

REDEEMING THE TIME “In the Beginning”

Introduction

In our last study, we examined some of the differences between kairos time and chronos time. These are different aspects of time. But we didn't specifically ask the central question: What is time?

Augustine is quoted as saying “I know what time is, but if someone asks me, I cannot tell him.”¹

Isaac Newton considered there to be an absolute, uniform rhythm of time throughout the entire universe, regardless of who was measuring it, where they were or how fast they were going.²

Though Albert Einstein showed through his two great theories, Special Relativity and General Relativity, that time was not absolute but affected by mass, acceleration, and gravity, he believed in a static (non-expanding, non-contracting) universe³. In a letter he wrote to comfort the surviving sister and son of his lifelong friend Michael Besso, he said, “This [Besso's death] signifies nothing. For us believing physicists the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one.”⁴

Julian Barbour, in his book The End of Time, notes that though Newton and Einstein differed greatly on the measurement and flow rate of time, neither bothered to define time itself! (He comes to the conclusion that there is no such thing!)⁵

After cataloging the great advances in clock and watch manufacturing, David Landes, a historical economist, had this comment:

“As a result of this heightened accuracy, the old definition of the second as one 86,400th part of a solar day was no longer suitable; the solar day was simply not uniform. After an attempt to redefine the second as a fraction of a given solar year was rendered obsolete in its turn, the General Conference on Weights and Measures decided in 1967 to detach the second entirely from celestial clocks: it was defined as ‘9,192,631,770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the caesium-133 atom.’

¹ Quoted by David S. Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, © 1983, 2000 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, p. 1.

² Michio Kaku, *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps, and the 10th Dimension*, Anchor Books (Doubleday), New York, NY, © 1994 by Oxford University Press, p. 85.

³ Joao Magueijo, *Faster than the Speed of Light*, Perseus Publishing, Cambridge, Massachusetts, © 2003 by Joao Magueijo, p. 67.

⁴ Quoted by William Lane Craig, “Timelessness & Omnitemporality”, *God & Time*, edited by Gregory E. Ganssle, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, © 2001 by Gregory Ganssle, p. 134.

⁵ See Julian Barbour, *The End of Time: The Next Revolution in Physics*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, © 1999 Julian Barbour. The author's entire thesis is that time doesn't really exist.

At the end of 1999, the United States National Institute of Standards and Technology proudly announced a new atomic clock to serve as America's primary frequency standard. Expected variance: no more than a second in the next twenty million years!

No one knows what time is; certainly no one knows how to define and explain it to the general satisfaction. But we sure know how to measure it.”⁶

To define time is exactly what we are going to attempt to do. Whether it is to the general satisfaction or not is yet to be seen. To understand what time is, we need to look at its creation and purpose. It will then be possible, I believe, to arrive at a theological definition of time.

I. Time's Creation

1. A Gap in History – Gen 1:1-3

Gen 1:1-3

1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. KJV⁷

a) The Sons of God – Job 38:4-7

Job 38:4-7

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The angels were present at the creation of this world.

b) Before the Foundation – Eph 1:4

Eph 1:4

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:

The words “foundation of the world” are the Greek “katabole kasmos,” which literally means the casting down of the cosmos. This does not refer to the setting up of this creation specifically but to the destruction of the previous order.

c) Not of this Creation – Heb 9:11 [2 Pet 3:4-8]

Heb 9:11

⁶ Landes, p. 202

⁷ All Scriptures are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

The Heavenly Sanctuary But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. NKJV

It is not of this creation – the real tabernacle in heaven. We will talk about this in a later sharing.

[2 Peter 3:3-8]

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Peter catalogs the heavens and earth that were (Gen 1:1-2), the heavens and earth that are (Gen 1:3ff) and alludes to that which shall be, because the entire cosmos will be gutted by fire.

2. Day One – Gen 1:3-5

Gen 1:3-5

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

a) Cardinal considerations

The first day is “Day One.” I believe it stands as a cardinal number (independent quantity). The rest are ordinal (sequential quality dependent on the first day). It marks the commencement of something new. This type of time, Day One, had not existed before.

b) Evening and morning

Evening presupposes a period of light. The full day is from morning to morning.

c) Darkness and light – John 1:1-5

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- 2 The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

John shows us that the Gospel is presented in Genesis 1:3-4 "God said, Let there be light and there was light." All that God has done is announced in the presentation of light and its separation from darkness. The rest of the Bible is the details of this spiritual principle.

3. The Week – Gen 1:6-2:3

a) Space (2nd day) – Gen 1:6-8

Gen 1:6-8

- 6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
- 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
- 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Isa 42:5

Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

b) Heavenly luminaries (4th day) – Gen 1:14-19

Gen 1:14-19

- 14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
- 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
- 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
- 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
- 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.
- 19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

c) Man & the Sabbath (6th & 7th days) – Gen 1:26-27, 31; 2:1-3

Gen 1:26-27, 31

- 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.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him;
male and female created he them.
31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.
And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Gen 2:1-3

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested
on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had
rested from all his work which God created and made.

II. Time's Purpose

1. Bringing Order to Chaos (Redemption)

Some measure time by entropy, the amount of disorder in a system. Randomness increases as time moves forward (in our world). But the six days of creation show a steady imposition of order on chaos – yet time moved forward!

2. The Pacing of Man's Labor (Works)

a) Work in the garden – Gen 2:7-8, 15 Gen 2:7-8, 15

7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his
nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the
man whom he had formed.
15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to
dress it and to keep it.

b) Six days of labor – Ex 20:8-11

Ex 20:8-11

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do
any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy
maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them
is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day,
and hallowed it.

3. The Realm of Fellowship with God (Worship)

a) In the cool of the day – Gen 3:8

Gen 3:8

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of
the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD
God amongst the trees of the garden.

- b) Holiness in time – Gen 2:1-3 (see above)
The first thing God explicitly sanctified in the Creation was time (His breathing His life into Adam is an implicit sanctification). God's primary sanctuary wasn't matter (an idol), space (a temple), but time (spirit equivalent).

III. A Theological Definition of Time

1. Time, a Spiritual Entity in a Material World
 - a) Spirit, soul, and body – Gen 2:7
Gen 2:7
And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
 - b) Time, space, and matter – Gen 1:2-8
Gen 1:2-8
2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
 - c) Worship God
 - i. In time – Deut 5:12
Deut 5:12
Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.
 - ii. In spirit – John 4:24
John 4:24
God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
2. Time, a Created Realm of Redemption
Each day of creation redeemed a different aspect of the creation.
3. Time, a Manifestation of the Living God
 - a) A new order of time – Ex 12:1-2
Ex 12:1-2
1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,

2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

b) The approaching day – Heb 10:24-25

Heb 10:24-25

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

c) Nearer than when we believed – Rom 13:11-13

Rom 13:11-14

11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Conclusion

Rom 8:17-23

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.