



Clocks, Time and Omniscience

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Abstract

I suggest there is no such thing as “time itself.” I use this term in the same sense that philosophers of time use it. One has said, “It is important not to confuse the actual physical clock that measures time with time itself,”² This paper is speculative, since if a time-detecting device should be found, my case would be defeated. I suggest that clocks define time.³ Early Christian theologians such as Augustine and Boethius, drawing from Platonists, particularly Plato and Plotinus, have argued that God is omniscient. Augustine relied on a belief that God made time and saw everything simultaneously. Boethius had a similar view of God’s eternity.⁴ Insofar as a case for God’s omniscience depends on this view of his eternity, then God is not omniscient. I suggest several reasons why some think God is omniscient and argue that they are not correct; I base this view on Scripture and other philosophical considerations. All biblical references are from the Revised Standard Version, Second Edition, 1971.

Original Research



Keywords:

philosophy of time, omniscience, eternity, clock, Augustine, Boethius, divine foreknowledge, theological fatalism.

Received: 2024/08/28; Received in revised form: 2025/10/23; Accepted: 2025/11/12; Published Online: 2025/ 11/15

■ Belding, R. (2025). Clocks, Time and Omniscience. *Journal of Philosophical Theological Research*, 27(3), 5-20. <https://doi.org/10.22091/jptr.2025.12544.3267>

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2. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/05/25/health/optic-clock-redefining-the-second/index.html> (accessed September 16, 2024)

3. “The answer to how we measure time may seem obvious. We do so with clocks. However, when we say we’re measuring time, we are speaking loosely. Time has no physical properties to measure. What we are really measuring is time intervals, the duration separating two events.” <https://www.nist.gov/how-do-you-measure-it/how-do-you-measure-second> (accessed September 16, 2024)

4. Boethius: *The Consolation of Philosophy*, (Dover Publications, Mineola, New York, 2002, 1962), translated by Richard H. Green, Book V, Prose 6. “For it is one thing to live an endless life, which is what Plato ascribed to the world, and another for the whole unending to be embraced all at once as present, which is clearly proper to the divine mind.”

Introduction

I suggest there is no such thing as “time itself.” I use this term in the same sense that philosophers of time use it. One has said, “It is important not to confuse the actual physical clock that measures time with time itself,” (Christensen, 2016). This paper is speculative, since if a time-detecting device should be found, my case would be defeated. I suggest that clocks define time.¹ Early Christian theologians such as Augustine and Boethius, drawing from Platonists, particularly Plato and Plotinus, have argued that God is omniscient. Augustine relied on a belief that God made time and saw everything simultaneously. Boethius had a similar view of God’s eternity.² Insofar as a case for God’s omniscience depends on this view of his eternity, then God is not omniscient. I suggest several reasons why some think God is omniscient and argue that they are not correct; I base this view on Scripture and other philosophical considerations. All biblical references are from the Revised Standard Version, Second Edition, 1971.

Time itself is nowhere to be found, whereas clocks are everywhere

Philosopher of time, Craig Callender, in an interview in 2016, asserted, “It is important not to confuse the actual physical clock that measures time with time itself ...”. The “Time” entry in the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy has nineteen references to “time itself” (Dowden, n.d.), and the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy has four (Emery et al., 2024). So, it is reasonable to use the phrase “time itself” as a marker for the claim that time is something. Since we use “time” extensively in our language, it makes little sense to say “time does not exist,” even though this is what I am arguing. Ontologically, time does not exist. Clocks play such an important part in our lives that we find it difficult to distinguish between “time” and the “passage of time.”

I contend that clocks do not measure time; rather, they count events. Caesium atomic clocks count changing energy levels, but they do not

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1. “The answer to how we measure time may seem obvious. We do so with clocks. However, when we say we’re measuring time, we are speaking loosely. Time has no physical properties to measure. What we are really measuring is time intervals, the duration separating two events.” (“How Do You Measure a Second?”, 2025)
 2. “For it is one thing to live an endless life, which is what Plato ascribed to the world, and another for the whole unending to be embraced all at once as present, which is clearly proper to the divine mind.” (Boethius, 2002, Book V, Prose 6)

provide a measure of time. Caesium atomic clocks refer to “The duration of 9192 631 770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the caesium-133 atom” (Optical Clocks – Physics World, n.d.). I know of no device that measures time or a physical property of time. Pending the discovery of such a device, I suggest we do not use a phrase such as “time itself” because that implies time is actually a thing.

Atomic clocks define time inasmuch as they define the subunits of seconds and are repeatable in their precision measurements. It is the repeatability of atoms, at their common frequency, that makes this possible. The NIST-F1 atomic clock in Boulder, Colorado, has an expected error of only 1 second in about 100 million years (Bikos, n.d.). More accurate optical-lattice atomic clocks have even greater accuracy (NIST, 2025).

Moreover, clocks are a part of most mammalian cells. Charles Weitz says, “Circadian clocks are molecular oscillators with ~24-hour periods that drive daily biological rhythms. Such clocks are found in all of the major branches of life, and likely represent ancient timekeeping systems important for predicting daily environmental cycles on our rotating planet. In mammals, circadian clocks are present in most, if not all, cells. These distributed clocks control myriad processes, in aggregate creating coherent 24-hour programs of physiology and behaviour” (Bikos, n.d.).

Time cells in the hippocampus aid in episodic memory and retrieval (Eichenbaum, 2014).

We measure space by rulers and by other, more sophisticated devices. Gravity waves have also been measured. Gravity waves were detected by two linked Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatories (LIGOs) on 8 August 2017.¹ However, I suggest there is no device that measures time; a device measures only the *passage* of time.

Theology: eternity and time

In theology, “eternity” and “time” have been used in some cases to justify the theory that God is omniscient. Augustine and Boethius pursued this path, and their theological momentum has contributed to the continued belief in omniscience. Perhaps most Christian

1. These two sites are in Livingston, Louisiana, and Hanford, Washington, and managed by staff from Caltech in Pasadena, California, and MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts

theologians believe in some form of omniscience. I shall mention just two of them: Elenore Stumpf and William Lane Craig.

Unravelling Augustine's dependence on Platonism and Plotinus would seem to be an endless task. Instead, I will rely on his account in Book XI of *Confessions*. The translation by Henry Chadwick¹ points out many similarities with Plotinus's writings. Others similarly believe that Augustine relies on Plotinus² and "is more faithfully Neo-Platonic and more specifically Plotinian than heretofore commonly acknowledged."

Augustine thought God "made" time. In *Confessions*: XI xiii (15), he wrote, "Since, therefore, you are the cause of all times, if any time existed before you made heaven and earth, how can anyone say that you abstained from working? You have made time itself. Time could not elapse before you made time. But if time did not exist before you made heaven and earth, why do people ask what you were doing then? There was no 'then' when there was no time." xiv (17) "There was no time when you had not made something, because you made time itself. No times are coeternal with you since you are eternal. If they were permanent, they would not be times."

In terms of logic, there is a short distance between God making time and God being outside of time. However, there is a distinction. He could have made time, and by his omnipotence could have placed himself within time or not. But this would have required a different world where time was something.

In XI, vii (9), Augustine writes of "simultaneity in eternity" and "simultaneity and eternity". He also writes "spoken eternally", "uttered eternally", and "a true eternity". It seems to me that Augustine is building a model whereby God lives somewhere "in eternity" where everything is simultaneously before his sight.

In XI, xi (13) this is made clearer still: "In the eternal, nothing is transient, but the whole is present." Henry Chadwick³ points out a similar statement from Plotinus.

I, too, affirm that God is eternal; that he always has been. I believe that "from nothing comes nothing", so something has always existed. It is another thing, however, to claim that what has always existed and continues to exist is the creator God; a topic for another analysis, and there may be few resources for this. However, I take it as a given that

1. See Augustine, 1991, Especially Book XI, "Time and Eternity."

2. See O'Connell, 1969, 1989, ix.

3. Chadwick's note on Plotinus, footnote 17.

the creator God has always existed.

While God is eternal, without beginning or end, some have understood “eternity” as a state or a place.

Boethius considers that “Eternity is the whole, perfect, and simultaneous possession of endless life. The meaning of this can be made clear by comparison with temporal things. For whatever lives in time lives in the present, proceeding from past to future, and nothing is so constituted in time that it can embrace the whole span of its life at once” (Boethius, 2002, Book V, Prose 6).

Eleonore Stump has a similar position. In an interview with Robert Lawrence Kuhn, she remarks, “... God is outside of time and sees everything simultaneously ...” (Stump, 2016). In another interview she opines, following Boethius, that God is outside of time and sees everything in the present. (Stump, 2017)

William Lane Craig holds a similar view. “Of course, temporarily there are no distinct moments in God’s knowledge, for everything he knows simultaneously” (Craig, 2000, p. 129).

Augustine’s view that God is outside of time does not seem to have any biblical warrant. But he claimed God created time. Perhaps this could be traced from his Christian mentor, Ambrose of Milan, who was influenced by Plotinus and Plato and whose work Augustine perhaps absorbed.

Augustine and Boethius seem to have taken Plato and Plotinus as good sources for insight into time. But this does not mean their ideas about it were correct. However, there is no evidence, so far, that time is something. I contend that no one, not even God, can be outside of time, because time is not something one can be outside of.

One simple objection to “there is no such thing as time itself” is that the same types of atomic clocks measure time with different results. Is time something because it is measured differently? Since the early 1960s, it has been demonstrated that time, as measured by atomic clocks, runs more slowly in the presence of strong gravitational fields; the stronger the field, the more slowly the clocks run. Clocks count events, but they do not measure time. Global Positioning Systems need to synchronize the clocks they use in their systems. Clocks on Earth run more slowly than clocks in orbit around the Earth where gravity is weaker. Since gravity acts on clocks, this seems to negate the claim that time is something, because different atomic clocks yield different time durations under varying gravitational fields.

More precise results are available in measuring atomic clocks’ (Bothwell, T. et al., 2022) dependence on gravity’s field strength.

I suggest that we persist “over” or “through” time. We do not persist *in* time. We also live in a three-dimensional space. We conveniently parameterize time to make a four-dimensional world, where the fourth parameter is atomic clocks under the influence of gravity. It is mathematically simple, and convenient for us to do this for many reasons. For example, we time tag events in space in order to perform Global Positioning System calculations.

If my contention is correct, then contrary to the model presented by Augustine and Boethius, God is *not* outside of time. He seems to share space-time with us and does not do everything at once. Cases where God has declared knowledge of the future are open to enquiry. Insofar as cases for God’s being omniscient rely on God’s seeing everything simultaneously or God being outside of time, this kind of omniscience is not plausible.

Why suggest that God is not omniscient?

The problem with omniscience is not that God knows all of the past and present. *Rather, it is the implication that he knows all of the future also.* This leads to a kind of theological fatalism, which will be defined when we deal with objections to *kinds* of omniscience. In simple terms, for God to know all of the past, he would need only a large database, recording all past events and the relationships between them. Then he could consult this database whenever he needed to. The point here is to propose a human model of how this might be done, not to explain how God actually does it.

It is only a plausibility argument, similar to Boethius’ argument as to how God sees everything simultaneously. For God to know the present, he would merely need to scan all persons and detect every system, extracting data sufficient to capture every thought, desire, and aspiration. Since he made us, he would know where to look. He would need to do this with a frequency high enough to scan all persons. Ps 139:1-6 declares this. So much for speculation as to how God achieves full knowledge of the present.

“Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.”

Has God ever changed His mind?

If God has always been omniscient, then he could not change his mind.

Craig, in an interview some years ago, agrees with this (Craig, 2000, p. 129). I will first suggest that, *prima facie*, instances in Scripture where God changes his mind are clear. In Exodus 32, God informed Moses that a molten calf had been made and was being worshipped and sacrificed to. In Exodus 32:9, God said, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation.” In 32:11, Moses asked God to remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel and avert any coming destruction. In 32:14, God changed his mind.

A similar story is found in 1 Samuel 15, where the Lord sent Samuel to anoint Saul king over Israel. Later, the Lord commanded Saul to kill the Amalekites, including Agag, their king. Saul did not fulfill this command. Samuel heard of this and confronted Saul, who first made excuses and later repented. In 15:11, the Lord repented over his decision to make Saul king.

To support omniscience, one could argue that God already knew he would change his mind, knowing in advance the details of the unfolding events. This explanation ignores the context of these events. In Exodus, there is a simpler account of God being persuaded by Moses. In 1 Samuel, there is a simple statement of God’s displeasure at Saul’s disobedience. Either model would explain how God could change his mind.

Has God always been omniscient?

If God were omniscient at the beginning of creation, then however we interpret Genesis 3, God would not have been surprised by Adam’s and Eve’s sin. If God were always omniscient, there could be no possibility of a human being performing an event about which God did not know everything. In other words, we would be completely determined.

If one holds the view that God sees everything simultaneously, perhaps also holding the view that God is outside of time, then his omniscience might seem natural. But I have already suggested that there is no such thing as time itself. So, there would be no time to be outside of.

The belief in omniscience has been held by Christians for a long time. It has seemed natural. It seems to affirm God’s greatness. It fits into Anselm’s concept that God is a being “*than which nothing greater can be conceived*” (Anselm & Williams, 2001, ch. 2). Certainly, God is great. But how we think about and articulate his greatness is not

straightforward. Our notions of greatness might not align with God's. For example, our notion of fairness might not align with him who "made the heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry" (*Ps 146*) Our concept of greatness might not align with the Son of God becoming incarnate and being born to a woman. More problematic still for our understanding of greatness is the notion that the Son of God was crucified and died a horrible death. I ask that we keep alive the idea that our personal concepts of greatness might not be those of our Creator.

For a lively defence of a type of broad-spectrum omniscience, see Bruce A. Ware. (Ware, 2000).

The notion of omniscience made sense to me when I thought Augustine's argument was correct, namely that God created time and that his and Boethius' description of eternity was plausible. But after doubting the detection of time itself, I looked again at omniscience, searched for its Scriptural justification, and found nothing convincing; I found only philosophical claims for omniscience and none convinced me of the claim that God knew all future events.

A Christian believer would naturally want to ascribe to God all that is due to him in worship and in adoration. I believe this is right and proper, but only if that which is due to him has been correctly derived. Anselm, in his *Proslogion*, speaks of God as *that than which nothing greater can be conceived*. This definition depends on what we mean by "great." When we think of greatness, I suggest we need to rethink our notions of it. How many items do I possess? How much influence do I have? When we are invited to think of God's greatness, where can we stand to observe it? One way, perhaps the only way, is to observe the acts of God in history as we understand them. The creation of everything that exists, the resurrection of the God-man for our redemption, the raising of Lazarus, and the healing of many physical illnesses. Rather than using our imaginations to understand notions of greatness, it has to be our observations of God's acts in history, as best we understand them, if we want to grasp his greatness.

When we think of God's perfections, we should not imagine our own limited perfections and extrapolate them, but rather think of God's character. We should think of instances where the God-man invites us to consider his actions. Such as his words in John 15:12-13. "*This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" This also needs to be a disciplined activity, in planning, executing,

reviewing, and revising.

Other grounds for believing in omniscience

There are at least five other arguments in favor of God's omniscience.

1. Consider the claim in Genesis 1:26-27:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; ... So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

It has been thought that, whatever else this means, it involves rationality, some free will, and an ability to have a relationship with God. If God retained his omniscience throughout the history of the created cosmos, then there would be no free will and a reduced capacity for humans to have a relationship with their creator. I have postulated “*some* free will” as Scripture teaches us that God sometimes acts in history to achieve whatever he wants. Since God is all-powerful, he could make himself omniscient, but only if he wanted to.

Based on my reading of this passage, it seems clear that the phrase “*in his own image*” indicates that at creation God endowed persons with creative powers, including the ability to disobey God-given commands.

2. In Scripture, Christ predicted Peter would deny him. See Matthew 26:33-35, Mark 14:29-31, Luke 22:33-34, and John 13:36-38. These and other examples clearly teach that God knows *some* future events. There is, however, no clear statement that God knows *all* future events. Some have thought verses such as Isaiah 40:23-24, Isaiah 46:10, Psalm 147:4, Matthew 10:29, Proverbs 5:21, Psalm 139:2-4, and Matthew 6:8 indicate omniscience. None of them does. Take Isaiah 46:10 as an example.

*“I am God, and there is none like me,
declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose ...’”*

“Declaring the end from the beginning” is a broad statement allowing much between a beginning and an end. “I will accomplish my purpose” also might include giving a person freedom to go against God's commands.

For one who views God as being outside of time and seeing

everything simultaneously, such a view would be implausible because God sees everything clearly and without ambiguity.

One could extrapolate from these instances to claim that God knows all future events, but I suggest this is not warranted, as most of these verses speak of current time or past time.

3. Craig asserts that Ps 33:13-15 shows that “God’s knowledge of creation includes knowledge of all human affairs:

The Lord looks down from heaven, he sees all the sons of men; from where he sits enthroned, he looks forth on all the inhabitants of the earth, he who fashions the hearts of them all, and observes all their deeds.” (Craig, 2000, p. 22)

It seems to me he extrapolates from current deeds to all events in the future. On the following page, Craig infers omniscience in Scripture from Jeremiah 17:9-10.

“God does not, however, merely observe our *actions*, but in one of the most startling affirmations of divine omniscience, we are told that God knows our very *thoughts*. One of Jeremiah’s characteristic emphases, for example, is that God discerns and weighs human hearts and minds:

The heart is deceitful above all things,
and desperately corrupt;
who can understand it?
I the Lord search the mind
and try the heart, to give every man according to his ways,
according to the fruit of his doings.” (Craig, 2000, p. 23).

This is a reference to current and past actions, but it is not an affirmation of omniscience. If it were, it would have future deeds and actions built into the statements. Rather, it is an affirmation of God’s ability to look into our deeds and thoughts and understand them.

4. Others have claimed that God’s perfection requires him to be omniscient, since if God lacked any item of knowledge, he would not be perfect.

Does perfection require omniscience? I suggest it does not. This comes close to our telling God how to be perfect. We do not have sufficient theological resources to determine the details of God’s perfection.

Even a proponent of Perfect Being theology, Brian Leftow, has wondered about “making stuff up.”¹ There is a conflict between working with sufficient theological resources and the temptation to invent our own notions of perfection.

Aquinas, likely following Aristotle, suggests a way to think about God’s perfection (Aquinas, n.d., Question 4: The perfection of God). God is fully developed and not capable of future development. That is, he lacks the potential for developing further. In this sense, he is pure actuality. But gaining knowledge must be seen as a further development, which is not possible. So, God, already having all knowledge, is presumed to be omniscient.

To say that God cannot gain knowledge, however, poses a problem. When did God become incapable of gaining knowledge? For those used to thinking that God sees everything simultaneously, this question should not be allowed, since there is no passage of time with God. However, to press my claim that God shares the same space-time with us, where the time dimension is an atomic clock that is influenced by gravitational fields, I propose an answer.

Was God omniscient since the creation of the cosmos? If he saw everything at once, the creation story in Genesis 1 would be misleading.

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” This seems to be an act of acquiring new knowledge: in reflecting on creation, he decided it was “very good.”

I propose that this observation alone should cause enough hesitation to set aside Aquinas’ conclusion that God is omniscient.

5. Another way to consider God’s omniscience is to follow the thinking of Luis de Molina, who influenced Alvin Plantinga, Alfred Freddoso, J. P. Morland, Thomas P. Flint, and William Lane Craig (Craig, 2000, p. 127). Several theologians and philosophers have contributed to the development of Molinism; I shall look only at its core features, taking a hint from Matthew 11:21-23 and 1 Samuel 23:1-14, where future contingencies are discussed. A classification of types of God’s knowledge has developed that includes “*Middle Knowledge*: God’s knowledge of what every possible free creature would do under any possible set of circumstances and, hence, knowledge of those

1. Reported in Mawson, T. J. (2018). *The divine attributes, Cambridge elements* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108598101>. P. 10.

possible worlds which God could make actual. The content of this knowledge is not essential to God” (Aquinas, n.d., Question 4: The perfection of God).

After examining all possible worlds that could be instantiated, God selected one world to instantiate. This is a plausible argument that builds around God’s knowing some of the future, a model for understanding possible worlds he might have instantiated. In summary:

- a. There are few passages in Scripture where future contingencies are discussed. It would be a massive extrapolation to suggest that God’s decision to create the world involved exploring all possible worlds and then selecting one of them.
- b. The definition of Middle Knowledge contains within it the guarantee of its success. “*God’s knowledge of what every free creature would do under any possible set of circumstances ...*” The *free creature* part, I suggest, should not be allowed in a definition which already assumes omniscience. After exploring the possibilities, there would be a selection of one world to instantiate. In the mind of God, I presume, there would be a plan for this instantiation. I think of the plan as a *script for instantiation*, including every detail. After God instantiated such a world, the creatures would no longer be free; they would be bound by the set of all possibilities for the selected world. I suggest that this case needs to be made before any inclusion of “*free creatures*” in the definition of Middle Knowledge.
- c. Based on my reading of the early chapters of Genesis, I too suggest that God made free creatures, within limits. However, that does not require God to be omniscient. Our notions of omniscience have been derived from Plotinus, Augustine, and Boethius (God sees everything simultaneously), or Luis de Molina (one world instantiation), or from other sources. Each has flaws.
- d. The example in Matthew 11 concerned real persons who had already acted and made tracks in history. This could also be included in God’s knowledge if he knows the past.
- e. The example in 1 Samuel 23 does insist on God knowing the past or the present and is the most persuasive case. However, there are other interpretations of this passage that do not lead to the conclusion of Middle Knowledge.¹

1. “The incident in 1 Samuel 23 could be explained on the basis of God’s knowledge of the present character of Saul and the men of Keila – God could reasonably surmise what

Omniscience contradicts scripture

There are statements in Scripture that suggest omniscience is a flawed theory.

First, there are “if-then-else” statements, such as in II Chronicles 7:14. “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” If omniscience were true, no choice could be made because God would already know the outcome of any proceedings between the people and himself.

In Matthew 6:14-15, we read “For if you forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.” The text suggests that we can choose to forgive or not to forgive. If God knew all our future actions, such statements would not be needed. Indeed, they would be misleading, suggesting choices we do not have.

If omniscience were true, then the creation mandates listed in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 would be strange. Following the making of persons in God’s image, the mandate is to have dominion, interpreted as stewardship, over the plants and animals. Also, it says the man *named* the animals. Whether we interpret this metaphorically or literally, it would seem strange that God would ask mankind to have stewardship over the earth and to give names to animals when he already knew the outcome of all the actions.

Finally, if omniscience were true, then petitionary prayer would be useless. This contradicts Scripture, which teaches us to be diligent in petitionary prayer in statements such as Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 11:9, Luke 18:1, Acts 2:42, Philippians 4:6, and 1 Timothy 2:1-3.

James 5:14-15 encourages us in this way. “Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” Again, if omniscience were true, such statements would be misleading. No choice would be possible. So the theory of omniscience would again contradict Scripture.

It could be argued that even though God knows all about the future, the advice to persist in prayer is for our benefit, perhaps to teach us to

they would do if David were to remain” (Craig, 2000, p. 137, footnote 1).

rely on our heavenly Father.

Consider “... If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” But if God already knew all the future, there would be little sense in asking him for anything since the future would already be determined. Consider: Once God knew all the future, we presume he would know it infallibly, so there would be no possibility of the future changing. If he did not know it infallibly, then he would not be omniscient. These passages portray God as engaging with persons, not as one who knows the future infallibly.

I have argued that time does not exist because no device measures or detects time. Clocks detect events of various sorts. Richard Gale, in his analysis (Gale, 1966) of J. M. E. McTaggart’s “The Unreality of Time” (McTaggart, 1908) coined the terms “The A-Theory” (dynamic or tensed time flows) and “The B-Theory” of time (tenseless). In the A-Theory, time flows or is dynamic. In the B-Theory, it is thought that time is always present and can be thought of as a “block” having four dimensions: three dimensions of space and one of time. If this were true, then God might see in an “eternal now.” However, my question of what detects time remains.

There is a variety of “Presentism” in the A-Theory of time, where the past does not exist, only the present is ontologically real, and the future has not arrived yet. As observers, our bodies are made to detect the passage of time (Eichenbaum, 2014). There is no need for ontologically real time.

Is there a past, present, and future? Yes. Where is this? Our past is stored in as many places as we can access – from memories, archives, books, films, and from Cosmic Microwave Background (Cosmic Microwave Background - Wikipedia, n.d.) As we encounter the present, new items are embedded in our memory (Eichenbaum, 2014). And the future remains to become the present and then the past.

The theological notion that God sees *everything simultaneously* is, I believe, the source of much confusion. We need a new model of clocks, time, and how God relates to us over time. I hope this paper will contribute to the ongoing discussion.

▣ **Conflict of Interests**

▣ The author declares no competing interests.

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