Plantinga Jr., *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 82–83.
11. Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 620.
12. James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 107.
13. Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 60.
14. Dallas Willard, quoted in Gary Moon’s unpublished manuscript.
15. George MacDonald, *Knowing the Heart of God: Where Obedience Is the One Path to Drawing Intuitively Close to Our Father* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1990), 52.
16. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998), 342.
17. Plantinga, *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be*, 34.
18. Interestingly, the Septuagint—the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament—often uses cognates of *hygiano* to translate *shalom*, a word that we usually translate as “peace” but that has a much richer meaning, closer to wholeness.
19. Plantinga, *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be*, 35.

CHAPTER 6: ILLUMINATION: A NEW MENTAL MAP

1. Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*, ed. John Albert Macy (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1905), 21.
2. Ibid., 23–24.
3. Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, chapter 5.
4. Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 148–50.

JOHN ORTBERG

5. Matthew 16:16 in *Da Jesus Book* (Orlando: Wycliffe Bible Translators, 2000).

CHAPTER 7: UNION: NEVER ALONE

1. Amanda White, “Smells Ring Bells: How Smell Triggers Memories and Emotions,” *Brain Babble* (blog), January 12, 2015, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/brain-babble/201501/smells-ring-bells-how-smell-triggers-memories-and-emotions>.
2. Quoted in Terre Spencer, “It’s Hard to Get Enough of What *Almost* Works,” <http://www.jungatlanta.com/articles/summer11-hungry-ghosts.pdf>.
3. Erwin Schrödinger, *What Is Life?: With Mind and Matter and Autobiographical Sketches* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 69.
4. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 57.
5. Christopher J. H. Wright, *Salvation Belongs to Our God: Celebrating the Bible’s Central Story* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 43.
6. Rankin Wilbourne, *Union with Christ: The Way to Know and Enjoy God* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2016).
7. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.xvii.1.
8. Huston Smith, *The World’s Religions* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 115.
9. Mallory Ortberg, “Ayn Rand Reviews Children’s Movies,” *The New Yorker*, December 18, 2014, <https://www.newyorker.com/humor/daily-shouts/ayn-rand-reviews-childrens-movies>.
10. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1980), 16–17.
11. Brenda B. Coljin, *Images of Salvation in the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 249.
12. Luke Timothy Johnson, foreword to *The Faith of Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, by Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), xiv.
13. Klyne Snodgrass, *Who God Says You Are* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 94–95.
14. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 69.
15. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1952), 63–64.
16. *Ibid.*, 175–77.
17. *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 201.