


Necessary Fear

ISAIAH 6 & 57:15

Holy! Holy! Holy!


The thrice holy God emphasizes His transcendence; not bound to time or space. He is unique, unlike any other in the human experience; he is the wholly other, the unfamiliar God.

The absolute moral and ethical perfection stands in contrast to the permeating presence of sin in all of creation.



Holiness, then, is God's capacity and right to arouse our reverent awe and wonder. It is his uniqueness (Ex. 15:11; 1 Sam. 2:2), his transcendence. It is his majesty, for the holy God is like a great king, whom we dare not treat like other persons. Indeed, God's holiness impels us to worship in his presence.


John Frame in "The Doctrine of God"



The response to the revelation of the holy God is a necessary fear. This fear is a quaking of the soul that is drawn to the wonderful (wonder filled) love of God by the sovereign gift of grace

Right fear does not stand in tension with love for God. Right fear falls on its face, but falls leaning “*toward the Lord.*” It is not as if love draws near and fear distances. Nor is this fear of God one side of our reaction to God. It is not simply that we love God for his graciousness and fear him for his majesty. That would be a lopsided fear of God. We also love him in his holiness and tremble at the marvelousness of his mercy. True fear of God is true love for God defined: it is the right response to God’s full-orbed revelation of himself in all his grace and glory.

Michael Reeves, “Rejoice and Tremble”



For thus says the One who is high and lifted up,
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly
spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive
the heart of the contrite.”

Isaiah 57:15

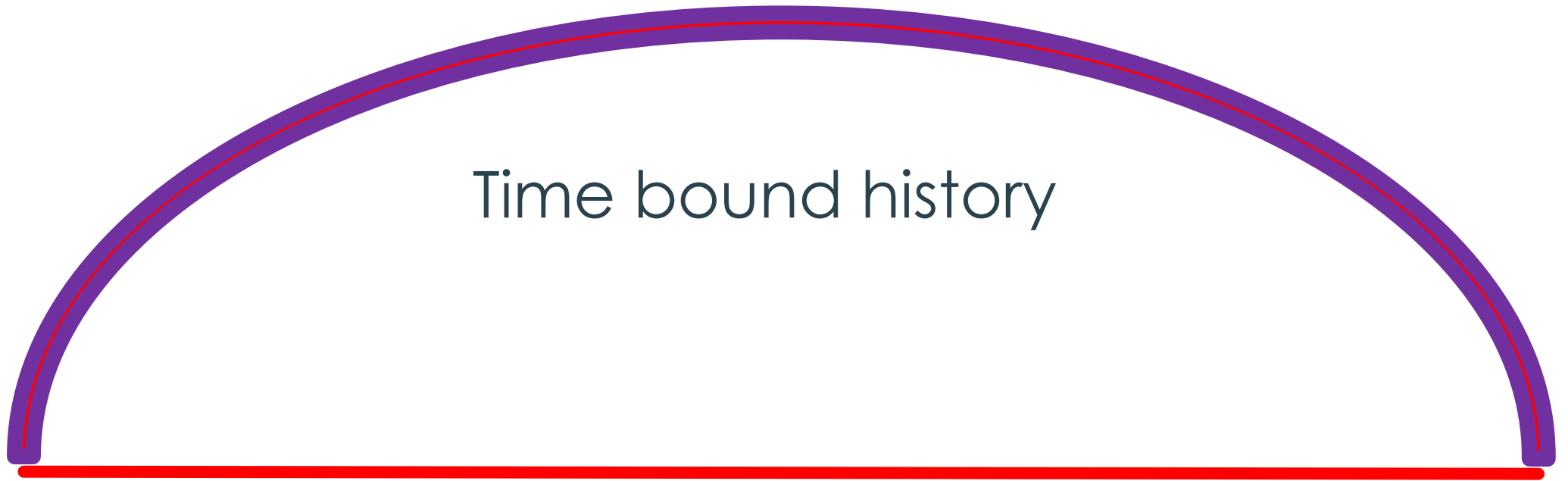
God : Transcendent
Incommunicable Attributes
eternal; simplicity; aseity; omnipresence



God : Immanence
Communicable Attributes

God is eternal
Timeless eternity

“God has no succession of moments in His own being”



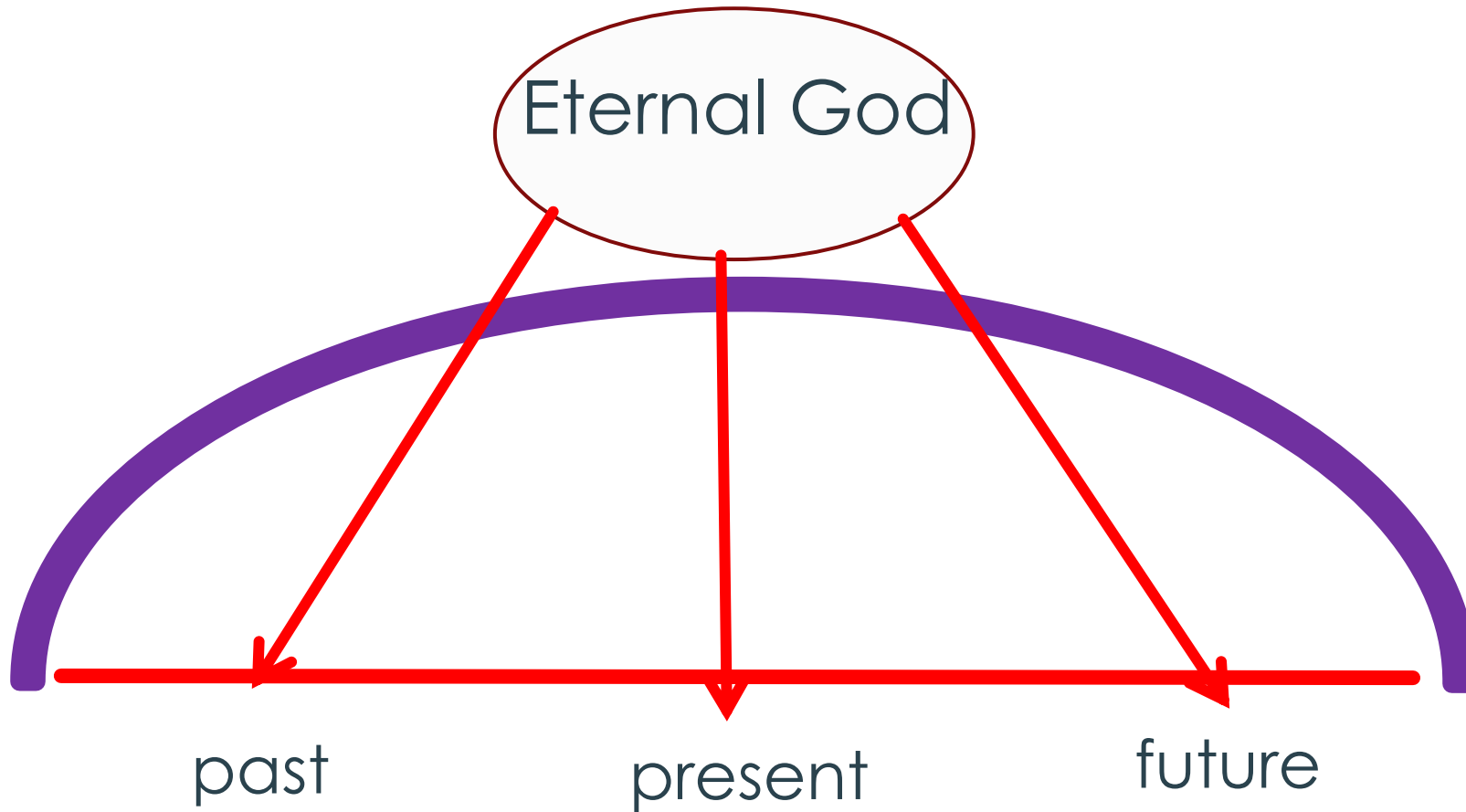
Time bound history



For a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night. Ps. 90:4

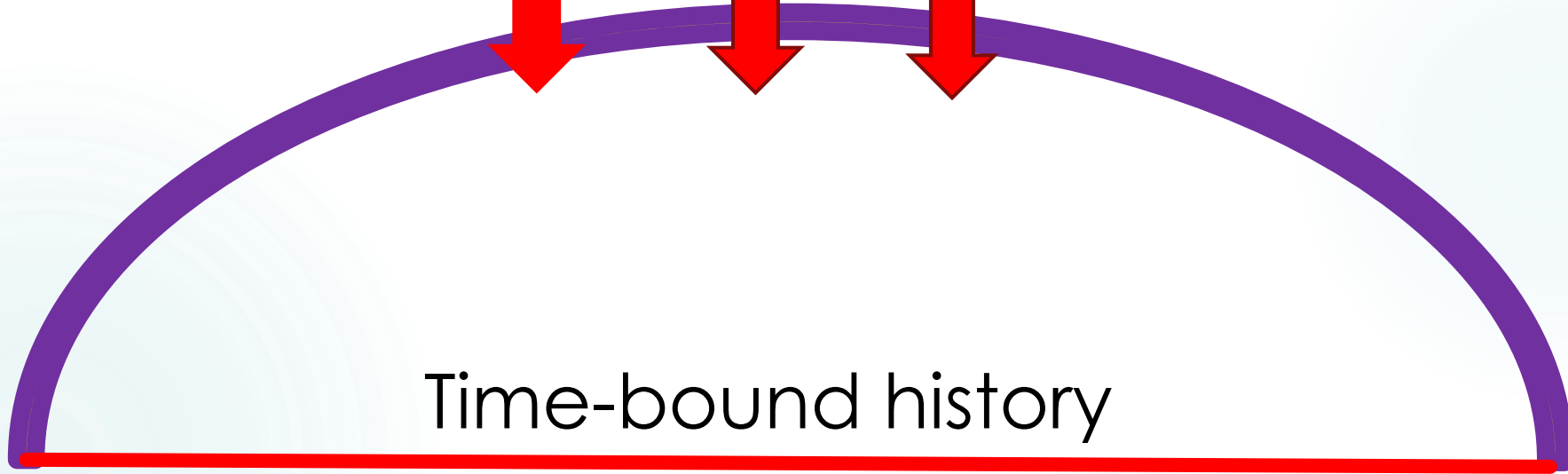
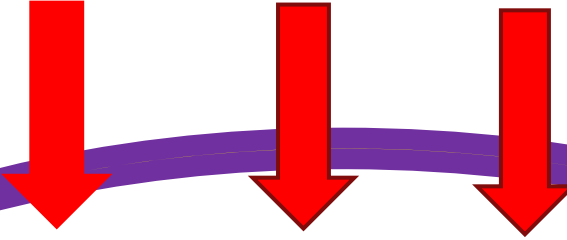
In God's perspective, any length of time seems to God to last forever: it never ceases to be present in his consciousness. Thus, God sees and knows all events past, present, and future with equal vividness.

Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology



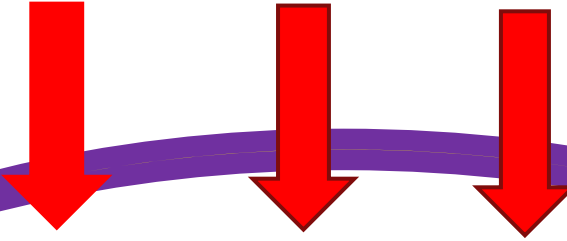
God sees all things simultaneously & as contemporary

God is eternal
timeless eternity




Time-bound history

God is eternal
Timeless eternity



Immanence
I dwell with the lowly and contrite of spirit
in order to revive the heart of the contrite



When fear of the Holy God is diminished it is replaced by familiarity. Familiarity is the leprosy of the soul. When we lose our vision of the transcendence of God (His holiness) we lose our spiritual sensitivity. The spiritual nerves of our life become desensitized, and pride becomes the destructive force in our life.



When God becomes Familiar

When we lose sight of the transcendent King our eyes are drawn to the familiar for security.

The familiar is the world in which we live, and the affairs of the world can wreak havoc on the soul. Our pride looks to solutions that we can produce and in which we can place our hope.



When God becomes Familiar

We lose the sense of His presence.

The antidote for familiarity is a regular diet of humility. True humility is fueled by a knowledge of God. Our desire to know Him begins with the awesome fear so that we experience His grace in His willingness to come near and be Immanuel.




When God becomes Familiar

Worship becomes perfunctory.


And the LORD said: “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men”.

Isa. 29:13

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Thus the “fear of the Lord” is a way of life which involves an accurate understanding of who God is and a corresponding ordering of one’s affairs. To speak of reducing this to a set of “do’s” and “don’ts” is to move one’s faith from the center to the periphery of life. No longer does living with a mighty, dynamic and free Being demand one’s whole attention.



Now it can be relegated to the level of the automatic and unthinking. In the same way, when “drawing near” to God becomes anything less than awesome and a little eerie, we have evidently forgotten Sinai and replaced interest in the Giver with interest in the gift.

John Oswalt in “The Book of Isaiah” vol 1.



When God becomes familiar

We lose our sense of mission

Our mission in life flows from the recognition of higher purpose and heavenly motive. It is this sense of mission that sustains us and enables perseverance