

REDEEMING THE TIME

“Generations”

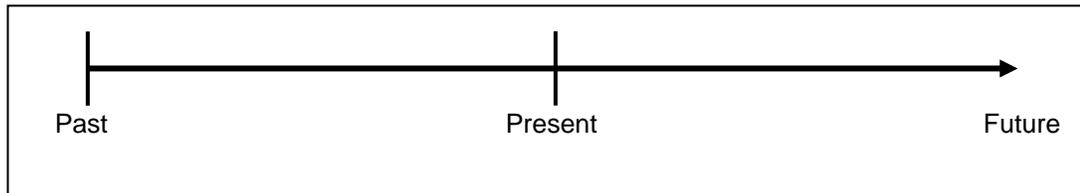
Introduction

□ A Definition of Time

In our last sharing, we spoke of a theological definition of time. We saw time as a manifestation of the Living God and that as such, it is a spiritual entity in a material world. In the created realm, we saw time as the forward progress of God’s plan of redemption. It is this redemptive quality of time, the fact that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, that gives time its unidirectionality. In our experience, it only moves forward.

□ The Time Line

In Western culture, we are primarily saddled with a concept of time that is Greek in origin. The best illustration of the Greek manner of thinking about time is the time line.



□ The Position of the Future in Hebraic Thought

As one might expect, the Hebraic conception of time is quite different.

Jer 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a **future** and a hope. NKJV

Prov 24:13-14

13 My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste;

14 Know that wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a **future**, And your hope will not be cut off. NASU

The Hebrew word translated “future” in these verses is ‘achariyth, which means the last or end, hence the future or posterity, all that comes afterward. It is elsewhere translated hindermost or hind part. Its combination with the word “days” should give us some pause.

Gen 49:1

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the **last** days. KJV¹

¹ All references are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

Isa 2:2

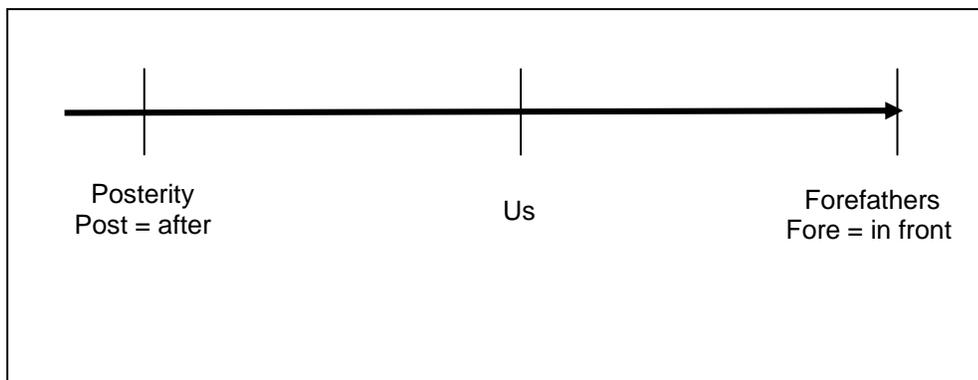
And it shall come to pass in the **last** days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

Dan 10:14

Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the **latter** days: for yet the vision is for many days.

*When we hear “last days” and “latter days,” we of course think of the end of the ages and our **coming** hope. But from which direction is the future coming? In our regular mode of thinking, the future is ahead of us and the past is behind us – not so in the Hebraic mindset. The future is that which comes after, or behind us.*

*As odd as this mind concept may seem to us, it is not totally foreign to our thinking. Looking back at the classic time line, where are our children and grandchildren? Ahead of us? Are they not born **after** us?*



Thorleif Boman in his Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek has this to say regarding the time flip:

“We Indo-Germanic peoples think of time as a line on which we ourselves stand at a point called now; then we have the future lying before us, and the past stretches out behind us. The Israelites use the same expressions ‘before’ and ‘after’ but with opposite meanings.

From the psychological viewpoint it is absurd to say that we have the future before us and the past behind us, as though the future were visible to us and the past occluded. Quite the reverse is true. What our forebears have accomplished lies before us as their completed works; the house we see, the meadows and fields, the culture and political system are congealed expressions of the deeds of the fathers. The same is true of everything they have done, lived, or suffered; it lies before us as completed facts, and we could unroll their genesis individually as much as we want, just as in a

motion picture. The present and the future are, on the contrary, still in process of coming and becoming.”²

Realizing that our future is behind us and in the hands of our progeny should impact the way we walk out our Christian faith.

I. The Scriptural Prominence of Generations

The importance of generations in the Bible can be seen in the structure of Genesis, the amount of Scripture given to the subject, and the attention given in Scripture to the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

1. The Textual Structure of Genesis

*The standout word in the book of Genesis is the Hebrew word *tol^edot*, generations. This term, in fact, gives us the structural outline of the book*

The Textual Structure of Genesis³	
The Creation – Genesis 1:1 – 2:3	
<i>Tol^edot</i> of the heavens & earth	Gen 2:4 – 4:26
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Adam	Gen 5:1 – 6:8
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Noah	Gen 6:9 – 9:29
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Shem, Ham, and Japheth	Gen 10:1 – 11:9
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Shem	Gen 11:10 – 26
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Terah	Gen 11:27 – 25:11
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Ishmael	Gen 25:12 – 18
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Isaac	Gen 25:19 – 35:29
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Esau	Gen 36:1 – 37:1
<i>Tol^edot</i> of Jacob	Gen 37:2 – 50:26

The use of *tol^edot* throughout the Bible in every place can and often must refer to what follows it.⁴ “The person named after the *tol^edot* is usually not the central character in the narrative but the person of origin.”⁵

2. Scriptural Sections Devoted to Genealogies

We only have to think of all those “begats”!

Some sections devoted to genealogies are: Ex. 6:14-25; Num. 1, 3, 26; Josh 13-21; I Chrn. 1-9, 23-27; II Chrn. 29:12-14; Ezra 2, 8:1-14, 10:18-44; Nehemiah 7:7-63, 12:1-24; Phil 3:4-5; II Tim 1:5; Rev. 7:4-8!

² Thorleif Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, NY, © 1960 by SCM Press Ltd., p. 149-150.

³ Adapted from Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, © 1988, 1996 by Allen P. Ross, p. 70.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

3. The Generation of Jesus Christ

Matt 1:1

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

*Remember that from a Hebraic mindset, the person mentioned at the start of the generational record is seen as the **origin!***

Matt 22:41-46

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Rev 22:16

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. **I am the root and the offspring of David**, and the bright and morning star.

II. Redemption, A Generational Plan

1. Original Intent

A. As communicated within in the Godhead

Gen 1:26

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

The expression “Let us make man” is equivalent in nature to “be fruitful and multiply.” God’s dominion over the earth was to be extended by the generations of mankind.

B. As communicated to man

Gen 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

C. As seen in marriage

Gen 2:23-24

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Matt 19:4-6

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mal 2:13-16

13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

2. Its Expression After the Fall

Gen 3:15-16

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Though we still have fruitfulness and dominion, it is through suffering (shown in the sorrow of birth and the bruised heel).

Gen 5:1-3

1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

Now when Adam had children, they were in his image primarily. God's holy character would not be transferred through procreation.

3. In Christ

A. In Adam

Rom 5:12-21

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Cor 15:21-22

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Because we were "in Adam" when he sinned, we all sinned. This shows us that none of us sins to ourselves. Our sins not only affect those around us, they also impact those who would come from us.

B. In Abraham – Levi's example

Heb 7:1-10

1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

- 4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.
- 5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:
- 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.
- 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.
- 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.
- 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.
- 10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

*That Levi paid tithes **in Abraham** is a central point in the argument for the superiority of the Melchisedecan priesthood over the Levitical priesthood. This is a powerful example of what it means to be "in."*

C. In Christ

Rom 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

We are in Christ. Why? Because of our total identification with Him in salvation.

Rom 6:3-9

- 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:
- 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
- 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.
- 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:
- 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

Our old man is crucified (present tense) with Him. We believe that we shall (future tense) also live with Him. Even though the crucifixion happened historically in the past, it is a present reality in our Christian walk. The old man is (present tense) nailed to the cross.

*The Crucifixion was an eternal act. We received the punishment for our sin nearly 2,000 years ago when Jesus died on the cross, because we were **in Him!** We entered into Him in the eternal domain of the atoning sacrifice by faith.*

Rom 10:9-10

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

*Though for us the moment of confession and belief occurred at a historical point in time, it placed us square in the realm of the eternal – chosen **in Him** before the foundation of the world.*

Eph 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

From our perspective, we became a believer and entered Christ at a specific point in time in our conscious past. From His perspective, we were in Him before the foundation of the world. The intersection point (or spiritual worm hole [Ps. 22:6, 16] if you will) is the Cross. It is there that we consciously enter the place where we have always been. We were “in Christ” and thus we follow Him.

More important than what we shall do (future tense) is what He has done (past tense) to make us what we are (present tense) and what we should be – redeemed, holy and without blame before Him in love.

III. God Proves Us by Our Generations

1. They Are a Testimony of Our Fruitfulness

A. Be fruitful and multiply

Gen 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The multiplication of the family of man was to be the evidence of its fruitfulness.

B. Adoption and mentoring

i. Adoption

The Lord gives fruitfulness in our lives not only by procreation, but adoption as well.

The Biblical list of adoptees is quite illustrious. Joseph decided to adopt Jesus. He and Mary would later have at least six other children (see Matt 13:55-56). Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and Manasseh and Ephraim were adopted by Jacob and their names became synonymous with fruitfulness.

ii. Mentoring

If you have no children (and even if you do), invest your life in someone who has a good statistical chance of outliving you! Those we disciple and mentor in the Christian walk become our spiritual progeny.

2 Tim 2:1-2

1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

C. Fruit that should remain

John 15:16

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

The Lord chose us to bring fruit and have the fruit remain. Whether we reproduce naturally, by adoption, or discipleship, we are commanded to bring that fruit to maturity that it might remain.

Isa 53:8-10

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and **who shall declare his generation?** for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, **he shall see his seed**, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

At the Cross in that historical moment, it looked like all was lost. But all was not lost. All was given. It was there that the grain of wheat died to become a bountiful harvest.

Heb 2:13

And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, **Behold I and the children which God hath given me.**

2. They Are Our Training and Test for Leadership

How we lead our families and children determines whether or not we are fit to rule in the kingdom of God. This principle is manifestly clear in both the Old and New Testaments. If we fail in the leadership of our families, we are disqualified for leadership functions within the church.

A. The Davidic kingdom

The Kingdom of David is a type of the Millennial Kingdom. In choosing all of his administration heads, be they prophets, singers, gatekeepers, musicians or soldiers, one term shows up repeatedly.

1 Chron 27:1

Now the children of Israel after their number, to wit, **the chief fathers** and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course were twenty and four thousand.

It was the chief fathers, those distinguished by wise management of tribal affairs, that received the top appointments. The qualifications for leadership in the New Testament church are no different.

B. The Church

1 Tim 3:2-5

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

3. They Are the Triumph of Our Warfare

God created man to have dominion and subdue for eternity. This means that the war is much longer than the current average life span of man. How are we to gain the victory? Through our generations.

Gen 32:1-2, 10

1 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

In response to the vision, Jacob divided his camps. He who had crossed the Jordan with only his staff had become two armies!

Gen 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Prior to the command of subduing and having dominion over the earth was given was the admonition to be fruitful and multiply. The only way Adam could have exercised dominion over all the earth would have been through their children.

Ps 127:3-5

3 Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

Our children are to be weapons of righteousness. It is they who shall speak with our enemies at the gate and take possession of it.

Gen 22:17

That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

The ultimate example of successful generational warfare is that the Father sent the Son to destroy the devil.

1 John 3:8

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Conclusion

When we realize that our future is behind us in the lives our children and our children's children, then the Christian walk ceases to be the chasing after a personal destiny somewhere out there in a future before me. It becomes the preparing of the way for those who come after us. Our destiny is in them, for they are in us and we are in Christ.