

Theory #6

God's Redemptive Calendar

We've been talking about the miraculous ways in which God has embedded His redemptive story in the constellations, in the Jewish feast days, and in the Jewish wedding customs. Now let's look at how He has embedded His *timeline* for the redemption within the creation account itself, which purportedly took place, according to Genesis 1 and 2, over a seven-day period.

As we've said, there is much discussion in Christian circles about whether or not these are literal 24-hour days. Many Christians believe they are; that God intended to communicate that they are; and that to take such scriptures less than literally is heresy, dishonest, or at least disrespectful. Many others believe the seven days actually represent long ages based on some indications from astronomy or geology or perhaps on what some would call logic or rationalism. Others believe the world has seen two generations if you will (one angelic and one human); that the raw material is itself quite old, but the habitation of man upon it is more recent.

As we wrangle about these details and their relative importance or insignificance—and they *are* hotly debated—we might miss a much more important issue. And that is, what is God really trying to tell us in these first few pages of His Bible? What's the bigger picture? Should we really be arguing about how long it took God to do what He did? Is it really that important?

Many would say yes it is, because we have to preserve the fundamental truth that **death entered the world because of sin**; and that's true, we mustn't ignore or controvert that biblical axiom. We don't want to undermine the reality and necessity of the **redemption** by positing that death, at least human death, preceded sin by long ages, or by any time at all.¹ Otherwise the Scripture becomes hopelessly contradictory.

¹ This is sometimes given as the fundamental argument against evolution from a Christian standpoint. If evolution is true, then death, of animals and pre-humans occurred multiplied billions of times before man came on the scene, and therefore death was not the result of sin, but simply the natural order and outcome of the dynamics of survival. Though we do not believe in evolution, we would ask the following question: Was it death *per se* that resulted from the Fall or only human death? Romans 5:12 says that "just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to *all men*, because

Biblical doctrine is founded on the notion that “**death entered the world because of sin.**” (Romans 5:12 says: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin...”) Adam’s sin and the resulting consequence (the curse) created a desperate need for redemption, not only for mankind, but for the whole natural world since it was cursed along with Adam. **Redemption** is the theological term for the process of “rescuing” the creation from this fallen condition. Without this principle of fallenness, the basis for the “gospel,” or good news of Christ’s coming, is eliminated. If nothing is wrong, then there is nothing to make right. However, something is definitely wrong with our world and we all know it.

Desperately wrong. To claim otherwise is to be deliberately contrary. Disease, privation, sin, suffering, selfish ambition, deceit, abuse and evil of every kind shout loud and long that goodness has all but fled the scene. Even much that appears good is motivated by self-will.

Some respond to this reality with accusations of God. Where is God in all this? Why doesn’t He do something to stop it? If He *can* do something and He doesn’t, then He is not good. And if He *can’t* do anything about it, then He is not all powerful and therefore not God.

But this response misses several key points, including the fact that God has granted man free will and He so respects man’s right to exercise that will that He will not violate it. As we’ve discussed already, free will is one of the chief ways in which we are “made in God’s image.” If God were to turn our every evil decision and action (born of our wrong thoughts and intentions) into goodness somehow, He would have to do that consistently for all evil acts in order to be fair. Which would quickly turn all of *us* into careless doers of evil because we would know there would be no consequence. Thus evil would actually become, indirectly, a means of doing good.

all sinned—” seems to indicate that this issue of death was directly wired to the human kingdom, not the animal kingdom. Otherwise, why didn’t he say “death spread to all creation”?

We question the idea that death did not occur *in the animal realm* before Adam sinned. (This does not validate evolution as a creative process, but only that animals, created immediately prior to man, died from natural causes before the Fall though we are not told this.) Number one, it is doubtful that the animal kingdom was ever intended to be immortal. Animals were not made in God’s image “who alone possesses immortality,” nor is it likely that they have eternal souls. If they do, then one could surmise that there would have to be animals in heaven, *or* a separate heaven for the almost infinitely varied species of the animal kingdom. And yet, in the New Jerusalem, there will no longer be any sea, so the fish are out of luck, I guess! This possibility, that animals died before the fall, might also explain the preponderance of animal fossils in the geologic record, but the dearth of human remains. If Adam did not sin for a lengthy period in the Garden, then there would have been lots of time for animals to proliferate and die while during the same timeframe, no humans died. And surely there were gazillions more animals (in toto) on the earth than humans, particularly by the time of the Noachian flood.

It seems likely also that Adam and Eve had to eat from the Tree of Life to sustain their immortality, or at least one could hypothesize such a thing. Else why was it there? Given that the Tree of Life appears in the New Jerusalem, for the healing of the nations, one could posit that it was also in the Garden for the same purpose. Could the animals have been immortal *without* eating from the Tree? And yet surely they didn’t, since the animal kingdom constitutes everything from bacteria to fish to birds to elephants. Unlimited lifespans for the fauna would mean that certain species would have shortly proliferated to unacceptable levels and overrun the earth. Think of the billions of fish eggs that do not survive today all living and producing billions more offspring. Think of mosquitoes and other bugs of short lifecycles living indefinitely and producing billions of offspring. Think of animals that specialize in carrion or scavenging whose entire digestive apparatus would have had to have been altered at the fall. Perhaps it is more likely that animal death occurred, at least naturally, and that scavengers were designed to keep the earth in tip-top condition for the habitation of man. It is entirely possible that violent carnivorous behavior was not part of the pre-Fall environment, at least in the Garden, since in the Restoration “the wolf will lie down with the lamb and the lion will eat straw like the ox.” This would indicate that all animals were vegetarian before Adam sinned. Including those with canine teeth. This is also difficult to comprehend given the apparatus designed specifically for tearing raw meat or anesthetizing prey (claws, incisors, stingers, etc.) It is possible that the curse eventually produced all of these changes in the animal kingdom. Or perhaps a better explanation is that the carnivorous animals lived outside the Garden and represented the fallen angels in God’s illustration and only domestic animals lived inside the Garden. But in the Restoration, since the fallen angels will be vanquished and put in the prison of eternal hell, there will be no place for such animal behavior in the restored earth. Thus the wolf lying down with the lamb. It also may be possible that the absence of violence in the Restoration, when Christ returns, is limited geographically to the region of the Messianic Kingdom (within the boundaries specified in Genesis 15). “For they will not hurt or destroy in all My Holy Mountain.” (Is. 11:9) Outside the boundaries of that Kingdom, perhaps a less-than-perfect environment would prevail. Just a thought.

But even if God didn't bring actual *good* out of our evil acts but only made them ineffective, men would still be encouraged over time to become more and more careless, more and more corrupt, because they would never suffer the consequences of their actions and learn that sin costs—they or anyone else. They would never be motivated to reform and God would be complicit in this as the Great Enabler, much as a wife who lies for her husband (or children) becomes their accomplice. Fact is, God is a gentleman, and He doesn't trespass on our will (at least in moral matters before we've made our own will known by our actions). However, rest assured that God intends to deal with evil definitively in the end, in a way that does not violate His own righteousness, or His ultimate goals. Why wait then?

Because God wants all men to be saved. That is His chief aim and He knows that time is required for us to see our evil ways and seek deliverance from our debt by our own free choice. Pain and suffering are the catalyst for this realization. Men have to experience sufficient consequences before they are willing to give up the pleasures of sin and self-will. God knows this and He is granting us time to repent. His ultimate goal, a redeemed and holy people, requires that He allow this process to go forward, because some *will* actually repent and turn around. (Many will not, according to Rev. 9 and 16.) Anyone who demands that God eliminate evil now, then, is lobbying for the final judgment ahead of schedule; their own, and everyone else's, and short-circuiting God intended goal.

And the final judgment will not be pretty. For many, it will mean eternal death in the lake of fire. Some might accuse God of being unreasonable or a tyrant, as if the punishment is not fitted to the crime (i.e., too severe). This is not the case. It isn't because He was *bigger* and more powerful than Adam that He made this decree of death. It wasn't because He was mean and vindictive. He decreed it in absolute righteousness.

The best explanation that I can give for this is that all sin is rebellion against the highest ruling authority and the highest good (God) in the universe. And that rebellion creates a "debt on the books" of one's life. God cannot overlook the imbalance that such a debt creates. It must be righted. He cannot ignore, or worse yet, reward, evil (or debt) and still be called good. Thus, establishing a consequence for sin actually preserves God's claim to righteousness.

In God's economy, death is the price we must pay to make things right. (The Bible says, "the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23) Since life is the supreme value we possess, it and it alone can pay for the supreme evil. The ledger must be balanced, either by death of the one who sinned, or by some other form of complete settlement. Jesus came to provide that alternate settlement for us. He paid the price (or wage) for our sin by dying in our place. He experienced both physical death and spiritual separation from the Father. Therefore, the *worst* (i.e., rebellion against God) was cancelled out, or balanced, by the best, the lifeblood of a perfect and innocent man. When we accept this, repent and put our trust in Jesus' provision for us, we receive, in effect, a credit to our account equal to the debt we owe. Our sin-debt is cancelled and we receive of the righteousness of Christ by faith. Consequently, we inherit His eternal resurrection and inheritance as well. (See Galatians 3 and 4.)

An illustration: It's as if God placed in the bank account of each person a sum sufficient to pay for all their sins. The gospel is God's way of telling us about this account and how to access it. If we choose to believe the money is there (by faith) and ask God to apply it to our sin-debt, we are forgiven. However, if we decide we don't believe this nonsense about a bank deposit and never go and redeem the money, our debt stands and remains unpaid. We will ultimately, then, have to pay it ourselves, and the only currency we will have left is our lives. Our own blood.

Someone might ask, why doesn't God just eliminate those who fail to make use of His gracious provision, rather than punishing them forever in hell? The answer is that we are made in His image, and He is a Spirit who cannot die. Neither can our spirits die. And those who identify with Satan, who belong to him, will go with him to his final destination. Hell was created for the devil and his angels and unfortunately, thus becomes the same fate for all who remain his willing slaves.

Others would say if we can't take God literally when He sounds literal, how can we know *what* to believe? And yet, there are enough questions raised in the first two chapters of Genesis alone when we *do* take it literally to keep us busy for a very long time. And the third chapter only adds to the pile of questions. But for the sake of argument....let's talk about time for a moment.

Time, as we humans know it, is a function of the material creation itself and does not really exist apart from it, at least not in any measurable sense. Yes, there is the concept of sequentiality: some things happen *before* other things and some things happen after. This will still be true in eternity. But time, as a measurement convention, is based on the movement of heavenly bodies. Without something objective on which to base our calculations, we cannot measure it at all.

But God, oddly enough, measured time *before* He finished making the sun and moon and the stars (according to Genesis 1), the very bodies we *humans* must use to calculate time. He says there was "evening and there was morning one day" on the very first day of creation, three days before He created the sun. He even created the *light* before He created the *sun*. He "separated the light from the darkness" in Gen.1, verse 4, but didn't make the heavenly bodies "to separate the light from the darkness" until verse 18 on the *fourth* day. The earth also brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed and trees bearing fruit, Genesis tells us, *before* He made the sun. And yet we turn ourselves into pretzels to try to explain how this could be. I sometimes wonder if He did not arrange these verses to so confound our logic and our oh-so-serious scientific analyses for a specific purpose; that is, in order to drive us to a deeper look at these first chapters of His Bible. But we get stuck and are not able to get past our need to make the Bible conform to our experience and limited knowledge and logic. More on that in a minute.

So time is measurable, but it is also ethereal. In fact, we speak of objective time and subjective time. The former, as we've said, is based on the movement of planets and stars and is documented by clocks, watches and sundials. The latter is relative, based on how immersed we are in an activity, or how much we are enjoying or detesting our current state or situation. "Time flies when you're having fun." Time drags when you're in pain, or doing something you dislike, or that is a struggle. If we are "counting the

minutes,” they go ever so slowly. If we are fully engaged and lose ourselves in an activity, we say, “Oh my, where did the time go?” It really feels like it disappeared.

God, however, is as unique in relation to time as He is in everything else. He knows all things, past, present and future, precisely because He is not bound by time as we are and operates outside of it. He sees the end from the beginning, somewhat like a person soaring over a parade in a hot-air balloon can see the beginning, the end, and all points in between simultaneously. But more than that, God is *involved* in all things and He has made decisions and plans in anticipation of and in response to *our* decisions, plans and actions. He is not hindered by us, thwarted by us, controlled by us, nor surprised by us and our choices or actions.²

The concept of creation as having occurred in seven literal 24-hr days, then, has tripped up many an educated individual who finds it difficult to conceive an undertaking so massive in so short a space of time—a debate that has divided friends and brothers. Some have speculated that God may have operated on a timeless plane that intersected those 24-hour bits at will but was not bound by them. Who knows really? Somehow I’m quite sure it’s not the primary point of the story. Whether or not God managed (in literal 24-hour days) to pull this off or not is not my point or concern here. He’s certainly capable of it. (And there are theological reasons to believe He did.) But regardless, the issue for purposes of this discussion is: *that’s how He presented the story of creation*, and there’s a reason He chose to do so. It is part of a cleverly embedded prophetic device in which He offers to the insightful seeker a deeper understanding of what He is about on this planet.

GOD’S TIMETABLE

So, the Genesis account of the creation week, besides being a living illustration for us of God’s situation (as described in Theory #1), also hints at God’s timetable for His plan. These seven days themselves, then, represent something. But what? The number seven in Scripture is the number of completion,

² The Bible calls this “foreknowledge.” Romans 8:29

restoration and rest. We've seen that there are seven feast days for Israel,³ in which the redemptive plan of God is foreshadowed and on which it is literally fulfilled or completed.⁴ We know, at least, that the *seventh* day represents the need for periodic rest and refreshment that God desires for His creatures. A weekly Sabbath. But is that all it means? And what about the other days? Is there more to it than that?

There is a principle, set forth in Psalm 90:4 and reaffirmed in 2 Peter 3:8, that states that, with God, "a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day." It could be said that this is true both figuratively and literally, and both for God and for us. In a figurative sense, all time is relative. As we said before, a day can feel like a year if things are going poorly. On the other hand, a year can zip right by if things are going well. If you are old, a year seems like a moment; but if you are young, it seems like an age.

God, however, is outside of time in the sense that He is not limited by it, nor is He subject to it. This is what "transcendence" means. God exists outside of our time/space continuum. He *created* our time/space continuum, so He cannot thus be subject to it. So this statement, "a thousand years is as a day and a day is as a thousand years," is one way of saying time is not an issue for God. He isn't a giant Whirling Dervish rushing around trying to get things done "in time" and missing a few vital appointments in the process.

So if time is not an issue for God, what is the point of the seven days in the creation account? Why did He give us that information at all? And why did He choose *seven* days? Why not 17 days, or 32 days or 1,323 days? Why any days at all if it doesn't literally mean what it says and if it has no real relevance?

³ We will discuss these in the next chapter in more detail.

⁴ As discussed in the last chapter, the first four feast days were fulfilled during Christ's first coming. They are: Passover, on which Jesus died as our Paschal Lamb; Unleavened Bread, during which Jesus, the sinless or "unleavened one," suffered the curse and penalty of death for us and paid our sin-debt; First Fruits, upon which Jesus rose from the dead after three days; and the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) on which the Holy Spirit was given to the Church as a guide and comforter. The final three feasts, Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles, will also be fulfilled literally, but during Christ's second coming (for the Church and to the world).

The fact is, it *has* significance, but not the significance most people ascribe to it. It's not about the exact number of minutes and days it took to *create* everything (even though it very well *could* be literal as well), or even primarily about the order of creation, or He wouldn't have given us two conflicting accounts of it.⁵

Those two accounts should wake us up to the reality that there's more here than meets the eye. As we said before, we think there's prophetic significance inherent in it, otherwise why bother giving us any reference to time at all? Why not just tell *what* He created and *at what point* sin came into the world and leave it at that?

Did you ever think about the fact that the seven-day week is a virtual worldwide standard and apparently always has been. Why? (It's such a part of our human culture that we never even stop to question it.) Where did it come from? What, other than God's own example, can be credited with the writing of *that* "rule"? The lunar calendar does not divide equally into four seven-day blocks. Doesn't that seem odd? Even the solar calendar is not *exactly* divisible by seven. So there must be another reason God presented time this way.

So here's the theory (and it's not new, though we have our own twist on it which we'll save for a later chapter):

ONE DAY = A THOUSAND YEARS

In a literal sense, the seven days of the biblical creation story correspond to seven thousand years that God has allocated for human history, a divine redemptive calendar. (Notice we did not say 7000 years of *history*, or 7000 years since the creation of the universe, or 7000 years since the beginning of time. That is another discussion and again much debated. But 7000 years of human history. Definable history. Documented history. The first signs of real civilization occur approximately 6,000 years ago.⁶)

⁵ The accounts in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 differ markedly in the order of creation.

⁶ Evolutionists would dispute this, and others would say it is more like 10-12,000 years, but when we speak of the dynasties of ancient Egypt, China, Mesopotamia, we are talking roughly in this timeframe.

This remarkable theory has been around a long time, at least since the second century A.D. It suggests that human redemptive history shall correspond, in its length, to the illustration set down in the biblical creation story itself. For six days, God worked. On the seventh day, He rested. Each day represents 1000 years of prospective human redemptive history.

Listen to two quotes from the second and third centuries:

“In as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years will it be concluded....For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years. In six days created things were completed. It is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousandth year.” — *Irenaeus (c. 180 AD)*

“The first seven days in the divine arrangement contain seven thousand years.” — *Cyprian (c.250 AD)*

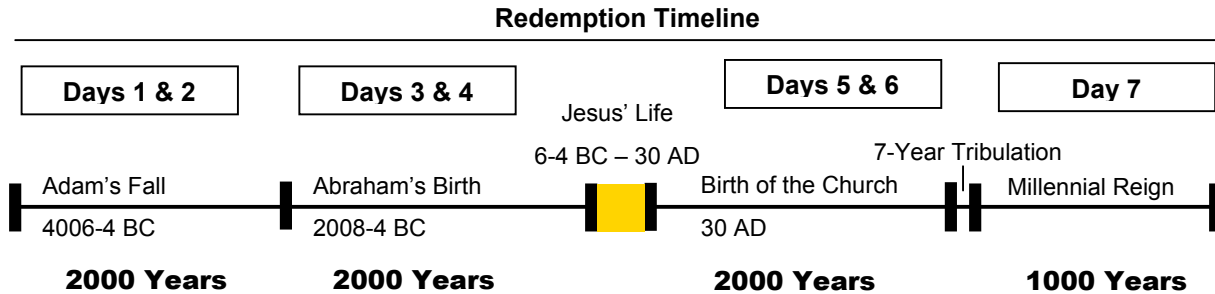
Thus one might be able to assert, as have Irish Archbishop James Ussher in his “Annals of the World” (published in 1658 AD) and others, that the creation (or, in our opinion, the Fall⁷) of Adam took place in approximately 4006-4004 BC. Abraham was born about 2006-4 BC according to some chronographers. (Interestingly, David, a type of Christ, was made king of Judah in 1006-4 BC.) And Jesus appeared on the scene sometime between 6-4 BC. (We know He appeared before Herod died in March of 4 BC because Herod tried to kill Him before he died, based on a reported astronomical sign of His coming, so He must have been born sometime between 6 and 4 BC.) This gives us a neat 2000 years from the Fall of Adam to the birth of Abraham⁸ (represented by the first two days of the creation week); and another 2000 years

⁷ We suggest this as the date for the *Fall* of Adam rather than his creation, because God is a stickler for details and at Adam’s creation, he was destined to live forever. Thus no timetable would have been implied, nor would it have been appropriate to impose one until the Fall. Why specify an end to something that was supposed to go on forever? God’s plan of immortality for Adam was genuine. God would not have started His 7,000-year time clock until Adam sinned and terminated his right to eat from the Tree of Life, thus inaugurating his limited life span and the limited life span of all men. At that point, the end was clearly in sight and God could begin counting the days. The time clock, after all, is a *redemption* time clock. It is the story of God’s reclaiming the earth and mankind for Himself. That story began, in a legal sense, at the Fall of Adam (even though God knew it would be necessary from eternity past).

⁸ Abraham, originally from Ur (believed to lie in present-day southeastern Turkey) is the father of 1) the Hebrew race (via his wife Sarah) through his son Isaac and grandson Jacob; 2) the Ishmaelites or Arabs through his son Ishmael (by Egyptian handmaid Hagar); and 3) the Edomites through his son Jacob and grandson Esau. (The Ammonites descended from Lot, Abraham’s nephew.) Both Isaac and Jacob married Syrian women (Rebekah and Rachel/Leah respectively) from the family of Laban, Abraham’s own relatives, and thus we could say that the Hebrews are, in essence, ethnically more like Syrians. You can read about this in Genesis 11-21. Jesus was a Hebrew (from this same line through Jacob’s son Judah) and the Ant-Christ is called the Assyrian. So he will likely have some degree of Syrian ethnicity also. Even if an Ammonite, descended from Lot, he would also likely be ethnically at least part Syrian.

from Abraham⁹ until the birth of Christ (represented by the third and fourth days of the creation week).

The timeline below gives us a visual diagram of this theory.



Treating Jesus' earthly life¹⁰ as a parentheses in human history then (marked out in yellow on the diagram), we begin our counting again at the end of His life (30 AD). Two thousand years of the so-called "Church Age" span the third 2000-year segment, represented by the two remaining creation workdays (Days 5 and 6). "In six days God did all His work." This gives us a total of 6,000 years of human history in which God will work out His plan of salvation, and corresponds to the "six days" that God worked on His physical creation. (Precisely when does the sixth day end? We'll address that in the next chapter.)

Interestingly, six is the number of man, biblically speaking. How appropriate that God would choose six as the number of thousand years in which to redeem His highest creation, mankind.

This 2000-year Church-Age will then be followed by a 1000-year Day of Rest, corresponding to the seventh day of the creation week, the day God rested from all His creative work, and completes the 7000 years or seven creation days. Again, seven is the biblical number of completion, restoration and rest, when God restores this earth (or at least the Kingdom of Israel) to its pristine pre-Fall state, and rules over

⁹ This gestation and selection of the Hebrews and ultimately Israel (through the patriarch Jacob), though a literal event with literal, historical ramifications, also functions as a type, or picture, of the Church. Israel is called God's wife in the Old Testament, a figure for the Bride of Christ. There will not be two wives or Brides in heaven (or one Wife and one Bride), one for God the Father and one for God the Son. There is only one God, Yahweh, made visible in Christ, and one Bride comprising Jewish and Gentile believers.

¹⁰ Interestingly, Jesus is said to have lived approximately 33 years. (He began His ministry at age 30 according to Luke 3:23.) Three is the number of God. This is like God saying, "Hello, get it?!" *Double* get it? (Some say He was born in 6 BC and died in 30 or 31 AD, making Him 36. This would be a symbolic way of God saying He was the "God-Man" since 3 is the number of God and 6 is the number of man. Either one works for me, although it is highly doubtful His ministry lasted six years, in which case it would have started in approximately 24 AD.)

it in a time of rest from war and strife for the human race. Israel will be the preeminent nation. This last 1000-year period is referred to as the Millennium or the Millennial Reign of Christ.¹¹

This is a workable hypothesis as you will see later as the picture unfolds.

¹¹ During this 1000 years Satan will be bound and unable to disrupt God's Kingdom. But at the end he will be loosed for a short time so that those who are, in their hearts, resisting Jesus' rule can be exposed and the final judgment can take place.