

# **FAST Lesson 5F:**

## **A Real Man Looks beyond This Life – Difficult Questions (Part 3)**

John Kain, 2010

- I. The discussion of suffering and free will for men raises another question: How do we reconcile man's ability to make good or bad choices with the apparent fact that God controls everything, and even knows our choices ahead of time? In other words, how do God's will and our free will both work at the same time?
  
- II. This question is related to the overall topic of **time** - a dimension that enables events occurring at the same point in space to be distinguished and measured by the interval between the events. We think of time as a linear dimension where one moment follows another. For us, one moment disappears before the next comes along. For us, life consists of the past, present and future. We can't change the past, we can only operate in the present, and our influence over the future is limited to making things happen and waiting for the results.
  
- III. It is difficult to understand the cosmic aspects of God's power because we naturally assume that God operates in time and space like we do. We can't know with any certainty when our self or another person will make a life changing decision in the future. So how is God involved without destroying our right and our responsibility to choose for ourselves?
  
- IV. Based upon what we see in scripture, many knowledgably men and women have suggested that God is not constrained by time and space. Because he created them, it is reasonable to assume he is able to move in and out of these dimensions. C.S. Lewis puts it this way: "Almost certainly God is not in Time. His life does not consist of moments following one another. If a million people are praying to him at ten-thirty tonight, he need not listen to them all in that one little snippet we call ten-thirty. Ten thirty – and every other moment from the beginning of the world – is always the Present for Him."

V. Our decisions matter to God. Somehow it is possible for us to have freedom of choice in our reality while his influence is maintained in ways that we can't fully understand, because his ways are not constrained by the dimension of time. We must accept for ourselves the linear nature of time and our ability to be in only one place at the same time, but we dare not limit our appreciation of God's ability to be unconstrained by these conditions of time and space.

**"The LORD works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster."**  
(Proverbs 16:4)

**"For a thousand years in your sight are like a day** that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night." (Psalm 90:4)

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, **for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.**" (Philippians 2:12-13)

**"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."** (Colossians 1:17)

"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: **With the Lord a day is like a thousand years,** and a thousand years are like a day." (2 Peter 3:8)

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For **those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son,** that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. **What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?"**  
(Romans 8:28-31)