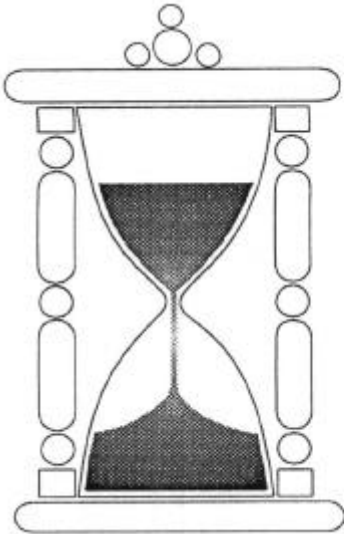


GOD and TIME

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*Original published around 1994 by Vision One Inc.
Typed into Microsoft Word April 2003 RA
Created as a Portable Document File April 2003*



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1

THE NATURE OF TIME

For the modern man living in a “western” culture, time is just something to measure with a clock.

In other cultures, this concept of time is not held. This is especially true of many ‘eastern’ cultures and of most primitive societies. To these men, time simply presents an opportunity to do whatever is ‘right’ for that particular moment. For example, at harvest time it is right to harvest the crops.

This is similar to God’s view of time, i.e. it is an opportunity that He has extended to man in which it is ‘right’ to respond to his call. The time of opportunity will not always be available, as He has already set a day in which He will judge all those who will not respond to

Him. At that day, time will be no more, because, along with the creation, it will have served its function within God's eternal plan.

CHRONOLOGICAL TIME and REALISTIC TIME

There are two ways of thinking about time. These have been called 'chronological' time and 'realistic' time¹. In modern cultures the emphasis is on the 'chronological' aspect, i.e. we think of time as something to be measured by a clock.

Alternatively, we could conceive of time as being defined by other happenings, e.g. we talk about doing things 'at the right time', and we look forward to 'holiday time'. This is the 'realistic' mode of thinking, in which time is associated with an opportunity or an event, rather than simply a system of measurement.

Whereas modern man thinks primarily of 'chronological' time, the Biblical writers generally adopted a 'realistic' view. The contrast between 'chronological' and 'realistic' is illustrated in the New Testament distinction between the Greek words **chronos** (measured time, duration) and **kairos** (time of opportunity and fulfilment).

Chronos may refer to a short time, e.g. '*a moment of time*' (Luke 4:5) or a long time, e.g. '*time of forty years*' (Acts 13:18), but always a measured time. The characteristic meaning of **kairos** can be seen in such phrases as '*time of temptation*' (Luke 8:13), and '*time of harvest*' (Matt 13:30), where the time is associated with some opportunity of event.

The Old Testament Hebrew has no proper equivalent of **chronos**, but it does have a word '**eth**' which can translate **kairos**. This is indicative of the concepts of time in the Hebrew culture. The idea of measured, chronological time was present, of course, but it was of far less importance than the 'realistic' understanding. Historians have noted that chronology, as we know it, was a late development in the Hebrew culture.

When it did develop it was largely borrowed from other cultures. This is well illustrated by considering the names of the months in the Old Testament.

The months were originally named according to a 'realistic' understanding of time, e.g. Abib - month of ripening ears (Ex 13:4); Ziv - month of flowers (I

¹ Marsh, John - 'Time, Season' article on pp258-267 in "A Theological Word Book of the Bible" edited by Alan Richardson SCM Press 1957.

Kings 6:1); Ethanim - month of perennial streams (I Kings 8:2); and Bul - month of rain (I Kings 6:38). It was only much later in the history of the Hebrews that the months began to be referred to numerically.

Throughout the Bible the word 'time' is predominately used in a realistic sense. We read of times of natural events and times of historical events, e.g. times of evening (Gen 8:11), harvest (Matt 13:30), and rain (Ezra 10:13). This thought was expressed by Solomon who wrote '*There is a time appointed for everything under heaven*' (Eccl 3:1-8)

When we understand the Biblical concept of time it better enables us to see it in relation to both God and man. If time is to be seen as an 'opportunity' of 'fulfilment' (refer to kairos earlier), then we see God as offering opportunities for man to respond to, and to fulfill. For example:

- God provides all that is needed for the harvest (rain, grass, etc. (Deut 11:14)), but the farmer must seize the opportunity at the appointed time.
- The mission of the Old Testament prophets was to explain to Israel that the events of their time were not merely haphazard happenings. They were actually a series of 'times-with-content' sent by God for His own purposes, and each demanded a certain response from His people.
- In our own context, God has declared this to be *the 'acceptable time of salvation'* (II Cor 6:2), and now calls for a response to this opportunity

TIME IN THE TEMPLE

The whole question of whether time is to be thought of in a realistic or chronological sense is to a great degree resolved when we see God as the Lord of time. To Him, time is merely a tool to bring about His purposes. Jesus indicated this at His ascension in response to His disciples' question about the timing of the restoration of the Kingdom.

'It is not for you to know times (chronos) or epochs (kairos) which the father has fixed by His own authority...' (Acts 1:7).

This response makes it clear that God has extended a time of opportunity (kairos) to man in which we have the opportunity to respond to His provision. He has also decided when this time shall begin and when it shall end (chronos). He is therefore revealed as the Lord of time in every sense.

It is important for us to understand this time of opportunity which God has extended to man, for this is the time in which we now live. To understand how God is using time, we need to comprehend something of His eternal nature and purposes, for it is only for the outworking of His purposes that time exists.

The eternal nature of God

The essence, or nature, of God is best summed up by the following three statements of scripture:

- *‘God is Spirit...’ (John 4:24)*
- *‘God is light...’ (I John 1:5)*
- *‘God is love...’ (I John 4:8, 16)*

Each of these statements lacks the definite article, and under the rules of Greek grammar, is therefore an expression of quality, nature, or essence. God is not said to be a spirit along with other spirits, but is declared to be spirit in essence.

To say the essence of God is spirit is to say that God is not bound, or limited, by any physical boundary. At the same time, spirit essence is the most real substance of all. Mere body or form does not add to the reality of the spirit essence of God.

The true definition of eternity is found within this spirit essence of God. God is not said to be eternal simply because He existed before time began, but rather is eternal in nature or essence because He is unbounded by any physical limitation. The word ‘eternal’ is therefore not so much a quantitative measure as a qualitative description.

This same concept of eternity can be applied to the many aspects of God which the scriptures describe as being eternal or everlasting:

- *‘eternal life’ (Matt 19:16)*
- *‘eternal judgement’ (Heb 6:2)*
- *‘eternal covenant’ (Heb 13:20)*
- *‘eternal purpose’ (Eph 3:11)*
- *‘eternal kingdom’ (Psalm 145:13)*

Eternal life, therefore, is not simply life which does not end, but is rather the essential life of God.² God’s desire to share His life is the central element of the eternal covenant.

² ‘Eternal’ is a translation of the Greek word ‘aionios’. William Barclay comments as follows on this word: ‘... we must remember that ‘aionios’ is distinctly the

The eternal covenant of God

The God of the Bible is a God of purpose. His eternal purpose is discussed in the scriptures under many different terms such as: the promise of the father, the Father's will, the eternal covenant, the eternal purpose of God, etc. A study of some of these terms will reveal that the central element of God's purpose is His desire to share His eternal life.

'And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.' (I John 2:25)

'... in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, (lit. 'before times eternal'). (Titus 1:2).

'What was from the beginning, (lit. 'was already in existence', not 'came into existence') ... concerning the Word of Life ... and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us ... that you may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.' (I John 1:1-3)

The second person of the trinity was set forth to be the expression, or articulation, of the purpose of God. In fact His very name 'the Word of God' embodies this truth. The Word was not set forward merely to declare the eternal purpose of God but to be the covenant. (Isaiah 42:6, 49:8). It is through Him that the whole everlasting covenant is to be brought to fruition.

'For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.' (Rom 11:36)

Creation and the created realm

The first 'outward expression' of God was seen in the creation of the heaven and the earth and all that are contained within them - including time, or 'the God appointed ages'. The creation was formed in response to a word spoken by God.

'... The material universe and the God-appointed ages of time were equipped and fitted by God's word for the purpose for which they were intended ...' (Heb 11:3).³

'Then God said ... and it was so.' (Gen 1:9)

word of eternity, and that it can properly describe only that which essentially belongs to and befits God. ... therefore eternal life is nothing less than the life of God Himself.' "New Testament Words" SCM Press 1964.

³ Weust, Kenneth S. - "The New Testament - An Expanded Translation."

'For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created by Him and for Him.' (Col 1:16).

This creation meant there were now two distinct realms viz., the eternal realm and the created realm. It was God's eternal purpose however, to use the created realm to bring man into the eternal realm. We have seen, for example, that it was His purpose to bring man into eternal life, i.e. to give man the life of the eternal realm. In summary, the created realm is to be seen as a tool which God is using to achieve His eternal purpose.

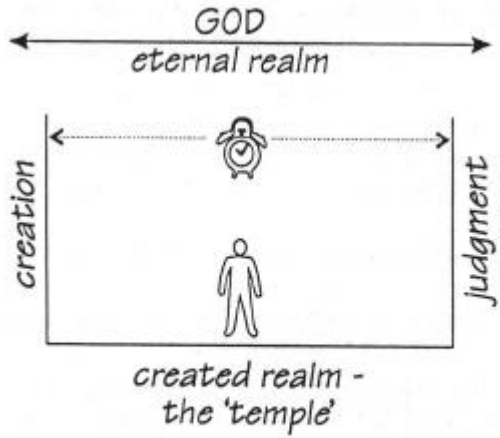


Fig 1 - The Two Realms

The created realm was set forth as the context within which the eternal purposes of God would be worked out. It was *the 'tabernacle, which the Lord pitched,⁴ not man.'* (Heb 8:2). It was the context within which the Lord Jesus Christ (our great High Priest) would minister the New Covenant.^{5 6}

The new creation

In the New Covenant, God has promised us a 'new heart' and a 'new spirit' to enable us to live His life. As a result of sin, the heart of man is 'hard', and 'stony', and unable to know the life of God.

⁴ The word 'pitched' conveys the idea of building, establishing, or setting in place. In this passage, there is a contrast made between two tabernacles (or temples). The first - the temple which the Lord pitched in the act of the creation; and the second - the tabernacle pitched by Moses during the time in the wilderness.

⁵ A temple could be defined as the context within which a priest ministers a covenant.

⁶ The New Covenant is also variously called the Eternal Covenant, the Everlasting Covenant, the will of the Father, etc.

'Moreover I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone ... And I will put My Spirit within you ...' (Ezek 36:26,27).

'... I will effect a new covenant ... I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts.' (Heb 8:8-13).

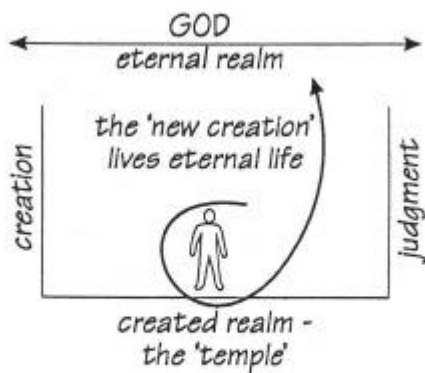


Fig 2 - The man in God's purposes lives eternal life

This new heart is the product of the 'new birth', or the 'birth from above'. (John 3:3-8). This is a spiritual birth - not a birth brought about by the flesh or the will of man, but by the Spirit of God.

The result of the new birth is a new creation - not of the passing created realm, but of the eternal realm (II Cor 5:17). It is by this new creation that man can then be brought into the life and purposes of God. He still lives in the created realm, but he is no longer bound to it, for he is no longer of it. While the

world is set aside for judgement,⁷ the new-born man who does the will of God abides forever.' (I John 2:17).

The new heaven and new earth

As the created realm was only meant to be the context for the outworking of the Eternal Covenant, it is necessarily temporary in nature. When God's purposes are complete there is no longer any place for the created 'temple'. Instead, there is a 'new heaven and a new earth' which is of the eternal realm, not the created realm.

⁷ The created realm will be judged for two reasons. Firstly, its use as a tool in the hand of God will be finished when His covenant purposes are fulfilled; and secondly, it has become stained by sin, and will be judged along with sin and death.

'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, ... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among men, ... And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple.' (Rev 21:1-3,22).

'The temple' in the new heaven and the new earth is actually God living among, or in, His people. This new temple is being built out of 'living stones'.

'And coming to Him as to a living stone, ... you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' (I Peter 2:4,5).

'... you are God's building.' (I Cor 3:9).

It is only that which is eternal, or incarnate,⁸ which will survive the judgement which is set for the created realm. The man who refuses to respond to the call of God, that is, the man who remains 'worldly' or 'earthy', will be judged with the world.

'But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.' (II Peter 3:10)

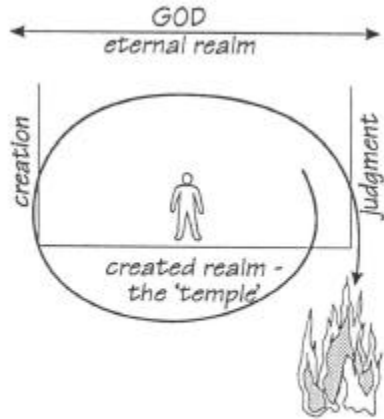


Fig 3 - The created realm is reserved for judgment

⁸ The word 'incarnate' means 'embodied in flesh, especially in human form'. As the word is Latin in derivation it does not appear in the Bible, but the Greek equivalent appears many times and is translated 'in flesh'. This usually speaks of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, e.g. *'He who was manifested in the flesh.'* (I Tim 3:16, John 1:14). With the giving of the Holy Spirit, there has come a way that He may live in us and we may live in Him. (I John 4:13,16). It can therefore be said that the Word of God can become 'incarnate' in the life of a believer. (I John 2:14).

THE TWO CLOCKS

The material universe can be measured in terms of three physical properties - space, mass, and time. The eternal realm is not bound by any of these limitations, and before creation, none of them existed.

‘... the material universe and the God-appointed ages of time were equipped and fitted for the purpose for which they were intended, and it follows therefore that which we see did not come into being out of that which is visible.’ (Heb 11:3).⁹

In the beginning

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth in seven days. Because he is omnipotent,¹⁰ He could have completed the whole creation in an instant - But He chose to work in a seven day period in order to establish a pattern.

The creation was a progressive unfolding of order and light. (Prov 4:18). On the first day, light was called out of darkness; and at the end of the sixth day, the creative process was complete.

‘And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done...’ (Gen 1:31 - 2:2).

The temple clock

The first act of calling a formless and dark world into order was the establishment of light. The light was called ‘day’, and the darkness was called ‘night’. (Gen 1:3-5). This cycle of day and night was the expression of time in the creation. Even though the sun and moon were not yet created, time was commenced. Thus, at the very beginning of the creation, God established ‘time’ which had not previously existed.

This ‘God-appointed time’ is an intrinsic part of ‘the temple’. It is the ‘clock of the temple’ which was established with the creation, and will end with its closing down. During the operation of the temple it is the clock, or time, to which the ‘programme’ of God proceeds.

⁹ Weust, Kenneth S. - “The New Testament - An Expanded Translation”.

¹⁰ ‘Omnipotent’ means ‘all-powerful’.

Although we will later see that each ‘day with the Lord’ is of a fixed duration, the ‘temple time’ is generally to be thought of as being ‘realistic’ rather than ‘chronological’ in nature. God always moves at the ‘right time’, or at the ‘appointed time’. The following examples illustrate ‘temple time’:

- *‘But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the law...’ (Gal 4:4,5).*
- Jesus’ first preaching was to declare *‘The time is fulfilled ...’ (Mark 1:14,15).*
- The gospel of John records a feast which Jesus did not attend publicly because He said *‘My time has not fully come.’ (John 7:1-9).* However at the next Passover Jesus declared *‘...My hour has come this hour.’ (John 12:1, 20-27).*
- *‘When the day of Pentecost had come ...’ (lit. ‘was being fulfilled’). (Acts 2:1).* In God’s timetable it was time for the actual fulfilment of what the Old Testament Day of Pentecost had spoken of in ‘shadow’.
- *‘He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness.’ (Acts 17:31).*
- *‘...appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time.’ (I Tim 6:13-15).*
- *‘... God promised long ages ago, but at the proper time manifested ...’ (Titus 1:2-3)*

The natural clock

On the fourth day of temple time, i.e. the fourth day of creation, God established the natural lights in the heaven to regulate the ‘natural clock’. *‘Let there be lights ... for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; ... and there was evening and morning, a fourth day.’ (Gen 1:14-19).*

This new cycle of day and night now rules the natural world, but ‘temple time’ continues. God is still moving at His ‘appointed time’. As Jesus came to do His Father’s will and therefore worked to the ‘temple time’. He was often misunderstood by those bound to the ‘natural clock’.

- He prophesied the violent destruction of Jerusalem purely because the inhabitants could not recognise *‘the time of their visitation’*, or as the New English Bible translates *‘God’s moment when it came’*. (Luke 19:42-44).

- Even His disciples misunderstood God's time for the establishment of the kingdom. *'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?'* (Acts 1:6,7).

TIME AND THE SPIRITUAL MAN

If the time in which we live is the only opportunity which God has extended to us, we must know how to make the best use of it.

Discern the times

We must be able to correctly discern the spiritual times.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were very competent at reading the natural signs about them, and no doubt, they could interpret events in the light of history, politics, and social customs. However, Jesus chided them for their inability to discern the spiritual times. They could not understand what God was doing, and therefore were forever asking for some sign to help them interpret the happenings about them.

'And the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Him, asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He answered and said to them, "... you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?'" (Matt 16:1-4).

Today, it is important for God's people to know where we are in God's timetable, i.e. we must be able to discern the spiritual times without the constant need for 'signs'.

Understand the times

Not only is it necessary to know where we are in God's timetable, but it is also important to know how to respond to His call. In the Old Testament, the wise men were those who knew and understood the times, and had a knowledge of the required response. *'... men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do...'* (I Chron 12:32).

If any of us lacks wisdom, the scriptural answer is for us to ask God and to believe that wisdom will be given to us. (James 1:5). No Christian should therefore lack an understanding of how to respond appropriately to the call of God.

Be alert

An understanding of the times will cause us to live soberly in faith, hope and love, being alert for the next thing on God's timetable.

'Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, ... so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. ...' (I Thess 5:1-8).

2

THE CREATIVE AND REDEPTIVE WEEKS

As we have previously seen, time is an opportunity extended by God to man so that man can be a partaker of the eternal purposes of God.

Just as time has a definite purpose, it had a definite beginning, and also will have a definite ending. Although we have said that the fulfilment of the opportunity extended by God depends on man's response, we must guard against the thought that time will 'wait' for man and will not end until man has fully responded.

Just as God created the world in a set time pattern, i.e. six days work and one day of rest, so He has also allotted the same set time pattern within which man is able to respond.

The seven days of creation are known as the 'Creative Week'; and the seven days allotted to man as the 'Redemptive Week'.

In this chapter the basis and purpose of these time periods are outlined.

THE CREATIVE WEEK

The first chapter of Genesis records the six days in which God called order into the creation of the heavens and the earth. This poses one question with regard to time.

Purpose of the Creative Week

Why, if God was omnipotent, did He confine himself to using six days for this work, when he could have done it all in one instant of time?

'For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.' (Rom 1:20)

Paul reasoned that in the creation of the visible realm God was displaying His invisible power and attributes, i.e. His eternal purpose. He has always made His purposes clearly evident to men through various means, e.g.

- the visible creation (Rom 1:20)
- the words of His prophets (Amos 3:7; Heb 1:1), and
- types and shadows (Col 2:16,17)

In this sense, the Creative Week was a pattern or type of the time in which God would see His eternal purpose fulfilled.

Length of the days of the Creative Week

The question as to the length of each of the days of the Creative Week has caused much needless controversy. There seem to be at least three predominant lines of thought.

The first theory is to make each day an extended period or epoch, because it is thought that God needed vast lengths of time to achieve such feats. The origin of this line of thinking is unbelief, as God could easily have completed the whole creation in one mighty act.

This relatively new theory was postulated in an attempt to allow for the vast ages of time that modern scientific theories demand for the evolution of the earth. It is interesting however, that it has not caused the very scientists for whom it

was devised to believe and turn to the Lord. It should be dismissed as a man-made attempt to cope with the omnipotence of God.

The second theory confines God to the '24-hour day clock' by suggesting that the whole creation took place in seven literal days. This understanding is held by many Bible-believing Christians, but it still fails to take into account the main reason for the creation being spread over a week instead of being an instantaneous event.

As we have seen, the 24-hour day was not established until the fourth day of creation. We have also shown the existence of two 'clocks', and demonstrated that in the outworking of His 'programme' God has not been regulated by the 'natural clock', but has always worked according to 'temple time'.

The third theory takes into account God's purpose for using seven days, i.e. to establish a demonstrative pattern. When this is considered it becomes evident that both the Creative and Redemptive Weeks are of the same length, i.e. measured by the 'Lord's clock'.

It will be demonstrated that in 'temple time', **a day 'with the Lord' was of one thousand years duration.**

THE REDEPTIVE WEEK

The Redemptive Week¹¹ Is a week of seven days as counted by the 'Lord's clock', i.e. week of 1000-year days. Although there is no single scripture which establishes this beyond doubt, consideration of all the following points will clearly show this to be so.

A day 'with the Lord'

'For a thousand days in Thy sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night.' (Psalm 90:4)

¹¹ This name is somewhat inadequate, as God's purpose for the Church during this week involves much more than just redemption. The fact of Adam's 'fall' required the provision of redemption, but it did not deter God from His immutable purpose - to incarnate Himself in man. A better name for this week would therefore be 'The Incarnate Week', but the present name is chosen simply for uniformity with many previous studies on the subject.

‘But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.’ (II Peter 3:8)

The primary emphasis of both these verses is the Lordship of our God over time. With God, time is but a tool in His hand, hence He views it with both a perspective and an intensity that we lack - **a different perspective**, because to Him a thousand years (many lifetimes of man) is but a day; and **a different intensity** because even in one day He can execute the greatest work.

Without taking these verses out of context or doing violation to the primary meaning, we can also see a further meaning. Both Moses (the author of Psalm 90) and Peter knew that by God’s reckoning each of His days extended over a thousand year period of our time. They both could have clearly made their primary point without even mentioning the period of a thousand years, but they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it was His intention that the second point be also made.

So in His ‘temple time’, a **‘day with the Lord’ is a thousand years.**

The day of Adam

The Lord commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that was in the garden of Eden. The result of Adam’s disobedience was that he would die in the same day.

‘but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat from it you shall surely die.’ (Gen 2:17).

Adam did not die in the same 24-hour day that he ate of the fruit of the tree, but he did die within the same 1000-year day. The Bible says Adam was 930 years of age at his death. (Gen 5:5).

Being the first man, Adam represented all mankind. The restriction on the length of his life has also applied to all men since that time. Even during the ancient times before the flood, when men lived very long lives, none lived for a thousand years. The oldest man recorded in the Bible was Methuselah who lived 969 years. (Gen 5:27).

In summary, it can be seen that the day of Adam’s life **was a day of one thousand years in length.**

Old Testament chronology

A study of the chronological data contained in the Old Testament shows that a period of approximately 4000 years elapsed from the time of Adam to the birth of Christ. This corresponds to four days of the Lord's reckoning.

As predicted in II Peter 3, many modern scholars have disputed this chronology. They have instead claimed that the origins of man (and indeed of the whole physical universe) are much older than the scriptures indicate.

'... in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.' (II Peter 3:3-4).

Peter was referring to what has become known as Hutton's Principle of Uniformitarianism. This principle has pervaded all modern scientific theories and is one of the bases of the Theory of Evolution.¹²

The effect has been to totally disregard Biblical truths such as Creation and Noah's Flood and to establish a chronology of man dating back millions of years. In this they have been 'willingly ignorant' of the fact that God controls the affairs of men, and that the only reliable record of ancient history is the one inspired by the God they have been so quick to reject.

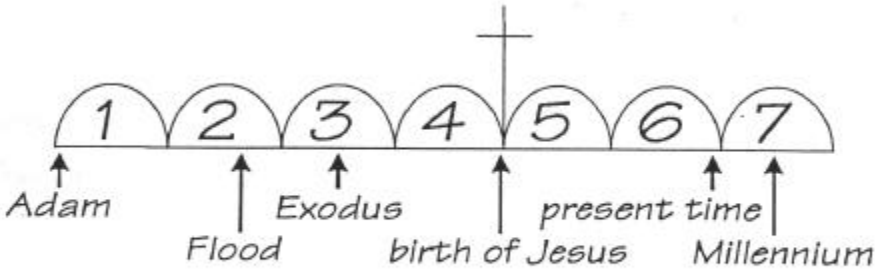


Fig 4 - The Redemptive Week

There have been studies in which the chronologies of ancient civilisations have been compared. Generally, these chronologies have been based on fables and imaginations, e.g. the 'dreamtime' stories of the Australian aboriginal culture. The Old Testament records are strikingly different however, as they are truly historical in nature. As a special article of interest, an extract from Martin

¹² For further reading on the Principle of Uniformitarianism see J Harvey and C. Pallaghy's 'The Bible and Science' especially Chapter 2C 'Some geological Perspectives' by Barry Tapp, (pages 28-38).

Anstey's "Chronology of the Old Testament"¹³ has been included in this chapter, pages 26 and 27.

Although the Old Testament is without doubt the most reliable historical record of ancient times, it is still an almost impossible task to produce an universally accepted chronology from its text. This is due to many factors, not the least of which is the different conception of time held by the Hebrew people. As was mentioned earlier, many eastern cultures preferred a 'realistic' approach to time, rather than the 'chronological' approach which we have in modern western societies.

There have been many attempts to produce a chronology of ancient times from the Hebrew text. Each one suffers from the same difficulty, i.e. the further back in time it extends the more question there must be about its reliability.

With the above mentioned restraints in mind, we can propose the following Old Testament chronology.

4000BC Adam
2350BC Noah's Flood
1920BC Call of Abraham
1500BC The Exodus
1000BC David
586BC Destruction of Jerusalem
4BC Birth of Jesus

Fig 5 - An Old Testament Chronology

The Redemptive Week and the chronologies associated with it can be conveniently represented in diagrammatic form. This is usually done by drawing seven semi-circles with each one representing a 1000-year day. A cross is often placed between the fourth and the fifth day to represent the cross of Christ - the central event of the Redemptive Week.. Such a diagram is included as Fig 4 on page 18, and the basic diagram is used extensively throughout this book.

In summary, it can be said that the Old Testament is the only reliable and historical record of the origin of man and of the physical universe. From the Old

¹³ Anstey, Martin - "The Chronology of the Old Testament" 1973 Kregel Publications.

Testament, it has been deduced that approximately 4000 years elapsed from the time of Adam to the birth of Jesus, and that in 'temple time' this is four days.

The days of the Church Age

'He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him.' (Hosea 6:2).

'Go tell that fox, "Behold I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach my goal."' (Luke 13:32).

After the utterance of these statements, no fulfilment was evident in either case after three literal days. Hence the primary meaning must be as a reference to

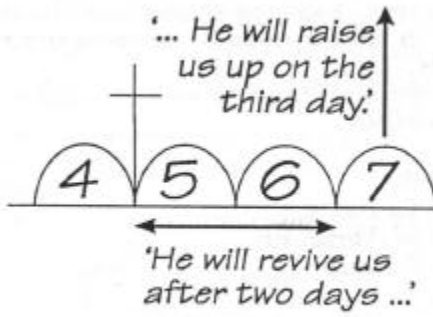


Fig 6 - Hosea 6:2

events in 'temple time'. That is, each day is to be taken as a period of 1000 years.

Both of these verses can then be seen to be speaking of the two days (2000 years) of the Church Age and the last day (or 1000 years) of the Millenium.¹⁴

The Church Age is the time of ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church in the

period between Jesus' earthly ministry and His second coming.

During this time, the many gifts of the Holy Spirit operate in the church ('casting out demons and performing cures' etc.) such that it may be restored, i.e. 'revived', and thus be perfected, and be able to live before Him, i.e. 'reaching His goal'.

The Day of Pentecost

'But Peter ... raised his voice and declared to them: "... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days", God says, "That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; ..."' (Acts 2:14-21).

¹⁴ Millenium is a word meaning 'one thousand years'. It has a special reference to the one thousand year period of 'ruling and reigning with Christ' mentioned in Rev 20:4, although it is not actually a scriptural term.

On the day of Pentecost, almost 2000 years ago, the apostle Peter explained that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the commencement of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32. Joel prophesied that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on all men who call upon the name of the Lord until *'the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.'* (Joel 2:31).

As the Holy Spirit is still being poured out exactly as Joel prophesied, we must still be living in the period he called *'the last days'*.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is taking place during the Church Age, or the last two thousand years before the Millennium. Peter spoke these words near the commencement of the fifth day of the Redemptive Week, (i.e. about 30AD), and we now live near the end of the sixth.

The *'last days'* is therefore not a reference to a few 24 hour days, but is in fact a reference to the last two 1000-year days before *'the great and glorious day of the Lord'*.

It can be seen, once again, that only by interpreting the phrase *'in the last days'* as referring to 1000- year days of *'temple time'* can the true meaning of the scripture be revealed.

The sabbath rest

'And by the seventh day God completed His work which he had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.' (Gen 2:2)

'Therefore I swore in my anger, "Truly they shall not enter into My rest." (Psalm 95:11).

'There remains therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God.' (Heb 4:1-11).

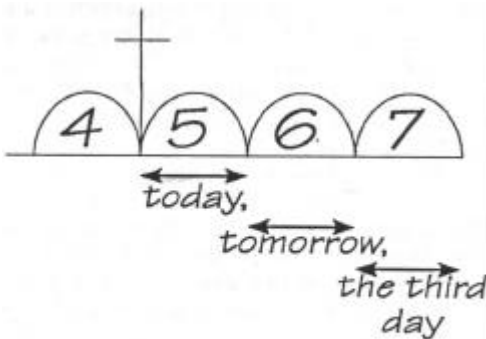


Fig 7 - Luke 13:32

The argument of the fourth chapter of Hebrews draws on the previously quoted scriptures to show that God entered into his rest on the seventh day, and it has always been His intention for man to enter that same rest. The sabbath was instituted in the Mosaic Covenant to illustrate this. *'... but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God'.* (Ex 20:8-11).

The Mosaic Sabbath was at the same time a literal rest day for the Israelites, and a reminder of the rest

that God entered into, and to which the Israelite was called.

The Israelites understood that the type of the sabbath rest was fulfilled on a national basis when Israel was led into the promised land of Caanan. As the argument of Hebrews makes clear, the occupation of Canaan under Joshua was not the fulfilment of Israel's entering God's sabbath rest, and it therefore remains for some to enter it.

This future sabbath rest of God will be the seventh day, or 1000-year period, of the Redemptive Week.

Jewish tradition and early Church Fathers

According to Jewish tradition and the writings of some of the early church fathers, the concept of six thousand years being appointed to man was well known. It was also understood that a period of 'rest' lasting one thousand years would follow.

Martin Anstey in "Chronology of the New Testament" says it was '... the almost universal tradition of the Jews that the world would last for 7000 years...'.¹⁵

Michael Green quotes second century church fathers Justin, Irenaeus and Barnabas, as well as the Jewish book "Jubilees", as having supported the doctrine. Green concludes 'this doctrine was so widespread that it almost became a touchstone of Christian orthodoxy'.¹⁶

F.F. Bruce includes the following quote from the Epistle of Barnabas in his commentary on 'Hebrews':

'Pay attention, children, to the meaning of the words: 'He finished it in six days'. It means that in 6000 years the Lord will bring everything to completion. For the 'day' with Him is a thousand years, of which He Himself bears me witness when He says: 'Behold the day of the Lord shall be as a thousand years'. Therefore, children, in six days - that is in 6000 years - everything will be brought to completion.' And He rested the seventh day'. This means: when His Son comes and brings to nought the period of the Lawless One and judges the ungodly and changes the sun and moon and stars, then He will rest properly on the seventh day. ... Finally He says to them: 'Your new moons and your sabbaths I cannot endure'. See what He means: it is not your present sabbaths

¹⁵ Anstey, Martin - "The Chronology of the New Testament"

¹⁶ Green, Michael - "The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude", Tyndale New Testament commentaries.

that are acceptable, but the Sabbath that I have made, in which, when I have put everything to rest, I will make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, the beginning of a new world.’¹⁷

Although quotations from these sources do not hold the same authority as the scriptures, they give an indication of the beliefs of the apostles and church fathers. When Peter wrote his second epistle, in which he spoke of a day ‘with the Lord’ as being of a thousand years, it was against a backdrop of the widespread acceptance of the doctrine of the Redemptive Week.

CREATED AND REDEMPTIVE WEEKS compared

It has been seen that the Creative Week is a type, or shadow of the Redemptive Week. It is helpful to compare the events and draw out the similarities between them.

DAY	CREATIVE WEEK	REDEMPTIVE WEEK
1	<i>‘Let there be light’</i> Light called day Darkness called night Division of light from darkness	Adam - Enoch (4000-3000BC) Mystery of Godliness and Mystery of Iniquity (Gen 3:15) Cain - ungodly line Seth - Godly line Flesh vs. Spirit
2	Division of waters above and below the firmament	Enoch - Abraham (3000-2000BC) Joining of the waters above and below the firmament in the flood of Noah

¹⁷ Bruce, F.F. - “The Epistle to the Hebrews”,
 New International Commentary on the New Testament p.74

3	Waters gathered - dry land appears Earth brings forth vegetation	Abraham - Elijah (2000-1000BC) From the sea of the Gentile nations (Isaiah 17:12,13; Luke 21:25) God's elect nation is separated Two gatherings of water so that Israel might possess Caanan (Ex 14:1-2; Joshua 3:14-17)
4	Lights in heavens for signs, seasons, days, years, and to rule and divide the light from the darkness	Elijah to Christ (1000-4BC) <i>'I am the light of the world'</i> (John 8:12)
5	Waters - fish Heavens - fowl Living creatures bring forth abundantly	Early Church - Dark Age (0-1000AD) Symbol of fish - fishers of men Inhabiting 'heavenly places' in Christ (Eph 2:6, 3:10, 6:12) New creatures (II Cor 5:17) Multiplication (Acts 6:1,7; 9:31)
6	Cattle, creeping things, beasts, <i>'Let us make man in Our image'</i> Male and female He created them Multiply and have dominion	Dark Age - 2nd Coming (1000-2000AD) Nations as beasts Three Beasts of Rev 13 Man restored in God's image Preparation of the Bride Dominion of Bridegroom, Bride, and Manchild (Rev 2:27, 12:5)
7	<i>'God ended His work which He had made and He rested on the seventh day'. (Gen 2:2)</i>	Millenium (2000-3000AD) <i>'But they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him 1000 years.'</i> (Rev 20:6)

THE THREE DISPENSATIONS

‘... *The material universe* and the God-appointed ages of time were equipped and fitted by God’s word for the purpose for which they were intended...’ (Heb 11:3).¹⁸

One of the purposes for which the creation was to *reveal* ‘... *His eternal power and Godhead...*’ (Rom 1:20). We will now see how the ages of time demonstrate some attributes of the Godhead, i.e. Divine nature or Deity. The principle of these is the triune nature of God, i.e. the union of three persons in one God.

As we have seen, the time appointed to man divides into six 1000-year periods, or six days. The same period can also be divided into three 2000-year periods, or dispensations. Each of these dispensations is a time for the primary witness of one member of the Trinity.

As Father, Son and Holy Spirit are co-equals and co-eternal in all things, so the dispensations of time are of exactly the same duration - 2000 years each.

The first dispensation reached from Adam to Abraham and bears witness to the Father. The central dispensation reached from Abraham to Christ, and was given over to the Son. The third dispensation reaches from the earthly ministry of Christ to His second coming. It is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit

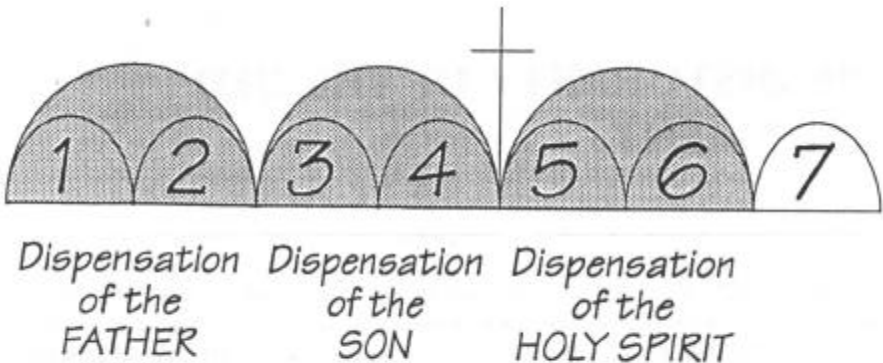


Fig 8 - The Three Dispensations

¹⁸ Weust, Kenneth S. - “The New Testament - An Expanded Translation”

Dispensation of the Father

The four fathers of mankind were all revealed in this dispensation - God the father, Adam, Noah and Abraham. In this time it was God the father, revealed as 'The Lord' or 'Jehovah', who made the first promises, the first prophecies and the first covenants.

Dispensation of the Son

This time was bounded on one side by the covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:1-8) which was sealed with the blood of circumcision and sacrifice, and on the other side by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This dispensation began with the offering of Isaac, only begotten son of Abraham and Sarah, and reached its end in the offering up of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. (Gen 22:1-14; Jn 3:16).

It could also be called the Dispensation of Blood Atonement as all the blood sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant fell within this time. The final sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ ended for all time any necessity for further blood atonement.

Dispensation of the Holy Spirit

Since the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been poured out in the earth to bring to a conclusion the purposes of God. The role of the Holy Spirit is to lead the Church *'into all truth'* - not just knowledge, but a totally fleshed-out manifestation of truth. (*John 16:13*).

It is this dispensation which is also called 'the Church Age'.

THE HISTORICITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The following is a quotation from pp57-58 of Martin Anstey's "Chronology of the Old Testament":

'The Hebrew records of the Old Testament possess, from the very earliest times, a definite historical character, in marked contrast with those of other nations. The antiquities of the Greeks are full of poetic fictions. They wrote

nothing in prose until after the conquest of Asia by Cyrus. 'Their own times', says

Egypt and India, Persia and other nations of the East, did not even postulate a historical basis. The farther back we trace their past history, the more obscure and uncertain it becomes.

With the Hebrew records the case

The annals of the Hebrew nation are authentic narratives by contemporary writers. The Biblical Record is the Record of the redeeming activity of God. This Record is embedded in a human history, but it is a miraculous history throughout.

It is not only a history of the external events of the life of men. In its primary significance it is a history of God, and of His activity within the realm of human history. Hence, none but men informed by the Spirit of God could write it, and only by faith in the truth of the Revelation can we ever hope to be able to understand it. The essence of Revelation is redemption, and redemption is a deed of God, done, as it were, within the veil, yet manifesting itself to us in the Revelation given in Holy Scripture, as a Divine movement in human history.

We trace the history in one unbroken line, from the Creation of Adam to the Crucifixion. Bible Chronology is an exact science. It is not built upon hypothesis and conjecture. It rests ultimately upon evidence, or testimony, but it does occasionally require the use of the method of scientific historic induction.

The historical character of the Old Testament has been vigorously assailed, from the rise of historical criticism, . . . , down to the present day; but the supposed parallelism between the early records of other nations, with their prodigies, and miracles, and Divine appearances, their myths and legends, and fictitious personages, does not really exist. Accurate historical investigation establishes the authenticity of the facts, and the reality of the persons presented to us in the writings of the Old Testament, so far as these can be tested by the application of the laws of history . . .'

3

PROPHETIC MEASUREMENTS OF TIME

The question ‘How long?’ has been on the lips of men and angels throughout the ages. (Psalm 6:3; Isaiah 6:11; Zech 1:12; Dan 8:13; Matt 24:3; Acts 1:6 etc.). Very rarely has the Lord responded to such questions in a straightforward manner, but has instead chosen to either answer in terms of his own ‘realistic’ time rather than ‘chronological’ time; or to answer in symbolic terms.

An example of both responses is found in Matthew 24, where instead of a direct answer regarding the time of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the end of the age, Jesus instead listed many of the ‘realistic’ happenings of the time, e.g. wars, earthquakes, famines, false Christs, etc. He also listed a number of prophetic symbols e.g. the ‘Abomination of desolation’, the ‘days of Noah’, and the parable of ‘the virgins’, etc.

This approach is in line with the Lord’s use of the ‘language of the symbol’ throughout scripture. By couching truth in symbolic terms the Lord has determined both to whom, and when, the understanding of that truth is given.

Jesus explained that the ‘mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’ could only be known by those whose ‘spiritual eyes and ears’ were open. (Matt 13). Paul said that He gained ‘*an insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit*’. (Eph 3:1-7). A further example is found in the last chapter of Daniel, where the Lord made it clear that there was to be a time element involved in the understanding of the symbolic which was to be ‘*concealed and sealed up until the end time*’. (Dan 12:9).

To gain insight into most prophecies or prophetic patterns it is necessary to understand the various prophetic measurements of time. It is intended in this chapter to outline the main prophetic measurements, and in the next chapter to show their application in the understanding of prophetic patterns (e.g. Daniel’s 70 weeks prophecy).

THE DAY

In prophecy, ‘the day’ is used in three separate ways as follows.

One day equals 1000 years

This is used in reference to the Lord’s Week and has already been discussed in sufficient detail.

One day equals one year

There are three Old Testament references to a year being substituted for a day. In these examples, the ‘days’ may be seen as ‘years’.

- **Israel’s judgement.** ‘*According to the number of days which you spied out the land, **forty days**, for every day that you shall bear your guilt a year, even **forty years**, and you shall know my opposition*’. (Num. 14:34).
- **Ezekiel’s prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem.** ‘*For I have assigned you a number of **days** corresponding to the years of their iniquity ... ; I have assigned it to you for forty days, **a day for each year***’. (Ezek 4:1-6).¹⁹

¹⁹ In each of the above examples the original Hebrew language adds extra emphasis to the point being made here by repeating the phrase as ‘a day for a year, a day for a year’. This is not translated in the English versions, but does show in

- **Jacob and Laban’s agreement.** ‘Complete the bridal **week** of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another **seven years**’. (Gen 29:27).

A particular ‘day’

There are many references to a particular ‘day’ in scripture, most notably:

- ‘the day of the Lord’ (Isaiah 13:9; Joel 2:1)
- ‘the day of redemption’ (Eph 4:30)
- ‘the day of salvation’ (I Cor 6:2)
- ‘the day of judgement’ (II Peter 3:7)
- ‘that day’ (Luke 10:12; 17:31)
- ‘the last day’ (John 6:39; 12:48)
- etc.,

Care must be exercised in assigning a fulfilment to these days, as some speak of the same day; some are different days; and some ‘days’ speak of just a period of time, rather than 24 hours.

THE WEEK

The Hebrew word translated ‘week’ in the English versions of the Old Testament is ‘shabua’ which literally means ‘a seven’, and on one occasion it is actually translated ‘seven’ days. (Ezek 45:21). The Old Testament used the ‘week’ to count a number of periods of time as follows:-

- week of days (Gen 29:27; Lev 12:5)
- week of weeks (Lev 23:15-16)
- week of months (Lev 23:24)
- week of years (Lev 25:8)
- week of weeks of years (Lev 25:8)
- week of milleniums - the Lord’s Week

literal translations such as “Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible” by Robert Young.

An understanding of both the 'week' and the 'day for a year', is necessary to comprehend the 'seventy weeks' of time appointed in Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy. (Dan 9:24-27).

THE MONTH

In Old Testament. times a number of different calendars were being used by different cultures e.g. Orthodox Jewish, Jubilees, Egyptian (fiscal) and the Roman or Julian (which we still use). Each had different numbers of days in the month varying from 28 to 31.

When we come to the 'prophetic month' however, its is important to see it as a period of exactly 30 days.

This can be shown from the 3 ½ year period spoken of in Revelation as '*twelve hundred and sixty days*' (Rev 11:3); '*42 months*' (Rev 11:2) and '*time, times, and half a time*' (Rev 12:14). Each of these is speaking of a period known as the 'great tribulation'. When the month is seen to be 30 days in length, then each of these expressions is equivalent.

THE YEAR

Because of the number of calendars in use the length of the year was also variable. The 'prophetic' year however can be seen from the scriptures mentioned above to be one of 360 days duration.

THE JUBILEE

The jubilee was a special extension of the 'sabbath' concept. A sabbatical year was held every seventh year. In this year the land lay fallow for one year. It was a '*sabbath of rest*' or a '*year of rest*'. (Lev 25:4,5).

The culmination of the sabbatical years was reached each fiftieth year, i.e. after a week of years. This year was the jubilee.²⁰ This was a year of release, restoration of liberty, and increase (Lev 24:8-17). It became another measure of time for the Hebrews and was a time to look forward to.

The prophetic significance of the jubilee will be seen in the study of 'The Number 120'.

THE CUBIT

The cubit was not a measure of time, but of length. There were various definitions of a cubit but most of them approximate 17 ½ inches. In a prophetic sense, the dimensions of structures such as the Tabernacle of Moses (given in the scriptures as cubits), are prophetic of lengths of time in years. This will be illustrated in the next chapter.

²⁰ The word 'jubilee' comes from the Hebrew word 'yobel' - a ram, because it was a ram's horn trumpet with which the year was heralded.

4

OVERVIEW OF PROPHETIC PATTERNS

Various prophetic patterns give more detail and substance to the overall time plan of the Redemptive Week.

It is important to see that each of these patterns adds a part and none of them tells the whole story. The whole is built up '*line upon line, precept upon precept*'. (*Isaiah 28:13*).

In this chapter only those patterns spanning a number of days of the Redemptive Week will be covered. In the next chapter those which add detail to the sixth and seventh day will be studied.

PASSOVER LAMB

The Feast of Passover was instituted as part of the exodus of the people of God from the captivity of Egypt. Thereafter, it was celebrated annually as a reminder of the great deliverance God had wrought for Israel.

The central ceremony of the feast was the sacrifice of a lamb which had been specially selected and prepared. The details of the selection and preparation of the lamb are given in Exodus 12:3-6. It was to be an 'unblemished male a year old' (representing the perfection of the species in the prime of life). It was to be taken on the tenth day of the month and **kept four days** until slaughter on the fourteenth day.

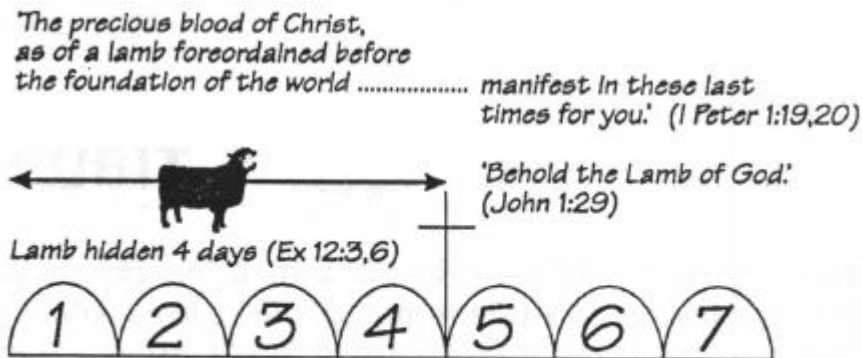


Fig 9 - The Passover lamb was kept for four days

As with most Old Testament references to the sacrificial offering of lambs, this lamb was a type of the Lamb of God - the Lord Jesus Christ. This is confirmed in many New Testament scriptures.

'... For Christ our Passover has also been sacrificed.' (1 Cor 5:7).

'... knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things ... but with the precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.' (1 Peter 1:18,19).

The four days of hiding of the Passover Lamb were typical of the four days of the Redemptive Week from the 'foundation of the world' to the crucifixion. This 4000 year period was discussed earlier in Chapter 2, pages 19 to 21. Just as the Israelites kept a lamb which had already been set aside for the purpose of an offering, so the Father did not reveal His pre-ordained Lamb until the right time - four days after the Creation.

‘For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you...’ (I Peter 1:20).

‘... the book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’ (Rev 13:8)

‘Otherwise He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’ (Heb 9:26).

It is also interesting to note that it can be shown by a detailed study of the Passion Week that Jesus entered Jerusalem on the tenth day of the month, was questioned by the rulers of the day who could find no fault in Him, and was crucified on the fourteenth day. This was a secondary fulfilment of the same type, as Jesus was again ‘kept four days’.

MOSES’ TABERNACLE

The Tabernacle of Moses and the priests who ministered within it were a copy, or shadow, of the heavenly tabernacle. It was for this reason that Moses was commanded to construct it exactly according to the pattern which the Lord showed him while he was on Mt. Sinai.²¹

‘... he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with blood. ... it was necessary for the copies of things in the heavens to be cleansed ... Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, ...’ (Heb 9:21-24).

‘... there are those who offer gifts according to the Law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “See,” He says, “that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.”’ (Heb 8:4,5).

One of the aspects of truth revealed in this shadow is that the overall dimensions of three divisions of the tabernacle are prophetic of the relevant ages of time.

As mentioned earlier, the cubit is often prophetic of a year’s duration. In this study of Moses’ Tabernacle this fact is the key to the interpretation of the major

²¹ Any reader who is unfamiliar with the history, layout, and ministry of Moses’ Tabernacle is referred to a basic study on the subject. The study of W. W. Patterson is recommended.

dimensions. When measuring areas and volumes it is necessary to also equate the 'square cubit' and the 'cubic cubit' with one year.

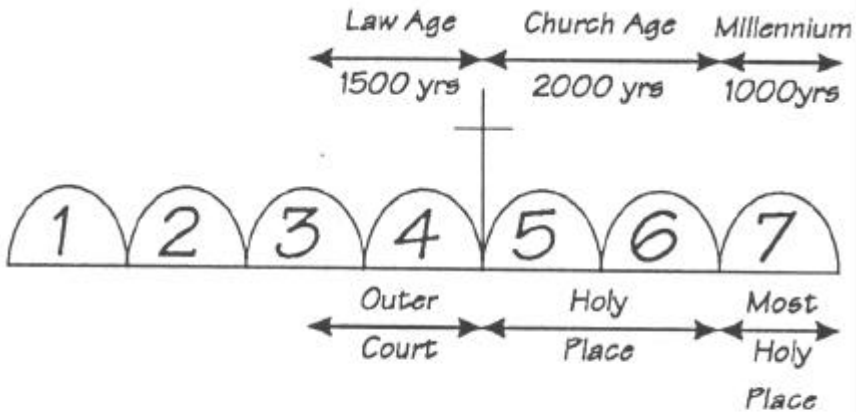


Fig 10 - The pattern of Moses' Tabernacle

The Outer Court: prophetic of the Law Age

The outer court was the term given to that part of the tabernacle precinct which was not enclosed within the main tent structure. It was surrounded by a linen curtain which was supported by timber posts. Within the outer court were the two brass pieces of furniture, i.e. the brazen altar and the brazen laver.

It was within this area that all animal sacrifices were prepared. This was the place where all the animal blood was shed. In this respect, the outer court is a type of the Law Age - a term used to describe the time in which 'the law' of the Mosaic Covenant was administered.

The relevant dimension here is the area of the outer linen curtain. It was a total of 300 cubits in length and was 5 cubits in height. (Ex 27:9-19). The total area of 1500 square cubits represents the 1500 years of the Law Age, i.e. Moses to Christ.

The Holy Place: prophetic of the Church Age

The holy place was the area of daily ministry of the priests within the ‘main tent’ of the tabernacle. In it were placed the golden candlestick, the table of shewbread and the altar of incense. Its entrance was through a ‘door’ of curtains supported on five pillars each ten cubits high.

This ‘room’ is a type of the Church Age, i.e. ‘*the time now present*’ (Heb 9:9).

The Church Age was separated from the Law Age by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ - ‘*the door.*’ (John 10:9). He fulfilled the law (Matt 5:17), and ushered in the Church Age by sending the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of believers. (John 14:16,17; 15:26; 16:13).

The most important dimension is the capacity of the holy place which enclosed a total of 2000 cubic cubits.²² This is typical of a time span of 2000 years which is the time allotted to the Church Age.

Another relevant dimension is that of ‘the door’. The number associated with this entrance is the number fifty. This is established from the five pillars each of ten cubits in height. The number fifty is symbolic of the Day of Pentecost - the time that the Holy Spirit was poured forth, thus commencing the Church Age. (Acts 2).

A study of the importance of each of the pieces of furniture in the holy place will also establish that it is typical of the age in which we now live.²³

The Most Holy Place is prophetic of the Millenium

In this area stood the Ark of the Covenant. The High Priest ministered here only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

²² The holy place was 20 cubits long, 10 cubits wide, and 10 cubits high. To substantiate these dimensions it is necessary to consider the foundational structure of boards used to hold up the covering of curtains which made up the holy place and the most holy place. (Ex 26:15-25). Such a calculation is beyond the scope of this study and interested readers are referred to detailed study notes written on the subject.

²³ For such a study readers are referred to Chapter 9 of “Unto Perfection” by V.J Hall, M. A. Wylie, and D. J. Watt.

In the most holy place the presence and glory of God were revealed as covering the earth floor. This is typical of the Millennial Age in which the glory of the Lord will cover the earth '*as the waters cover the sea.*' (Isaiah 11:9).

The relevant dimension here is again the capacity of the 'room'. In this case the most holy place was 1000 cubits, which is typical of the 1000 years of the Millennium.

DANIEL'S 70 WEEK PROPHECY

Daniel was a young Israelite who was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, during his first attack on Jerusalem in approximately 580BC. During his captivity, the Lord gave Daniel a number of important prophetic visions. One of these has become known as 'Daniel's 70-week prophecy.' The prophecy is contained in Daniel 9:24-27.

Clauses of the prophecy

The basis of the prophecy is that within a period of 70 weeks there was to be a fulfilment of six particular clauses as follows:

- to finish the transgression,
- to make an end of sins,
- to make reconciliation for iniquity,
- to bring in everlasting righteousness,
- to seal up the vision and prophecy, and
- to anoint the most holy.

Within the time of the prophecy a number of other events were also prophesied to occur as follows:

- restoration of Jerusalem,
- the coming of Messiah the Prince,
- the cutting off of Messiah the Prince,
- the destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary by the people of another prince
- the finalising of sacrifice by Messiah the Prince, and
- an overspreading of abominations to continue until a complete destruction.

Time-Scale of the prophecy

Within a period of 70 literal weeks none of the above was completed. A detailed study of the six main clauses reveals that even to this day only one of them has been fulfilled. Jesus has ‘made reconciliation for iniquity’, but each of the other clauses is yet to be fulfilled. His provision at Calvary has enabled the remaining clauses to be fulfilled at the right time.

Further interpretation and historical study shows the prophecy to be referring to a period of 70 weeks of years, i.e. 70 periods of seven years or 490 years. (This term ‘week’ was discussed in Chapter 3, page 32.)

The 70 weeks are divided into two periods - a period of sixty-nine weeks and a period of one week.

The sixty-nine Weeks

The first period of the prophecy is a period of ‘seven weeks and sixty-two weeks’. By interpretation, this is a total of 483 years. The time was to commence from a decree concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem.²⁴

The end of this first period is ‘until Messiah the Prince’. The literal meaning of Messiah is ‘the anointed one’, and so it can be seen that Jesus is the only person that could be meant by this reference.

At His baptism the holy Spirit descended upon Him and He was ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1). Following this, Jesus declared Himself to be the ‘Anointed’, the ‘Messiah’, or the ‘Christ’. (Luke 4:18; 4:41). Jesus’ baptism was in about 26AD,²⁵ a period of 483 years after the commencement of the prophecy.

²⁴ The prophecy was to commence from the going forth of a *decree ‘to restore and rebuild Jerusalem’*. (Dan 9:25). There has been much discussion as to which of a number of decrees given at about that time best fits the requirements. Those considered are (i) the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4), (ii) the decree of Darius (Ezra 6:1-12), (iii) the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra (Ezra 7:11-16), and (iv) the decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (Neh 2:1-8). Various writers have put strong arguments for the acceptance of each of these decrees. It is beyond our scope to detail the chronological issues involved, and for the present purposes the decree of Artaxerxes given in 457BC will be taken to be the commencement of the prophecy.

²⁵ Jesus was about 30 years of age when He was baptised. (Luke 3:23). He was born in 4BC.

The seventieth week

In the last week of the prophecy, the Messiah was to 'make a firm covenant with many'. We discussed earlier that Jesus became the Eternal Covenant so that we would be able to participate in God's eternal purposes.

'... Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers.' (Rom 15:8).

The whole of the seventieth week is taken up with the Messiah confirming the covenant. However, in the middle of the week two further things regarding the Messiah were prophesied. He was to 'be cut off and have nothing', and He was to 'put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering'. Jesus fulfilled both of these at His crucifixion. At that time His public earthly ministry had lasted about 3½ years.

Also in the middle of the week was to come 'a wing (or overspreading) of abominations' which was to last 'until a complete destruction.'

The combined effect of these happenings was that a large period of time has been inserted in the middle of the seventieth week. This time is the Church Age in which the Eternal Covenant is still being confirmed by the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Christ).

The end of the inserted time will see another specific 3½ year period of the confirming of the covenant. This period is the second half of the seventieth week. As such, the outstanding clauses of the prophecy must be fulfilled by the end of this time.

The Book of Revelation refers to a time of 1260 days in which 'my two witnesses' will prophesy. In their declaration, these two confirm the same covenant - there can be no other covenant. This period is the last half of the seventieth week.

'I will give you power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy 1260 days clothed in sackcloth.' (Rev 11:3).

This 1260 day period concludes at the time of the 'second coming' of the Lord. At this time the final clauses of Daniel's prophecy will be fulfilled as He will confirm that the purpose of the eternal covenant has been achieved.

In summary, Daniel's 70 week prophecy spans two and a half days in the Redemptive Week. It prophesies exactly the time and ministry of the Messiah and includes the time we presently live in. It has also prophesied things even yet to be fulfilled. It is a most comprehensive prophecy.

NUMBER 120

Like many other numbers in scripture the number 120 has a symbolic meaning, i.e. 'the end of the flesh (or fallen nature) of man' and 'the manifestation of the glory of God'. There have been a number of occurrences of this symbolic number in the Bible and each one has pointed to the one final fulfilment of what has been symbolised. The example below show the development of the symbol.

Days preceding the flood

'Then the Lord said, My Spirit shall not strive (in some manuscripts 'abide') with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' (Gen 6:3).

At the end of the allotted 120 years the Lord destroyed all ungodly flesh and began a new dispensation with Noah. The obedient response of Noah and his family was typical of the response required by men in these times. Such a response allows a man to be brought to God, *'...having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;'* (1 Peter 3:18-20).

Days of Moses

'Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigour abated.' (Deut 34:7).

Although Moses' life in the flesh was completed, he was raised from the dead by Michael and assumed a new position in heaven. (Jude 9). He appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with Elijah and Jesus (Matt 17:1-5), and will reappear together with Elijah as the two witnesses during the Great tribulation. (Rev 11:3-13; Zech 4).

Dedication of the Temple

'... and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets in unison ... for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.' (1 Chron 5:11-14).

The dedication of this temple was a demonstration of the desire of God to fill a place with His glory when divisions of the flesh are put aside. The priests were 'without regard to divisions', the trumpeters blew in unison and the singers

were 'heard with one voice', and the glory of the Lord so filled the place that the priests could not stand to minister.

Day of Pentecost

'... *These all with one mind* were continually devoting themselves to prayer ... a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together ... they were all together in one place ... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.' (Acts 1:13-15; 2:1-4).

The new dispensation of the Holy Spirit commenced with a display of unity of heart and mind. Speaking in tongues was (and still is) an indication that 'the flesh' can be reckoned as dead. No work of 'the flesh', or expression of the will of man, can control the tongue. (James 3:8).

Redemptive Week

The six days of the Redemptive Week in which God brings man from his fallen state to his perfected state is a total of 6000 years. At the end of this period the man in God's purposes will live in His presence for the last 1000 years (or Millenium) of the week - *but 'no flesh can be justified in His presence'* (Rom 3:20; I Cor 1:29) and therefore the end of the 6000 year period must also be an 'end of flesh' experience.

This can be seen as the end of the 120th Jubilee. (120 x 50 = 6000). As with each jubilee under the Mosaic economy, the 120th jubilee will be a time of release from bondage (of the fallen nature), and of the restoration of liberty.

This time is spoken of in the discussion of the First Resurrection in which the bonds of '*the earthy*' are broken, '*mortality puts on immortality*', and '*the perishable puts on the imperishable.*' (I Cor 15:33, 54).

This time was also prophesied in Gen 6:3 where God declared the days of man to be 120 years. Truly there are only 120 jubilees allotted to the fallen man in which he can respond to the call of God.

THE SEVEN TIMES PROPHECY

The prophecy of the 'seven times' is seen in its basic form in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. God gave Nebuchadnezzar a dream which could only be interpreted by His prophet Daniel.

Prophecy to Nebuchadnezzar

The dream featured a very prominent tree which had all its foliage and branches stripped off before it was cut down to leave only a stump. A band of iron and bronze was then placed around the stump, and it was left in the field. It was clear that the stump represented a man as its mind was changed from that of a man to that of a beast until 'seven times' passed over it, i.e. until seven periods of time had passed.

Daniel interpreted the dream as a prophecy of the humiliation which God would inflict on Nebuchadnezzar until such time as he could acknowledge that his kingdom and power was bestowed on him by God.

*'You will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you will be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and **seven periods of time will pass over you**, until you recognise that the Most High is ruler of the realm of mankind, and bestows it on whomever He wishes'. (Dan4:25).*

This prophetic vision was fulfilled in Nebuchadnezzar's lifetime. *'Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; ... But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High ...' (Dan 4:33-34).*

A wider prophecy

Like many Biblical prophecies, the prophecy of the 'seven times' has a much wider application.²⁶ As God caused 'seven times' (or seven periods of time) to pass over Nebuchadnezzar, so He has also allowed seven periods of time for the kingdoms of the world to have dominion.

The specific purpose of the 'seven times' in Nebuchadnezzar's life was to bring him to the realisation that God is the ruler of the realm of mankind.

²⁶ This multiple fulfilment of a prophecy is called 'developmental fulfilment'. This simply means that a prophecy may be seen to be fulfilled in an immediate sense and then at a later time may be fulfilled in a wider sense. An example can be seen in the prophecy that Abraham was to be the '*father of many nations*'. (Gen17:4). This was fulfilled in Abraham's lifetime as his sons Ishmael and Isaac both became princes over twelve tribes which later developed into nations. However, a much wider fulfilment is seen in the New Testament where Abraham is portrayed as the father of the Gentile Christians among the nations. (Gal 3:29).

Similarly, the wider purpose of the ‘seven times’ is to demonstrate that man’s kingdoms cannot endure. Only seven times in history will God allow mankind to fulfil what he desired at Babel, i.e. the establishment of a unified world government. Seven times God will humble these world governments, until He establishes His own eternal kingdom. The purpose of these seven times of humiliation, is to cause a recognition, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, that only God’s kingdom is eternal.

The seven kingdoms

The book of Daniel contains three visions which pertain to the world political powers which have been allowed by god to have dominion. These visions are of ‘the great image’ (Dan 2), ‘the four beasts’ (Dan 7) and the ‘ram and the he-goat’ (Dan 8). The book of Revelation also contains three relevant visions, i.e. ‘the great red dragon’ (Rev 12), ‘the beasts and the dragon’ (Rev 13) and ‘the scarlet beast’ (Rev 17). A detailed study of this subject is beyond the scope of this booklet,²⁷ but in identifying the kingdoms the interpretation of Rev 17 is helpful. ‘... *and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other is not yet come.*’ (Rev 17:10).

History identifies the five who have ‘fallen’ as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. We are presently living in the end of the Roman era - although the Roman empire itself has fallen we live in a world dominated by a Roman form of government. The kingdom ‘yet to come’ is the kingdom which will be empowered by antichrist to rule during the time called ‘the great tribulation’.

There are numerous ways to diagrammatically show the relationship between these various visions, but for our present purposes Fig 11 shows the time of these kingdoms in relation to the timeline used elsewhere in this study.

The Lord’s prophetic pattern of allowing a kingdom to become established before it was then humiliated has two cycles to be completed. The current world order will disintegrate thus allowing the seventh kingdom to be established. The humiliation of this seventh kingdom has been depicted as the most devastating judgement of all. The vision of the ‘great image’ in the second chapter of Daniel shows it being crushed by a stone which in turn *became* ‘a great mountain and

²⁷ For detailed studies of the world kingdoms outlined in Daniel and Revelation, refer to either of the following notes which are available through TRI BOOKS. ‘Major Prophetic Themes of Scripture’, V J Hall, 1989. ‘History of the Nations’, I W D Barlow, 1988.

filled the whole earth'. (Dan 2:35). The judgement of this last kingdom is also the final judgement of all the previous kingdoms and allows the establishment of the kingdom of God, which itself endures forever.

The 'seven times' prophecy should then be seen as a prophetic pattern which has been partially fulfilled, but which will be consummated in the days ahead. The events of these final days are the subject of the next chapter.

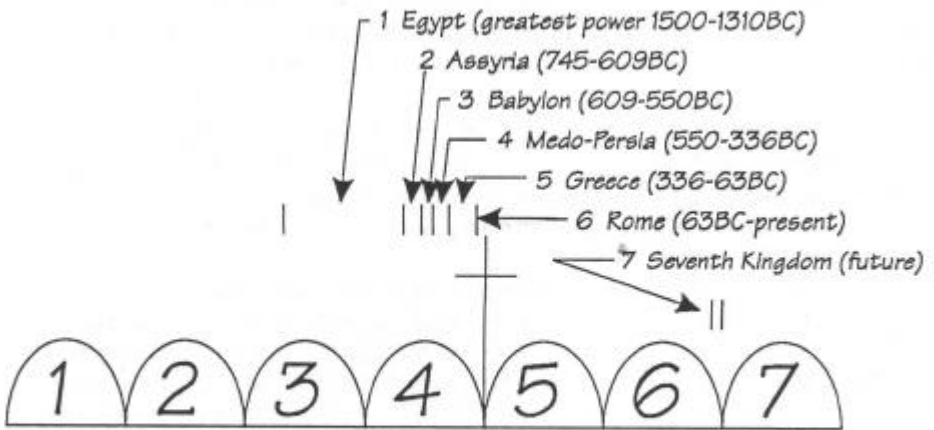


Fig 11 - The Seven Kingdoms

5

OVERVIEW OF ESCHATOLOGY

Our study of Time in ‘the Temple’ revealed that as the created realm had a definite beginning, it is also to have a definite end when its function within God’s eternal purposes is complete. The study of this final phase of time is called ‘eschatology’ - a word meaning ‘the doctrine of last things’.

The ‘last times’ involve the fulfilment of God’s purposes and are therefore very involved. A detailed study of all aspects of eschatology is beyond the scope of this present study. It is the intention here to outline the timing of the major events and to present this in a simple diagrammatic form.

There are many different approaches to presenting such a broad subject and the approach presented here is chosen primarily for its simplicity.

THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection of the dead is anticipated in many scriptures of the Old Testament.

'If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time I will wait till my change come.' (Job 14:14).

'Your dead will live, their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy.' (Isaiah 26:19).

'As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake.' (Psalm 17:15).²⁸

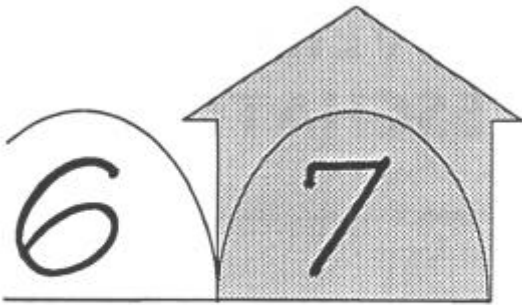


Fig 12 - The resurrection of the last day

This Old Testament teaching was so widely understood that in New Testament times the Sadducees were considered notable because they did not believe in the resurrection. (Matt 22:23).

Jesus confirmed the certainty of the last day on at least two occasions. (Matt 22:22-33; John 11:23-25). In view of the earlier discussion of the prophetic significance of the term 'the last day', the resurrection of the last day is best understood as

the resurrection which will take place during the seventh, or last, 1000-year day of God's week.

This interpretation is strengthened when it is seen that this 'resurrection on the last day' is to take place in two quite distinct phases as the following scriptures show.

'And many of those who sleep in the dust will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.' (Dan 12:2).

'Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did good deeds to

²⁸ See also Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:9-11; Isaiah 25:8; Ezek 37; Dan 12:2; Hos 13:14

a **resurrection of life**, but those who committed evil deeds to a **resurrection of judgement**.' (John 5:28,29).

'There shall certainly be a resurrection of **both** the righteous and the wicked.' (Acts 24:15).

A study of Rev 20:1-6 makes it clear that there are two separate groups of people involved in each phase of the resurrection, and also that each phase takes place at different times spaced one thousand years apart.

'... and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until one thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.' (Rev 20:4,5).

This can be summarised diagrammatically as follows:

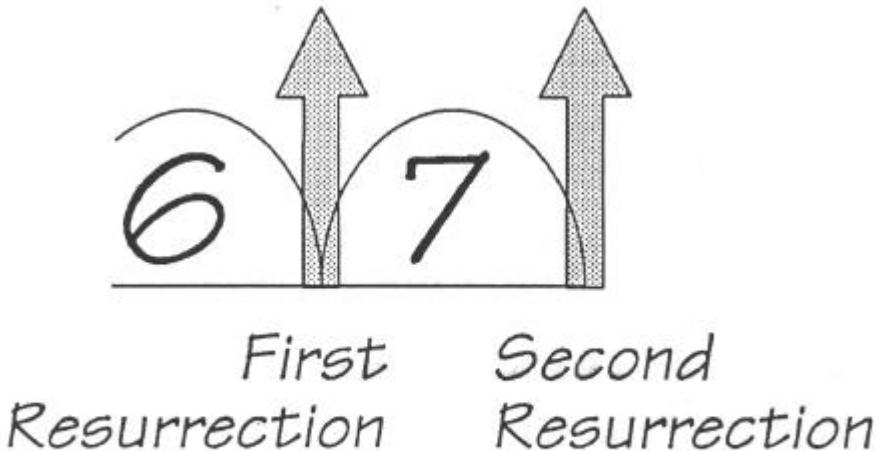


Fig 13 - The two resurrections

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Following His earthly ministry of approximately 33 years, Jesus ascended to the heavens to sit at the right hand of His Father. At the time of His ascension, it was prophesied that He would return in the same manner. (Acts 1:9-11).

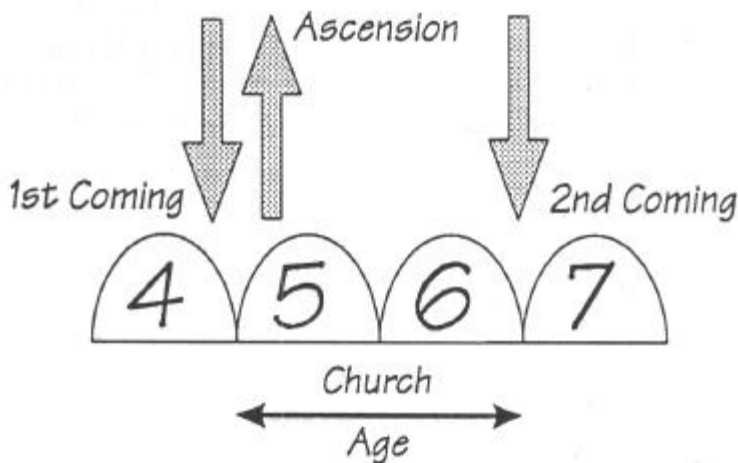


Fig 14 - The 1st and 2nd Comings of Christ

The second coming of Christ will occur during ‘the last times’, and more specifically , at the time of the first resurrection. This is shown by the following scriptures.

‘... in Christ all shall be made alive. But at each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming...’ (I Cor 15:20-23).

‘For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall arise first.’ (I Thess 4:16).

‘... we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.’ (I Cor 15:51,52).

There are many facets to such an important event as the second coming of Christ. To illustrate some of these we shall briefly study the three Greek words used to describe the event in the New Testament.

Parousia

‘Parousia’ means ‘presence’ or ‘arrival’ and was used in Hellenistic Greek to designate the visit of a ruler. The same Jesus who ascended to heaven will again visit the earth in personal presence (Acts 1:11), at the end of the age (Matt 24), in power and glory (Matt 24:27), to destroy antichrist (II Thess 2:8), to raise the righteous dead (I Thess 5:23), and to gather the redeemed. (Matt 24:31; II Thess 2:1).

Apokalypsis

His return will also be an ‘apokalypsis’, that is, an ‘unveiling’ or ‘disclosure’. The power and glory which are now His because of His exaltation (Phil 2:9, Eph 1:20-23) will be disclosed to the world. (I Peter 4:13).

Christ is now reigning as lord at his father’s right hand (Heb 1:3, 12:2; I Cor 15:25), but His reign is invisible to the world. It will however, be made visible by His apokalypsis. (I Cor 1:7; II Thess 1:7; I Peter 1:7-13). Thus, the second coming of Christ is inseparable from His ascension for it discloses His present Lordship to the world.

Epiphaneia

The third word ‘epiphaneia’, meaning simply ‘an appearing’, designates the visibility of His return. (II Thess 2:8; I Tim 6:14; II Tim 4:1,8; Tit 2:13).

THE ‘RAPTURE’

When the dead in Christ have been raised in the first resurrection, they, together with Christians alive at that time will be physically caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This ‘catching up’ has become known as the ‘rapture’ although the term is not actually used in the Bible.

*‘... and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then those who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.’ (I Thess 4:16,17).*

We can see, then, that the ‘rapture’ happens at the same time as the ‘2nd Coming’ of Jesus.

THE 'GREAT TRIBULATION'

The time which has become known as the 'great tribulation' will be a period of 3½ years in which antichrist will rule the earth.²⁹ He will attempt to force all who live on the earth to worship him and to take his mark.

During this time the perfected Bride of Christ will be protected *in 'the wilderness'*. (Rev 12:6). Any Christians not involved in the Bride will have to pass through the 'great tribulation'. During this time they will be faced with the decision of taking the mark of antichrist, or being beheaded for their faith in Christ.

The 'great tribulation' will immediately precede the first resurrection because those who do not receive the mark of antichrist will come to life in the first resurrection.

'... and I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ... This is the first resurrection.' (Rev 20:4,5)

FINAL JUDGEMENT

In our study of 'Time in the Temple' (pages 7-9), we saw that God has already set a time in which He will judge the world. (Acts 17:31). The opportunity He has extended will have then expired, and those who will have not taken that opportunity will then come into judgement.

We have already seen that the second resurrection is to be a resurrection of judgement of judgement which is also referred to as *'the second death'* (Rev

²⁹ This forty-two month period of antichrist rule (Rev 13:5) during which judgement is poured out, will indeed be a time of great tribulation. However, it should be noted that the expression 'great tribulation' appears only twice in the New Testament, and in neither place does it refer specifically to this period. In Matthew 24:21 it is more general in its application, while in Revelation 7:14 it refers to the trouble out of which the church will emerge perfected for the Day of Atonement. In our present context, the term 'the great tribulation' is only used as a convenient label for reference. So many writers have used this term that convention demands its continued use.

20:6). This is in marked contrast to the first resurrection which is called a '*resurrection of life.*' (John 5:29).

All those who are not involved in the first resurrection will be judged at this time. Satan himself will also be involved in the second resurrection. He will be bound at the time of the first resurrection and released 'from his prison' to face the second death.

Those raised in this second resurrection will stand before 'the great white throne of judgement' and be judged from 'the book of life'. They will then be '*cast into the lake of fire*' along with death, Hades, and Satan himself to '*be tormented day and night forever and ever.*' (Rev 20:6-15).

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH

The present heaven and earth were created by God as a context for the outworking of His eternal purpose. Once that purpose has been fulfilled there will be no further need of the heaven and the earth. They will '*wear out like a garment*' and, '*like a mantle Thou wilt roll them up.*' (Psalm 102:25,27; Isaiah 51:6; Heb 1:10-12).

What then is the purpose of '*a new heaven and a new earth*'? (Rev 21:1).

The present heaven and earth were created, or it could be said, they are of the 'created order'. When they are judged by fire, all things of the 'created order' will also be judged with them. Only that which has passed by way of the new birth from the 'created order' to the 'incarnate order' will remain.

The new heaven and the new earth are not of the 'created order', but of the 'incarnate order'. It is clear that only those who have no part in the second death will participate in the new heavens and the new earth. (Rev 21:1-8).

This then becomes the culmination of the eternal purpose of God. The creation, time, 'the temple', etc, will have all served their purposes and will have been dispensed with. Those who have taken the opportunity extended by God will be 'in His image, and after His likeness' and living in the incarnate order of life called the Melchizedek Order.