

REDEEMING THE TIME

Practical Christian Living Inside and Outside the Space-time Continuum

“Introduction: Time, the Precious Commodity”

Introduction

Eph 5:13-17

13 But all things that are reprove are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. KJV¹

On the surface, this section of Scripture is quite simple. It tells us to be wise in this world and redeem the time because the days are evil. But the affects of these simple statements go quite deep. In these four verses (and those preceding them) the subjects of light and darkness, wisdom, evil days, and understanding the will of the Lord come up. Each of these is a major subject in the Word of God in their own right. And among them stands this simple admonition: redeeming the time.

The Apostle would have us buy up the time through a wise understanding of the will of the Lord because the days are evil.

Col 4:5-6

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Our wisdom is shown when our speech is graceful, seasoned with salt, and we know how to answer every man. One major aspect of redeeming the time is working to redeem fallen man within time.

Col 4:2-4

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

We need to make the mystery of Christ manifest by our deeds and words. But we only have a limited time (“the open door”) to accomplish this. This is why we are told to redeem, to buy up, the time. As a shopper hunts for a good bargain, we are to seek out and pounce upon the opportune time to make the light manifest.

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

Though Ephesians 5:16 and Colossians 4:5 deal with a particular aspect of time (kairos), it brings our attention to all of time (chronos). Kairos is the segment or season of time, chronos the duration of time. One is the quality (kairos), the other the quantity (chronos). In one sense, kairos is to chronos what rhema is to logos. A mastery over the words of God (rhema) help us gain an understanding of the Word of God (logos). Conversely, an understanding of the breadth of the logos helps us put rhemas in context.

In like manner, if we redeem the kairos moments of life, then our time (chronos) will be fruitful. If we have an understanding of the breadth of time (chronos), it will help us put the seasons (kairos) in context.

This is what we will endeavor to do in this study: gain an understanding of time to better appreciate our need to redeem it. Along the way we should arrive at a deeper awe of God, a true appreciation of what is at stake, an increased faith, and an increased hope.

In this introductory sharing, we are going to look at some key questions:

- *What are the implications of time?*
- *Is time money?*
- *How are we to understand the will of the Lord?*

I. The Implications of Time

Alan G. Padgett is the Professor of Systematic Theology at Luther Seminary, St. Paul. With regard to time's place in theology, he has this to say:

“The relationship between God and time may seem an obscure subject. Yet the more one studies it, the more convinced one becomes that this doctrine plays a key role in our grasp of the relationship between God and the world. How we understand God's relationship to the world, in turn, is a central part of any theistic worldview.”²

In other words, it is central to our understanding of God and our walk with Him how He relates to us in time. It touches areas of doctrine such as free will, foreknowledge, and predestination. It colors our understanding of His Omniscience and Sovereignty. It has an impact on how we view our hope and how long (time, get it) one must have faith.

Let us look at some of the implications of time.

A. God Is Before Time

Ps 90:1-4

- 1 A Prayer of Moses the man of God. LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.**
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.**
- 3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.**

² Alan G. Padgett, “Eternity as Relative Timelessness”, *God & Time*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. © 2001 by Gregory E. Ganssle, p. 92.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

B. God Is the Master of Time

Dan 2:20-23

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

21 **And he changeth the times and the seasons:** he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22 **He revealeth the deep and secret things:** he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, **who hast given me wisdom and might,** and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Remember that the context of this was Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which was nothing less than God's outline of the ages of Gentile kingdoms and the establishment of the Kingdom of the Son!

C. Types of Time

1. A short list of Bible "times"

In the Bible, we find "sundry times", "times past", "time of reformation", "last time", "manner of time", "due time", "time in the flesh", "old time", and even "the time of the dead." And this is only from three books (Hebrews, 1 Peter, and Revelation)!

2. Types of time we encounter in life.

- i. Practical Time – watch or clock time (but we still deal with time zones!).
- ii. Subjective Time – "The day just dragged on." "Time flew by!"
- iii. Dynamic Time – astronomical clock, orbits.

3. Time as a physical property.

In Science, time is viewed as a physical property. We encounter this in everyday life when we talk about speed. "We were going 65 miles an hour (the speed limit was 35!)" Miles is distance covered in space, per hour is the time rate.

When Albert Einstein formulated the theory of Special Relativity and later General Relativity, one of its main components was that time was relative. Your time and my time are different. Your space and my space are different. But we will both agree on a four dimensional aggregate called space-time.³

$$(T_*)^2 = T^2 - X^2$$

³ Julian Barbour, *The End of Time*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY. © 1999 by Julian Barbour, p. 150

II. Of Time and Money

A. Time Can Be Exchanged for Money.

Ex 21:18-19

18 And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed:

19 If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: **only he shall pay for the loss of his time**, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.

B. We Will Be Judged for Our Use of Both.

Luke 12:16-21

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, **this night thy soul shall be required of thee**: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

2 Cor 5:9-10

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

C. We Have a Limited Amount to Spend.

1. Time is short.

1 Cor 7:29-31

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

2. Faithful in little is faithful in much.

Matt 25:19-21

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

3. We have no power over the day of death.

Eccl 8:8

There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

III. Understanding the Will of the Lord

A. It Is a Revelatory and Contemplative Process.

1. Revelation

Eph 1:15-20

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

It is through the spirit of wisdom and revelation that we can understand the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power (resurrection)!

2. Contemplation

Luke 24:45

Then opened he their understanding, that they might **understand** the scriptures,

Eph 5:17

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding** what the will of the Lord is.

The Greek word translated “understand(ing)” is suniemi. It means knowledge acquired by reflection and consideration; to collect together the single features of an object into a whole.⁴ Once the Lord reveals something to us, we need to chew on it, contemplate it, and put it together.

⁴ E. W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1980, p. 830.

B. The Revelation of the Lord in Time

Ex 3:14

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Ex 6:2-3

2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

We studied the Name YHWH extensively in “The Father’s Covenant Name.” It can alternately mean “I Will Be what I Will Be” and “Is-Was-Will Be.”

Rev 1:4-6

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from **him which is, and which was, and which is to come**; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

*To understand what the will of the Lord is, we must understand what He has done, what He is doing, what He **could** do, and what He **will** do.*

1. What He has done.

What He has done is a window into the past, yet it affects our present and the future.

2. What He is doing.

What He is doing is a window into the present, which is being affected by His past purposes and points us to future realities.

i. What He *could* do.

What He could do is a window into the possible future (based on the conditional if / then clause in prophecies).

3. What He **will** do.

What He will do is a window into the absolute and definite future, which is the culmination of the past and present.

Isa 46:9-10

9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

C. His Desire for all Mankind.

1 Tim 2:4

Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Conclusion

Most Christians concept of the hope is static – an arrived to final state in timelessness. We are to have an answer for the hope that lies within us. The depth and breadth of that answer will depend on the depth and breadth of our understanding of the hope.

Is our answer simply that we are saved? As great as being saved is, it is only the beginning, not the end. Do we really have a measure of what we are saved from and what we are saved to?

Time affects all these ideals and how we relate to God. Our understanding of time should deeply impact our faith and practice.