

PART THREE

The Timing of the End

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Chapter Eleven A Timeplan?

"There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under Heaven"

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Does God have a specific timeplan for the completion of all history? The idea that He has no such plan is very popular. Of course, we all agree that just because an idea is popular doesn't make it true. After all, People of the 15th century thought the world was flat, and people now believe the world is billions of years old. Christians do not believe the world is flat but many try to reconcile evolution and the Bible.

Theistic evolution has influenced christian thinking, and it is taught in some seminaries. The current creation "science" espouses a 10,000 year old earth. That is still too many years if you believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. So this idea that God might have a timeplan will be thought of by many as speculative. But please don't stop reading now!

I am not the first person to suggest existence of a timeplan. Some before me, including first century authors, believed in one. And we will look at what some of them had to say.

First, I will present scripture verses that imply God planned the creation overall. Next, we will look at God's perfection. Everything God does must have design and significance because He is perfect. These attributes imply *perfect* planning. Then I will give reasons why time is a part of the creation. And if I can show the creation has any order with respect to time, then we can reasonably conclude, God has a perfect timeplan. Simply because; if God has any kind of plan, it must be perfect.

What is the nature of such a timeplan? For an answer, we need to first look at the context of the Millennium. The Millennium appears by itself, seemingly fitting nowhere in scripture, like an arm with no body attached. Next, we will want to see how the Sabbath days and

years, given in Leviticus, have significance in "type" that provides a context for the Millennium. Finally, we will look at several reasons for this view including some historical and scholarly opinions.

Scriptures on Planning

Lorraine Boettner echoes the sentiment of many conservative scholars:

"It is unthinkable that a God of infinite wisdom and power would create a world without a definite plan for that world."¹

He goes on to list some scripture references that cause him to believe this. I would like to offer these as well.

Isaiah 40:12 - "Who has measured the waters ... marked off the heavens... calculated the dust of the earth ... weighed the mountains and hills in a scale?"

How can anyone measure, mark-off, calculate or weigh on a scale and not be planning? Doesn't this sound like planning?

II Timothy 1:9 - (God) "... who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus

1. "The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination", p.20.

before times eternal."

This implies that Christ had a purpose for people before the creation existed. Wouldn't this suggest the need for the planning of the creation?

Matthew 25:34 - "Then shall the King say unto them on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'.

Since God has seen the end before the beginning commenced, how can there *not* be planning?

Psalms 139:16 - "Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

Surely, all of ones days being known before they began suggests God could plan them.

Daniel 2:28 - "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days."

Has God planned some things?

Isaiah 14:24 - "The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, 'Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, ...'"

Here is prima-facia evidence of planning; God's testimony to that effect.

Isaiah 46:11 - "Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass, I have planned it, surely I will do it."

Since God has directly said He has planned in general is it possible God also has a time plan? We see in these verses implications of purpose and design. This adds up to planning.

Design and Significance In Creation

In this section, I hope to show adequately that time is a part of the creation; and, that time related historical events have some order. If I

accomplish those two things, it will mean God must have a perfect timeplan. Why? Because everything that God does is perfect.

E. W. Bullinger, a nationally known scholar quoting Psalm 18:30 and 29:7 suggested that God's way is perfect. And if God's way is perfect, then everything He does must have design and significance.² That means you can add nothing to His plan, nor can you take anything from it without making it less than perfect or complete.

We, who know our creator, subscribe to the doctrine that it is He who defines what is good, acceptable and perfect.³ God's way is perfect; not only in the sense of correct but in the sense of complete.

For example, a car is designed to fulfill the purpose of transportation. That means each part of the car has a function; it has a significant job to perform. If a part does not have a function that contributes to the overall purpose of transportation, then that part is not needed for transportation and therefore we would have an imperfect design. But, God *is* perfect, so we can conclude that in His car all parts are significant.

That is why the Bible *is* the Word of God rather than just *contains* the Word of God.⁴ Isn't this the basis for our belief in Biblical inerrancy; every detail accounted for, every detail fits?⁵ It is faith in the Doctrine of nerrancy which enables us to know that God has a complete plan which can be known if He chooses to reveal it.

We can readily see design in the works of God by just looking at the creation. The beauty of a rose just after opening, or the intricacy and uniqueness of a snowflake. This is the fruit of creative design at its best. Compare that to a stinking, filthy garbage bucket which is the result of degeneration and chaos. What more does a wise man need to believe that God is the Grand Designer?

The design of God is readily seen in the creation of the universe. We observe space through a telescope; we observe energy by sticking our finger in a light socket or lighting a birth-

2. "Number In Scripture", p.1-2

3. Psalms 18:30; 29:7; Romans 12:2

4. If the Bible only contains the Word of God, then how does any man know what part is truth and what part isn't?

5. Matthew 5:18

day candle. We can experience mass by carrying a pound of lead in one hand and a pound of feathers in the other.⁶

We get the sensation of velocity while riding in the car. And we get our sensation of passing time by recording historical events. I would like to suggest that time is as much a part of the creation as any of the other properties of mechanics that I named.

Time is a part of the creation because it has a beginning, a history and an end just as the rest of the creation. Science has proved that time is a physical function like mass and velocity. In fact, if you were to take a journey and travel near the speed of light, time would change for you compared to people back on earth.⁷ If your journey was for one month, when you came back you might find that several years had passed on earth. Since time can change as a function of other physical properties, means it must also be a part of the creation.

Time order?

Now let's look and see if there is any order with respect to time. We observe time in the present by looking at our watch whose mechanism is patterned after the movement of the stars. The stars move from one place to another in a repeating sequence which we define as a cycles called months and years. Keeping track of the cycles help us get perspective on our world.

God gave us this idea in Genesis 1:14 where He said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years." Thus one of the purposes is to keep track of time.

We know that's true because He said in Isaiah 46:9,10, "I am God and there is none like

me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done." After all, God could have created the planets with no movement. But He didn't, so the movement must be significant because God's "car" has no unnecessary parts.

We find in the Old Testament that God ordained certain increments of time as holy days and years that should be observed. He ordained that Israel should work six days and rest on the seventh.⁸ He also decreed they should work the land six years, and let it rest (lie fallow) the seventh year.⁹

God practiced what He preached in the process of creation. Genesis tells us He did His creative work in six days, and He rested from all His work on the seventh day. Don't we have a pattern here where a rest period is decreed as the last of seven periods of time?

That means there is order to certain time sequences. Namely, the ones where we find a series of seven periods of time; work six and rest one. There may be order to other segments of time but this is the relevant one.

Intuitively, we can see that God having a timeplan is a reasonable observation about the creation. In addition, we have discussed several lines of reasoning; one suggests God is perfect. Another line of reasoning suggests time is a part of the creation; and, I have offered scientific evidence to substantiate that claim. On top of that, we looked at several time periods; each a series of seven; each God's invention. These sets of time periods suggest time order. Lastly, this all means that since God is perfect, He must have a *perfect* time order; or in other words, a perfect time plan. Conversely, what is the implication about God if we show some order of events but not perfect order?

Scriptures for a Timeplan

As we have previously shown, it appears God may have planned the overall scope of the creation and all important events in it at very least. Calvinists would have us believe *all* things are planned down to the last detail. Do we have any scriptures that directly relate to the idea that God planned the important events of Bible history?

6. Mass is equal to the weight per unit of volume.

7. This phenomenon is expressed by one of Albert Einstein's theories of relativity. Robert Eisberg, in his textbook, *Fundamentals of Modern Physics*, says, "We see that a time interval between two events occurring at the same place in some frame of reference is *longer* by a factor one divided by the square root of one minus the quantity velocity squared divided by the speed of light squared when viewed from a frame moving relative to the first frame and, consequently, in which the two frames are spatially separated."

8. Leviticus 23:2

9. Leviticus 25:3,4

Sure there is! Let's look at some now and I will comment as we go along.

Daniel 9:24 - "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place."

This seems like an edict by God of His plans. A specific period of time to accomplish certain goals.

Daniel 9:25 - "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress."

We know that "Messiah the Prince" is Jesus at His first coming.¹⁰ And there was a specific time when he did arrive on the world scene. God held the Jewish leaders responsible for knowing the time of His arrival. It turns out that Jesus triumphantly came into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey, to the cheers and praise of the people exactly 69 weeks of years later. And because the rabbis did not recognize the fulfillment of this prophecy, God decreed the destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke 19:43-44 - "For the days shall come upon you ... surround you ... level you to the ground ... and not leave one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

So what about the time or *your* visitation, do you see God's hand yet?

If the First Coming was predicted precisely, isn't it consistent to believe the Second Coming could be predicted, at least, generally?

Acts 17:31 - "... He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in right-

eousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Here is another verse alluding to a time plan.

Hebrews 9:26 - "... at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested"

Galations 4:4 - "... when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His son, ..."

These verses suggest to me that He came when the *time* was right from God's viewpoint. Didn't God define the "fullness of time", at least partially, in Daniel 9:25 when He predicted the day of Messiah's arrival? This is *prima facie* evidence of a timeplan.

Matthew 24:36 (Referring to the Second Coming of Jesus) - "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."

This verse suggests to me that we can know the year or maybe the season of the year but not the exact day or hour. If we can not know the year or season then the passage, as written, is to some degree misleading. In any case, the words firmly imply that the Father does have a time planned for the Second Coming; even if we can't know it.

Revelation 9:15 - "And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so they might kill a third of mankind."

How can God prepare angels for a certain job at a certain time and not have a time plan? While speaking of the Second Coming, Jesus in Acts 1:7 said,

"It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority."

Two observations jump out at you from this verse. God has said flat out that the date of the second coming is already planned and decided.¹¹

10. This was shown clearly by Sir Robert Anderson in his book, "The Coming Prince".

11. See also Acts 17:31

And at first glance, it would appear that Jesus is suggesting that we cannot know the approximate time of the Second Coming. But before you form an opinion, please hear me out.

I believe Jesus is choosing to tell us about His time plan through other scripture and not tell the early disciples; just like He told John, the Apostle, but not us, about the seven thunders of Revelation 10:3,4. And, it makes good sense. If the disciples knew the physical kingdom would not come for some 2,000 years, they would get easily discouraged because of their perceived small impact on millions yet future.¹² They would be overwhelmed with the enormity of it all.

The parallel passage; I Thessalonians 5:1, suggests they didn't need to know when.

"Now as to the times and epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you."

God knew they would all be dead; so there was no need for them to know. Likewise now, after nearly 2,000 years of low key Biblical activity, some might miss the kingdom if they didn't think it was near.¹³ For their sakes, we need to be able to show the kingdom is near. This idea is confirmed in Daniel Chapter 12. There God tells Daniel to seal up his book *until the time of the end* when it can be understood in the context of the time period in which fulfillment takes place.

Thus, it makes sense for God to give us information in 2008 not revealed to them in the first century. We can also find support for this interpretation because other scripture indicates we *can* know the approximate time of the Second Coming.¹⁴

The Approximate Time

Evidence for knowing the approximate time can be seen in several sets of direct scripture.

Let's look at Matthew chapter 24.

You will remember the scene where the dis-

12. They knew it would be millions because of God's promise to Abraham of seed "... as the sand which is on the seashore; ..." (Genesis 22:17)

13. I Thessalonians 5:1-6

14. Matthew 24:32-39; Luke 21:27-30; I Thessalonians 5:1-11; Daniel 12:9,10; Matthew 25:1-13

ciples ask Jesus (vs:3), "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" To understand this passage correctly you must recognize that three questions were asked; *When* will these things be, *What* are the signs of your coming, and *What* are the signs of the end of the age. He answers the *when* question last as shown in verses 32- 41.

"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

(Is there any question that God has appointed a specific day, even if we can't know it?)

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

If God means by using the word "day" that we cannot know even the approximate time, then why this unique wording? Standard wording for this concept would be to say something like "You do not know when your Lord is coming;" or "You do not know the time when your Lord is coming." But since it actually says day, I think we should take Jesus at His word. Verse 50

again refers to not knowing which *day* and *hour* He might come. Here is another example.

The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13, is a story relating the marriage of Jesus (the Bridegroom) to the Church. The ten virgins (Israel and others) are not occupied with regular duties at their own individual homes but are waiting together in a place where the bridegroom will appear. Since they went to sleep, they must not have been worried about him being late. Thus they must have known the approximate time but not the exact time of his arrival.

Now isn't that the normal procedure at modern weddings? The guests come early and wait for the ceremony to start. There is a scheduled time to start but many times for one reason or another the ceremony isn't on time. In the relaxed culture of the first century, a Hebrew wedding could start late enough that guests might take a nap.

Despite how much credibility my reasoning is given, the moral of this story is presented in verse 13. "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour." This is a warning to Christians today that Jesus is coming, and we may know approximately but not exactly when.

Another direct scripture suggesting we can know the approximate time is Hebrews 10:25. It says, "...encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near." What day? The context is a reference back to chapter 10, verse 28, to those awaiting His coming. Is this not an exhortation to action as we observe the rapture approaching? Doesn't it also imply we *know* approximately when the day will come?

The Birth Process

The following verses deal with the concept of how the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ is like the birth process. There are two applicable observations we can make about the birth process: (1) it takes a specific amount of time; a doctor can discern approximately but not exactly when a baby is due, and (2) labor pains start near the end. Once the pains begin, the intensity increases and the spasms come more frequently until they are continuous at birth. We can see this "type" in modern history. We observe low-key Biblical activity for 2,008 years but we

expect tribulation (birth pains) to start any time now.

Matthew 24:8 - "But all these things are the beginnings of birth pangs."

Here Jesus is talking about events leading up to the 2nd Coming.

I Thessalonians 5:3 - "While they were saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

We see here the same "type" application. But this reference is to the rapture of the Church.

Romans 8:22 - "for we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now."

Does this verse imply the whole creation is subject to the "type" of the birth process? Can we infer thereby that a timeplan is in place, and that we can know approximately when a "birth" will occur? Isn't that the implication of all the verses we have examined?

We have looked at some direct references to a time plan but much of our knowledge on this subject must be confirmed through studying "types". That is probably the best way God could tell us something He didn't want to reveal in former times.¹⁵ And, I believe one of the information items to be the approximate time of the rapture and Second Coming. So my perception seems consistent with the idea of an end time expansion of knowledge.¹⁶

We have also shown by direct scripture the idea of an "appointed time for everything". Don't these reasons mean God has some kind of timeplan, and because He is perfect, His timeplan is perfect? If it is true that God has a timeplan, what might such a plan look like?

15. Refer to Daniel 12:9,10

16. Daniel 12:4