

Understanding
Times and Seasons

Part 1

**The Biblical Evidence about
God's Many Clocks**

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Are Times and Seasons to be Understood?

All children who are learning to walk fall down a few times. Similarly, those who eagerly look to know *when* the end of the age will come should be expected to make a few mistakes in “setting dates”. It is not in the power of any human being to set the date of Christ’s return. But the Scriptures make some very plain statements about the timing of latter day events and claim that, in the time of the end when the Messiah’s coming is imminent, those who are wise **will** understand the numbers of the days!

But “take heed to yourselves, **lest** at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, **and so** that day come upon you unawares. ³⁵ For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:34-36¹).

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. ² For yourselves know perfectly that the day of Yehovah so cometh as a thief in the night. ³ For when **they** shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon **them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. ⁴ But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:1-4).

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold

fast, and repent. **If** therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know **what hour** I will come upon thee” (Revelation 3:1-3).

“And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed **till** the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but **the wise shall understand**” (Daniel 12:9-10).

So what did Jesus mean when He said to His disciples, “It is not for **you** to know the times or the seasons [*times or dates, NIV*], which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7)?

In telling the disciples that *they* were not given to understand the times or seasons, Christ used words with meanings which are somewhat lost in the translation. The word for “times” (Greek *chronos*: Strong’s #5550) refers to the **general time frame** of events in God’s plan, whereas the word for “seasons”

(Greek *kairos*: Strong’s #2540) carries the meaning of **fixed or special occasions** (as in its usage in the phrase “a time, and times, and half a time”, Revelation 12:14). Christ’s disciples seem to have thought that He would return in their lifetimes. They were given to understand *neither* where they fit in the 7000-year plan of God, nor the details of when specific events would occur at the end.

But that did not mean that God’s servants living at the very end would not be given such information. Indeed, the basic overview that the first century disciples were *not* allowed to understand — the knowledge of approximately where we are in the 7000-year plan — has been common knowledge in the Church of God for decades. And there is every indication that those who are **wise will** be given to understand the finer details of the timing of prophesied events at the appropriate time shortly *before* they occur.

“If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not Yehovah have done *it*? ⁷ Surely the Lord Yehovah does **nothing**, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. ⁸ A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord Yehovah has spoken! Who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:6-8, NKJV¹).

¹ The King James Version is used throughout, except as noted. And, regardless of translation, wherever יהוה (YHVH) appears in the Hebrew version of either the Old or New Testament, the text has been replaced with Yehovah (pronounced *Ye-ho-yah*’, meaning, **He Who IS**: He Who Was, Is, Will Be).

So who are the wise who *will* understand the times? The foregoing quote from Amos shows that those to whom God reveals His secrets are “His servants the prophets”. But Jesus warned of a time of birth pangs, when many would be offended, and betray one another, and hate one another — when many false prophets would arise and deceive many (Matthew 24:10-11).

Yes, even *within* the Church of God, Jesus long ago predicted that *many* would rise up to hate one another and to prophesy falsely! For those who do not love their own brethren cannot serve God, as John wrote, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John 4:20).

The thought is continued in Matthew 24: “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:12-13, NKJV).

Whatever talents a person may have to offer in the service of God, be it gospel-preaching, prophecy, alms-giving or whatever else, the words of Matthew 5:23-24 apply: “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; ²⁴ Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

We are instructed to *endure* in the way of love toward God and love toward fellow man in spite of all the evils around us. As

Jesus said, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35, NKJV). And Peter later added: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*” (1 Peter 1:22).

In Daniel 12, the wise are contrasted with the wicked. This is comparable to the contrast implied in Matthew 24 and elsewhere between the righteous (those who love God and their brethren) and the lawless (those who succumb to idolatrous practices — and / or mistreat fellow man).

Jesus admonished, “Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not [*implying you do not know very far in advance*] when the time [*kairos — the specific time*] is. ³⁴ For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter [*doorkeeper, NKJV*] to watch. ³⁵ Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: ³⁶ Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.” (Mark 13:33-37). In this parable, a person who was *watching* might see the master approaching some time *before* he arrived.

It will be as it was in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:36-42). Noah was apparently told that the flood was coming 120 years before it occurred (Genesis 6:3). Then, when the ark was finished he was given only

seven days advance notice that it was time to enter into his place of safety (Genesis 7:4). Meanwhile, the rest of the world was oblivious of the need to take shelter.

Similarly, faithful servants of God facing an end-time “flood” of war and terrors will receive a very short advance notice of when (and where and how) to seek refuge. But God’s promise of protection applies only to those who are really *watching* — to those who are staying spiritually sober and alert, enduring in the way of love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, etc., and truly serving God in building up (rather than tearing down) relationships within His Church, the modern-day “ark” that must be built (Malachi 3:16-18; Ezekiel 14:12-20).

The information on the pages that follow may be helpful in understanding the times and seasons of Biblical prophecies. But it can be no substitute for the right behavior (based upon the right spirit and approach) that will be required of individuals to be brought under God’s forgiveness and thus “be **accounted** worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

None of us has it made.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). And our “worthiness” will in part be decided based upon our willingness to forgive our brethren from the heart and *overcome* any differences we may have with them. The law plainly says, “You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin

because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* Yehovah” (Leviticus 19:17-18, NKJV¹).

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14-15).

“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. ⁴ And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

The Scriptures include a few words of caution here: Correction should be given in a kind way (cf. Proverbs 26:4-5; Galatians 6:1). And older people who may step out of line must be approached with respect (cf. 1 Timothy 5:1).

The principles of Matthew 18 go far beyond the oft-quoted statements in verses 15-17. We do well to go back and read those words in the context of the entire chapter. For the Father in heaven will hand over to the torturers each one of us who fails, from the heart, to forgive his brother his trespasses (vv. 34-35).

“Who then is a faithful and **wise** servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? ⁴⁶ Blessed *is* that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. ⁴⁷ Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him

ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸ But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; ⁴⁹ And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants [*bearing grudges against and belittling or betraying fellow Church members — God’s true servants*], and to eat and drink with the drunken [*turning instead for camaraderie with those who are drunken on the wine of Babylon the Great’s idolatrous teachings or on the cares of this world*]; ⁵⁰ The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹ And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 24:45-51).

Clearly, the people who will be kept from the hour of trial — those who will understand the times and be prepared to take refuge when necessary (Isaiah 26:20) — will be those who steer clear of idolatry and maintain brotherly love. The condition for receiving God’s protection during the tribulation, and for entering into His kingdom, will not be church affiliation or structure (“government”), nor prophesying (preaching the gospel), casting out demons or working wonders (cf. Matthew 7:22-23), but rather *individual character*, whether one’s deeds (his way of living) be righteous or wicked. In the message to the seven churches God speaks to individual church members, saying, “...I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto **every one** of you according to your works” (Revelation 2:23).

The church era in which we live lends itself easily to a “judgmental” spirit. After coming face-to-face with blatant apostasy and a great falling away from the truths of God, it is easy to begin to mistrust one another. But the skittishness of war (in these battles that we wage against wicked spirits, Ephesians 6:12) with its potential for bringing on “friendly fire” must be overcome. So must the proclivity to unjustly condemn others be conquered. We must turn away from the tendency of the era to trust in *self-righteousness* while despising others and seeing little if any need for personal overcoming or growth.

Those with the spirit of brotherly love will recognize their own shortcomings. They will be humble and forgiving and practice the way of love as described in the writings of John — and in 1 Corinthians 13 and many other Scriptures. Although they most certainly will be uncompromising in their dedication to the true God and “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24) amongst themselves, they will not be quick to condemn. Rather, since love thinks no evil, (1 Corinthians 13:5) God’s faithful servants will give others the benefit of the doubt and extend mercy, seeking as much as possible to work things out and “live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18).

The wise then, are *God’s servants the prophets* who **hold fast to their love** and service for the true God and for fellow man, both in and out of the Church. These *will* understand both the general time frame and the specific days of end-time events when the right time comes. □

In Scripture, times and seasons
are defined by the movements
of the master clock in the sky:



“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 signs², and for seasons, and for days, and years’ ” (Genesis 1:14).

² These are “road” signs (navigational tools), not omens.
See: *Signs in the Heavens, Are Eclipses a Sign of the End?*

Genesis 1 provides the first information about time in the Bible. How “day” and other words denoting elements of time are used throughout the Scriptures will be explored in the pages that follow.



NASA photo

One Day

“God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.
And there was evening and there was morning, **one day**.”
(Genesis 1:5, RSV)

Hours in the Day

In the New Testament³ there are references to “hours” in both day and night. But the numbering of these hours is different than what we are used to:

Jesus said to Peter, “What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” (Matthew 26:40).

“And he [*the chief captain*] called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night [*around 9 p.m.*]” (Acts 23:23).

| Night | | | | | | | | | | | | Day | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

“Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world” (John 11:9).

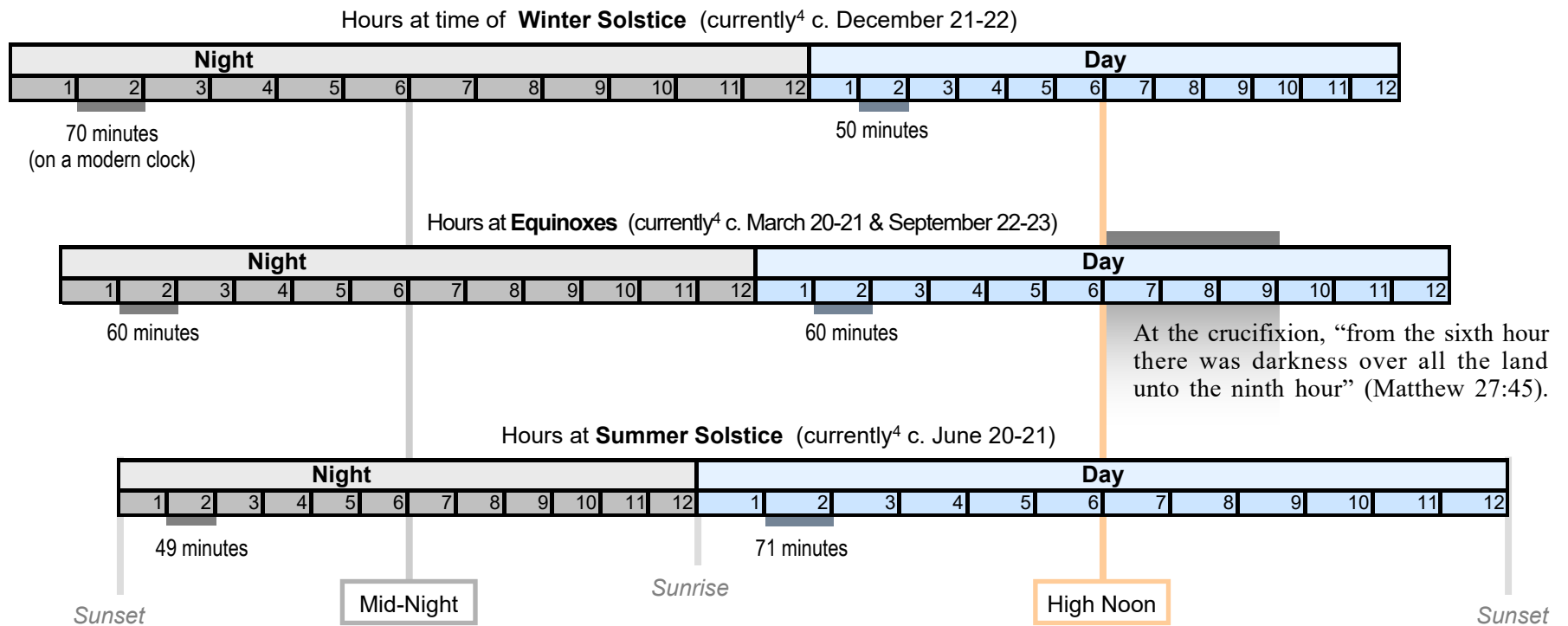
“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard... ³ And he went out [*again to hire*] about the third hour [*around 9 a.m.*] and... ⁵ Again... about the sixth [*high noon*] and the ninth hour [*around 3 p.m.*]... ⁶ And [*again*] about the eleventh hour... ¹²... ‘These last [*who were hired an hour before sunset*]... worked *only* one hour...’ ” (Matthew 20:1-12 NKJV).

As noted on the previous page, the creation account shows that a full 24-hour period (inclusive of both night *and* day) was also called a “day”. For “there was evening and there was morning, one day” (Genesis 1:5, RSV).

³ **Hour numbers** are not mentioned in the Old Testament. But archaeological evidence from ancient Egypt indicates that the division of the night into twelve parts dates back to at least **2150 BC**, and probably much earlier (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hour#Egypt>). That corresponds to the time of Noah’s flood (c. 2269 BC) and the dispersal from the tower of Babel (c. 2168 BC). And the **world’s oldest sundial**, from Egypt’s Valley of the Kings, shows the division of the *daytime* into twelve parts also. That sundial is dated to c. **1500 BC** — to the time of Moses (born c. 1527 BC) (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundial#History>).

Hour Lengths

The “hours” in Biblical times varied in length. They were numbered from sunset and sunrise — with days and nights each twelve hours long year-round. Only at the time of the equinoxes were the hours of night and day the same length. At the latitude of Jerusalem the days and nights were divided as follows:



The *sixth hour of the night* marked the mid-point between sunset and sunrise.

The *sixth hour of the day* was high noon all year long. But daytime hours in mid-winter would have lasted only about 50 minutes on our clocks. And in mid-summer, a daytime hour would have been about 71 minutes.

⁴ In the first century AD the solstices and equinoxes fell two to three days later on the Roman calendar than they do now.

John 19:14

“Pilate... sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*... ¹⁴ Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and **about the sixth hour**. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’ ¹⁵ ...The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’ ¹⁶ So **he delivered Him to them to be crucified**. So they took Jesus and led *Him* away” (John 19:13-16 NKJV).

Some commentaries claim that the *sixth hour* in this passage was according to “Roman time” — i.e. 6 a.m. (sunrise). But the common use of a.m. and p.m. came much later. [Extra-biblical writings](#)⁵ show that the Romans of that era counted hours from sunset and sunrise, just like the Jews.

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge offers a different explanation:

“Instead of ἑκτος [*hektos*, G1623], sixth, several MSS. and fathers have τρίτος [*tritos*, G5154], third, as in the parallel place. Mr 15:25,33,34”.

Would Pilate (and the crowd) have been at the court, available to judge a case at 6 a.m.? Perhaps. But, the third full hour of daytime (between 8 and 9 a.m.) seems more logical — and fits with the witness of Mark:

“And it was **the third hour** [9 a.m.], and **they crucified Him**” (Mark 15:25).

There are three other references in John’s gospel to specific hours:

“...They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about **the tenth hour**” (John 1:39).

Here the tenth hour is logically a couple of hours before sundown (4 p.m.) — time to be thinking about dinner — and to be getting in out of the cold, or mosquitoes, or other dangers that might lurk in the night.

“He [*Jesus*] left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee... ⁵ Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar... ⁶ Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about **the sixth hour** [noon]. ⁷ There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. ⁸ (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)” (John 4:3-8).

For this “sixth hour” to have been at sunrise (6 a.m.) would have required Jesus traveling by night (with potential concerns about safety in the dark; compare Luke 10:30). Had He arrived at 6 p.m., His disciples would have needed to be searching for lodging as well as for food. It makes more sense that this was intended to be a midday stop in the midst of a long day’s journey. Howbeit, after the woman brought back others from the city to hear Jesus, presumably detaining Him for a good part of the afternoon, He agreed to stay two days.

“So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee... And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus was come... into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he

would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death... ⁵⁰ Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed... and he went his way. ⁵¹ And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth. ⁵² Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at **the seventh hour** [1 p.m.] the fever left him. ⁵³ So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth...” (John 4:46-53).

Again, it is more likely (considering needs for safety, sleep and food) that the nobleman arrived in Cana and approached Jesus in the afternoon — not at breakfast time (7 a.m.), nor an hour after sundown (7 p.m.).

It is 18 miles from Capernaum to Cana — a two-day journey on foot, or about six hours on a mule. But either way, whether on foot or mule back, for the nobleman to arrive at 1 p.m., and be on his way home the next day, makes more sense.

You would think that John would have been consistent throughout his gospel in how he counted hours. So the internal evidence favors the idea that those manuscripts which say “the third hour” (rather than the sixth) in John 19:14 are the ones that are correct.

⁵ <https://sites.google.com/site/dilucinum/home/horologium>

Night Watches

In ancient times the nights were divided into guard watches.

The **Old Testament** mentions only *three* night watches:

| | | | |
|--|---|--|------------------------|
| <p>“Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street” (Lamentations 2:19).</p> | <p>“So Gideon, and the hundred men that <i>were</i> with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that <i>were</i> in their hands” (Judges 7:19).</p> | <p>“And it came to pass, that in the morning watch Yehovah looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians” (Exodus 14:24; see also: 1 Samuel 11:11).</p> | |
| Sundown near 6 p.m. | c. 10 p.m. | c. 2 a.m. | Sunrise near 6 a.m. |

In the **New Testament** period there were clearly *four* night watches — referred to by number and also by name:

“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning” (Mark 13:35).

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------|
| <p>Evening Watch</p> <p>The first watch of the night.</p> | <p>Midnight Watch</p> <p>(Luke 12:38) “And if he shall come in the second watch...</p> | <p>Cockcrow Watch</p> <p>“or come in the third watch, and find <i>them</i> so, blessed are those servants.”</p> | <p>Morning Watch</p> <p>(Matthew 14:25) “And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.”</p> | |
| Sundown near 6 p.m. | c. 9 p.m. | Midnight | c. 3 a.m. | Sunrise near 6 a.m. |

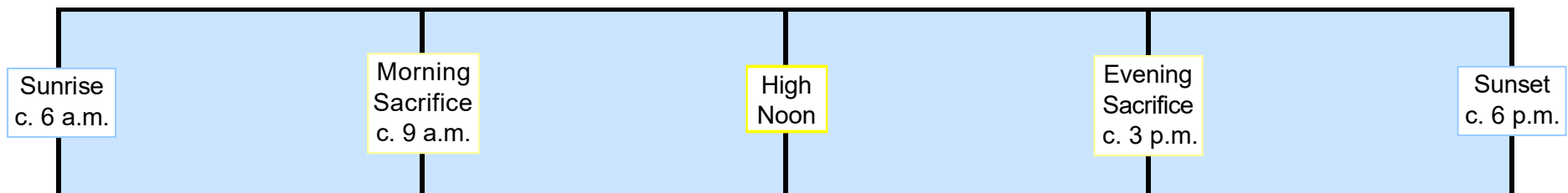
Daytime Watching

While the need for a night watchman may seem obvious, it was also important to be on guard against attack during the day.

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, *which* shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of Yehovah, keep not silence, ⁷ And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth” (Isaiah 62:6-7).

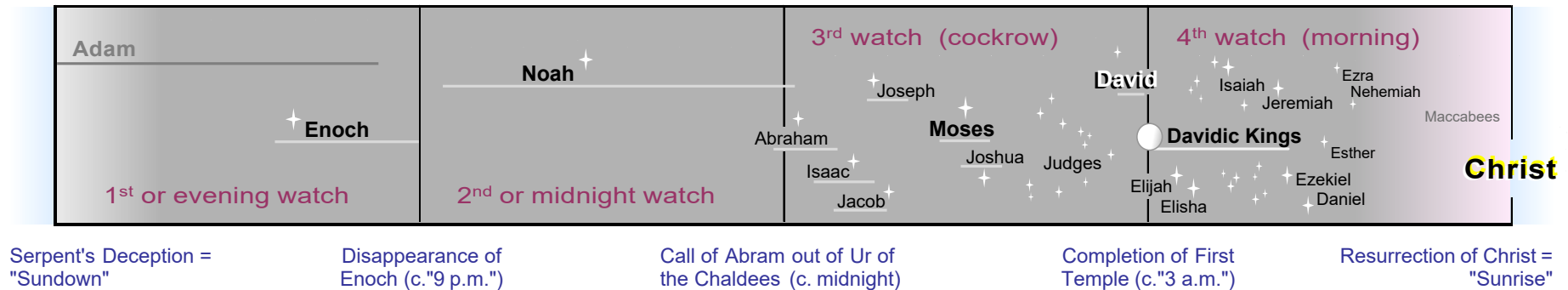
“Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night” (Nehemiah 4:9 NKJV).

The daytime watches may have followed the pattern of those during the night. Because of the activities at the temple, the day at Jerusalem naturally fell into four time periods:



Thousand-Year Night Watches

“For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as... a watch in the night” (Psalms 90:4).



When Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit they rejected the Light of God's right and true instructions and walked in the darkness of the serpent's lies. And thus the world as a whole was plunged into spiritual darkness — cut off from access to the tree of life, and doomed to die. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23; compare 5:12). And “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

The way to eternal life — the way into the holiest of all — was not made manifest until the sacrifice of Christ, as the Passover Lamb of God (Hebrews 9:8-15).

At Jesus' death, the veil of the temple was torn in two (Matthew 27:51). This signified that it is through Jesus' sacrifice that the separation between man and God

can be removed. To be restored to God's good graces and to enter into Life one must be washed in the blood of the Lamb (forgiven the sins of the past), and then sin no more, walking instead as Jesus walked — in the heavenly Father's Light, living by His every word. For “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

The time between Adam's sin and Christ's atoning sacrifice was like one long four-watch night. During this time God provided night watchmen: Enoch, Noah, Moses, and other prophets to serve as “stars” — as preachers and witnesses of God's way of righteousness (Daniel 12:3; 2 Peter 2:5).

Toward the end of the third watch, the “moon” light of the Davidic throne

(Psalms 89:37) arose to rule (guide) the night⁶ (Genesis 1:16). And Jesus was born near the end of the fourth watch.

Jesus was to be the “greater light to rule the Day” — a light greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31). He was to bring spiritual daylight (the Light of His heavenly Father) to the world.

But, when Jesus walked the earth in the flesh, He did *not* come in His glory, radiant as the sun. Instead, He came as a mortal man, made of dust, like the other sons of David, and like the physical moon.

In this *night watch* analogy, Jesus came as a light that shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1:5). He was the “Moon” that would

⁶ These Biblical symbols are explored further in *Part 2: Seven Millennial Days*.

later shine *like* the “Sun” (Isaiah 30:26; Psalms 89:36) — with the glory that He had with His Father before the world was (John 17:5; Matthew 16:27).

Since Jesus now shines like the sun (Acts 26:13-15), His resurrection may be likened to “sunrise”. For it was only *after* Jesus was raised from the dead that the disciples’ eyes were opened to *understand* what He taught — how that He was come to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45; Luke 24:44-47).

Prior to the atoning sacrifice of Christ the words of the Bible were “as the words of a book that is sealed” (Isaiah 29:11). But later John was told:

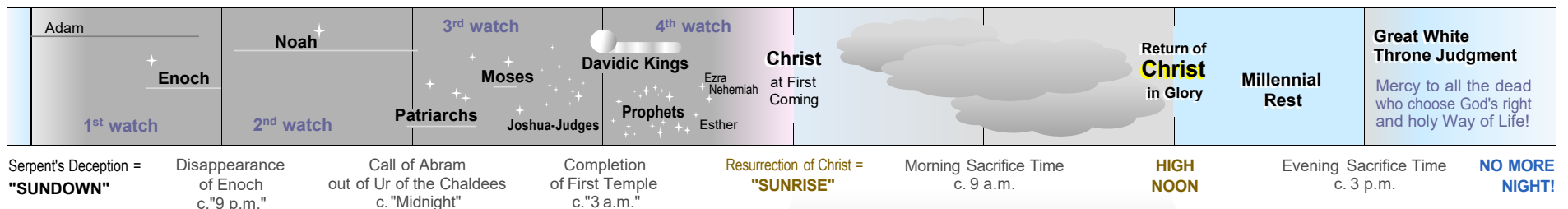
“**Seal not** the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

¹¹ He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. ¹² And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ¹³ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. ¹⁴ **Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.** ¹⁵ For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Revelation 22:10-15).

And so, we do well to heed Jesus’ words: “Enter ye in at the strait [*narrow / constricted*] gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴ Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

From God’s perspective the time remaining until Christ’s return is *very* short. Only two *daytime* watches (about 2000 years — or just *six hours* in this analogy) after the “sunrise” of Jesus’ resurrection, Jesus will return in glory to make His flock to rest at “noon” (Song of Solomon 1:7). Then He will rule (with the help of the saints) in the glorious millennial “day” of rest (Revelation 20:4,6).

By raising Jesus from the dead, and by accepting His sacrifice in our stead, God gave the “sunrise” of hope to a dying world (compare, John 3:16). The restoration of *all* things comes just six “hours” later.



A Spiritually Dark and Gloomy Morning

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away...” (1 Peter 1:3-4).

The Light of the glorious gospel of Christ is clouded over with a *counterfeit* gospel that promises *grace* without *real* repentance. “What...? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Romans 6:1-6). The gospel Christ brought is “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). To repent is to *turn away* from sin, to *stop sinning* and walk instead in *obedience* to God’s law. To inherit eternal life, one must *overcome* the wicked one and the world (1 John 2:13-14; 5:4-5), *overcome* evil with good (Romans 12:21), and keep *Christ’s works* (walking as He walked) unto the end (Revelation 2:11; 2:26). So, choose Life! Choose (unlike Adam) to study and live by God’s *every* word (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3; 30:19).

A Day that Lasts a Thousand Years

“But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with Yehovah as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8).

| 1000 years = one day | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------|
| one twelve-hour night = c. 500 years | | | | | | | | | | | | a twelve-hour day = c. 500 years | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 40 year hour |
| c. 120-year watch | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

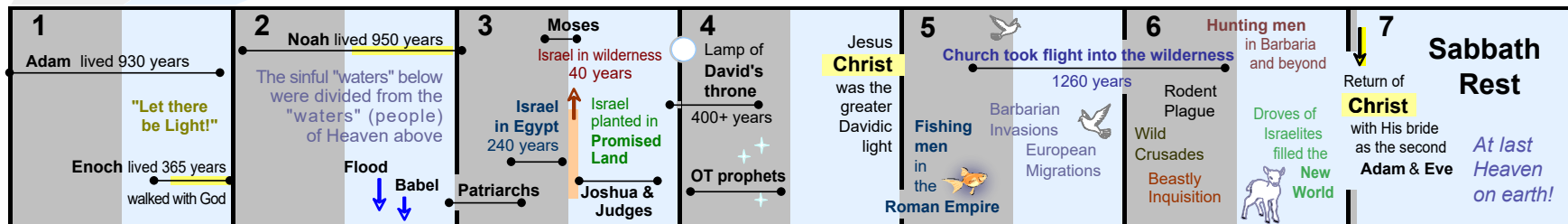
In the above verse, Peter referred back to the song of Moses which says that a thousand years to God are “*as* a watch in the night” — and also “*as* yesterday when it is past” (Psalm 90:4). The concept that a thousand years is like a day to God is evident from the fact that Adam, who undoubtedly ate of the forbidden fruit soon after being created (before he had any need of clothing for

warmth), was to die in the “day” that he ate of that fruit. Now Adam lived 930 years. But he did die in the very same *millennial* day in which he sinned.

The concept of thousand-year days, paired with the seven days of creation week, indicates that God’s rest — Christ’s soon-coming thousand-year reign on earth (Revelation 20:4,6) — will be in the seventh millennium of mankind’s

existence. Likewise, the work of God in the first six days of creation week foreshadowed the work that God has been doing in the six millennial days since Adam’s creation.

Some of the details regarding this aspect of God’s creative handiwork may be found at cgsf.org in the continuation of this series: *Part 2: Seven Millennial Days* and *Part 3: The Bible Timeline*.



Only half of Peter’s comment is illustrated here. Conversely: “...one day *is* with Yehovah as a thousand years”. Thus, one twelve-hour day, as we know it, is as 500 years to God. An hour is like forty years, and three hours are like 120 years.

A Week of Seven Days

There is no basis in the natural realm for the seven-day week — nothing in the movements of the earth and skies to define how long a “week” should be. The definition of the week must be accepted as a matter of faith, not sight, as it is written:

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: ¹⁰ But the seventh day is the sabbath of Yehovah 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 Yehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Yehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8-11).



Some think that the division of time into seven-day weeks — with the seventh day as the day of rest — is just a Jewish thing. But there were no Jews when God made the Sabbath day. And Jesus said, “The sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27) — yes, for *all* of mankind. The Creator, our Father in Heaven, set aside the seventh-day Sabbath to spend time with His children. It is a time for people to seek God and to find the abundant, happy and joyous life that only God can give. And so we are instructed:

“⁶ Seek ye Yehovah while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts:

And let him return unto Yehovah, and he will have mercy upon him;

And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

“⁸ For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith Yehovah.

⁹ For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways,

And my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:6-9).

Do we believe God — and Jesus? Or would we rather have it our own way? According to Jesus, the *seventh*-day Sabbath was made for us!

Months



“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” (Genesis 1:14).

“He made the moon for seasons...” (Psalms 104:19, YLT).

The Hebrew word for “season” in the above verses is *mow'ed* (מוֹעֵד H4150), meaning *set time / appointed time* or *appointment*. It is used in reference to the annual times that God established for us to gather at His footstool, to learn from Him and give Him thanks and praise:

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *Concerning* the feasts [*mow'ed* H4150] of Yehovah, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, *even these are* my feasts [*mow'ed* (pl.) = *appointments*]” (Leviticus 23:2).

The timing of these feasts (*set times*) is directly or indirectly defined by the days of the lunar month. For example:

“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even *is* Yehovah’s passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread unto Yehovah: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread” (Leviticus 23:5-6).

The Biblical month began with the night when the new crescent moon first became visible in the evening sky. This is

evident in part because the Hebrew word for “new moon” is *chodesh* (חֹדֶשׁ H2320), which is the noun form of the verb *chadash* (חָדַשׁ H2318), which means to *renew* or *repair* or to *renew oneself*. So the new moon day of Scripture was the day which started as the moon’s light began to be restored.

We also have the witness of history showing how the Jewish Sanhedrin in ancient times would *sanctify* the day, setting it apart for God’s decreed holy purpose, when two or three reliable witnesses in Israel brought testimony that they had sighted the new lunar crescent. The holy observances for the new moon day would then proceed.

Israel’s new moon days are intended to be days of renewal for God’s people. For on each new moon day (in ancient times and in the age to come) the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah is pictured by the slaying of a kid of the goats for a sin offering (Numbers 28:15; Isaiah 66:23).

The moon is a symbol⁷ of a mother (Genesis 37:9-10) — and also of the light God gave through the throne of David and through Israel’s mother-city, Jerusalem. And so it is *Israel’s* crescent moon that defines the new moon day. For the new moon pictures *Jerusalem’s* restoration. And the sacrifice for sin was offered there.

Jerusalem needs to be restored to the light of God and renewed through the atoning sacrifice of her Messiah. Only then can she effectively do her job as a mother, and light the path of her children.

In Numbers 10:2-3,10 the Israelites were commanded to assemble before God on the new moon days at the times of the morning and evening sacrifices. Those in the current era who celebrate Israel’s new moons (by offering up *spiritual* sacrifices, acceptable to God, 1 Peter 2:5) partake in the renewal that her glowing crescent pictures.

For further discussion of this see: [*New Moons: Should We Observe Them?*](#)

⁷ The symbols in creation are explored in [*Part 2*](#).



Years

“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” (Genesis 1:14).

“You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths drip *with* abundance” (Psalms 65:11 NKJV). “Blessed of Yehovah is his [*Joseph*’s] land. . . ¹⁴with the precious fruits of the sun, with the precious produce of the months’ ” (Deuteronomy 33:13-14 NKJV¹).

Years are defined, and crops are regulated by the earth’s annual circuit around the sun.

In the Middle East, as in other grain-growing regions of the world, crop years begin in the autumn. Barley, wheat, oats and rye all have varieties that are planted in the fall. And since the end of the harvest of the grain crops is also in the fall, the Scriptures refer to the time around September or October as both the *beginning of the year* (*seedtime / commencement of sowing* in the northern hemisphere) and the *end of the year* (completion of *ingathering*).

The Holy Land is “a land which Yehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Yehovah thy God *are* always upon it,

from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year” (Deuteronomy 11:12).

The *end of the year* is defined as the time of the “Feast of Ingathering, *which is* at the end of the year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of* your labors out of the field” (Exodus 23:16 NKJV) — “at the year’s end” (Exodus 34:22).

The gathering in of Israel’s grain crops begins soon after the first reaping of the barley in March or April. And, when under God’s blessing, Israel was promised: “your threshing [*processing of grain in preparation for storage*] shall reach unto the vintage [*into summer*], and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time [*into autumn*]” (Leviticus 26:5).

The day of shouting (*Yom Teruah*) or blowing of trumpets (Leviticus 23:24;

Numbers 29:1) is a *memorial* of the *beginning* and creation of the earth, “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted (*ruwa*) for joy” (Job 38:7) at the beauty of God’s handiwork. The Jews associate Adam’s creation with this date. And they also call it *Rosh Hashanah*, the “beginning of the year” (Ezekiel 40:1) — claiming that the months (as in the story of Noah’s flood) were originally numbered from autumn. (See Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.3.3).

However, in order to align the months with the plan of salvation, God had the Israelites number their months from springtime (Exodus 12:2). Month 1 is when grains *begin* to ripen; in month 7 Israel’s reaping, threshing and vintage

come to an end and the olive presses begin to flow. This pictures God's seven-millennium plan for bringing the "grain" (His people, Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17) into His storehouse, for bringing an end to the "vintage" of bloodshed, and for pouring the "oil" of His Holy Spirit upon all flesh.

It is not that the year begins in the spring, but that the harvest of the grain crops begins in the spring.

Just as the 24-hour day begins with a night portion, so the crop year in Scripture begins with the colder, darker portion of the year. But the *numbering of the months* begins around the time of the spring equinox — when the light of the sun begins to dominate the landscape. This is akin to the way the daytime hours are numbered in Scripture from sunrise, even though the day as a whole begins at sundown, as illustrated on page 16.

Twelve lunar months are ten to eleven days short of a solar year. So, in order to keep the first month in sync with the beginning of reaping, Biblical years sometimes have a thirteenth month. For the ripening barley is what defines the first month, as it is written that, at the time of the exodus:

"The flax and the barley were struck, for the barley *was* in the head [*Hebrew: אֲבִיב aviv* H24], and the flax was in bud" (Exodus 9:31, NKJV).

And: "This month [*the month of the exodus*] *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be the first month of the year to you*" (Exodus 12:2). "Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage... ⁴ This day came ye out in the month Abib [*literally: in the month of the aviv (אֲבִיב) — the month when the barley begins to ripen*] ...¹⁰ Thou shalt therefore keep this [*Passover*] ordinance in his season [*its appointed time: (Hebrew: mow'ed* H4150)] from year to year" (Exodus 13:3-4,10).

Although months are numbered from springtime, the sabbatical and jubilee years of Scripture are *crop years* — counted from autumn to autumn, as it is written:

"Six years you shall sow thy field [*beginning in autumn*], and six years you shall prune your vineyard [*primarily a winter activity*], and gather in its fruit [*in spring and summer*]; ⁴ but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to Yehovah. You shall neither sow your field [*in autumn or after*], nor prune your vineyard [*winter*]. ⁵ What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap [*in spring and early summer*], nor gather the grapes of your untended vine [*in summer*], *for* it is a year of rest

for the land [*from autumn sowing through the end of summer grape-gathering*]...

⁸ And you shall count seven sabbaths of years... forty-nine [*crop*] years. ⁹ Then you shall cause the trumpet of the **Jubilee** to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. ¹⁰ And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year... ¹¹ That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it you shall neither sow [*in autumn or after*] nor reap [*in spring/summer*] what grows of its own accord, nor gather [*in summer*] the grapes of your untended vine" (Leviticus 25:3-5,8-11 NKJV¹).

In each case, when explaining sabbatical and jubilee years, the forbidden activities are listed in the order of the progression of the crops — from autumn planting time through the end of the following summer's grape-gathering time. Thus the sabbatical and jubilee *years of rest* are understood to begin and end in the autumn — at the beginning of the darker and colder months of the year, just as the 24-hour *day of rest* begins with the darker portion of the day.

However, there are other "years" in Scripture that do not follow the crop year pattern. Some years are counted from the date (or month) of a given event, just as we number our own years from birthdates and anniversaries.

For example: “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.⁴¹ And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of Yehovah went out from the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:40-41).

The 430 years may have been counted from the circumcision covenant that God made with Abraham (as alluded to in Galatians 3:17) or (more likely) from the birth of Isaac⁸. Abraham’s circumcision and Isaac’s birth both appear to have occurred in the spring-time, as did the exodus.

The years “*after the exodus*” were also numbered from spring to spring:

“And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: ...^{33:38} And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of Yehovah, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first *day* of the fifth month” (Numbers 20:28; 33:38).

⁸ “Israel” means *prince of God*. Among the patriarchs, Abraham was the first such prince (Genesis 23:6). And it was the *children* of “Israel”, the *children* of God’s patriarchal princes, who sojourned 430 years. Galatians 3:17 appears to be giving only the *general* time frame. Exodus 12 refers to a specific day.

“And it came to pass in the fortieth year [*after the exodus*], in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month [*some 66 days before the Israelites would enter into the Promised Land*], that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that Yehovah had given him in commandment unto them” (Deuteronomy 1:3).

Ezekiel however does not appear to have counted the years of his captivity (by which he dates the years in his writings) from the anniversary of their capture. According to the Babylonian Chronicles, Judah’s king Jehoiachin (along with Ezekiel and 10,000 others, 2 Kings 24:10-16) was taken captive on the second day of Adar (on the Sabbath day, March (15-)16, 597 BC). But Ezekiel numbers the years of their captivity as *calendar years* (autumn to autumn crop years), as seen by examining the following:

“And it came to pass in the twelfth⁹ year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth *day* of the month, *that* one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten” (Ezekiel 33:21).

⁹ Some manuscripts say “eleventh” (אחת עשרה = 1&10), but it is assumed here that the majority opinion, which says “twelfth” (שתי עשרה = 2&10) is correct. A scribe could have absent-mindedly changed the

Since Jerusalem was destroyed in the summer, in the fifth month of the eleventh year of Ezekiel’s captivity (eleventh year of Zedekiah’s reign, 2 Kings 25:2), and since it can be about a four month journey between Babylon and Jerusalem (as it was in Ezra 7:9), it appears that Ezekiel was numbering years from autumn to autumn — with the man who brought the message arriving in the winter (in the tenth month of the twelfth year) less than five months after the city was taken (in the fifth month of the eleventh year) and *before* the Babylonian army got back from Jerusalem with the Jewish captives (who would themselves have brought the message).

Thus the use of “year of our captivity” in Ezekiel 33:21 above shows that in Ezekiel 40:1 “In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year” (Hebrew: *rosh hashanah*), most likely refers to the *seventh* month, the autumn month of Tishri.

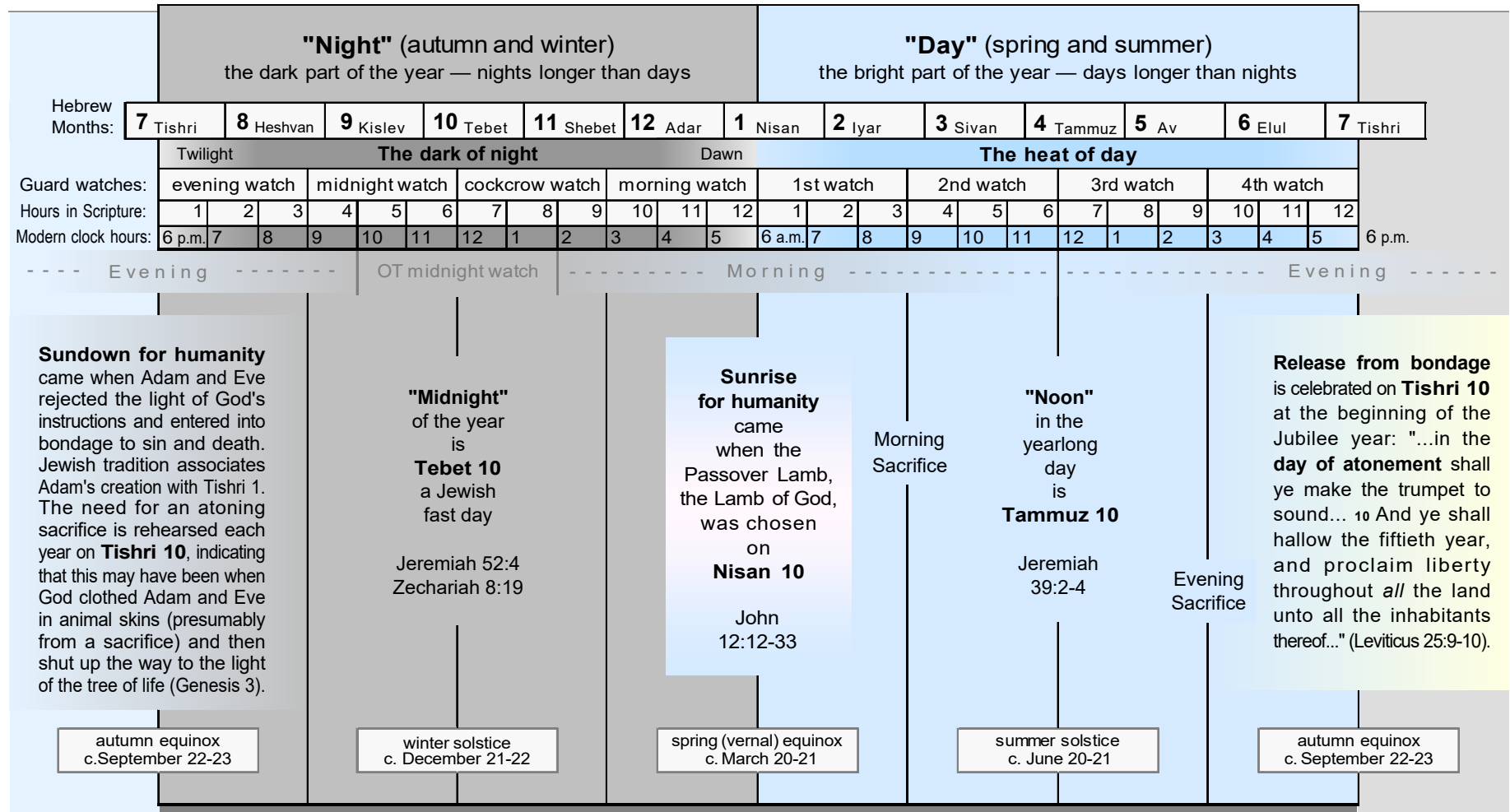
While Hebrew *months* are numbered from springtime, the *years* begin and end in the autumn. □

text to say “eleventh” (knowing Jerusalem fell in the eleventh year), but it is doubtful that any would have changed it to “twelfth” if the original said “eleventh”.

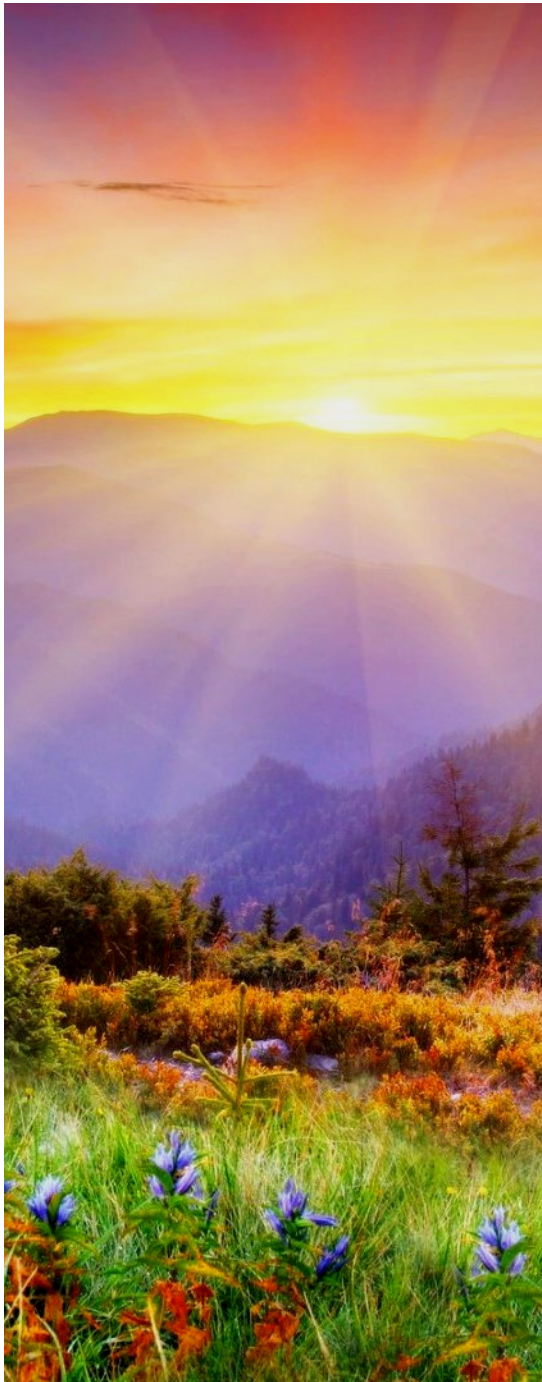
The Yearlong Day

“The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psalms 90:10; compare Genesis 5; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:4-6).

Like the 24-hour day, each year has a dark part (autumn and winter) and a period of increased light (spring and summer). Thus the year (from the perspective of Jerusalem and the Northern Hemisphere) can be viewed as having the parts of a normal day as shown below:



This illustration shows several different Scriptural uses of the terms “evening” and “morning” (for general time periods, the night watches and the daily sacrifices). For additional information about how these and other time expressions are used in the Bible, please see: [Resolving the Passover Controversy – Part 1](#), at [cgsf.org](#)



Is there a Sacred Calendar?

God is the maker of the sun and moon by which He regulates the cycles of the crops and (according to Genesis 1:14) defines months and years. There is no humanly-devised calculated calendar — no, not even the Jewish one — no calendar of man that is completely and truly in sync with the clock in the sky.

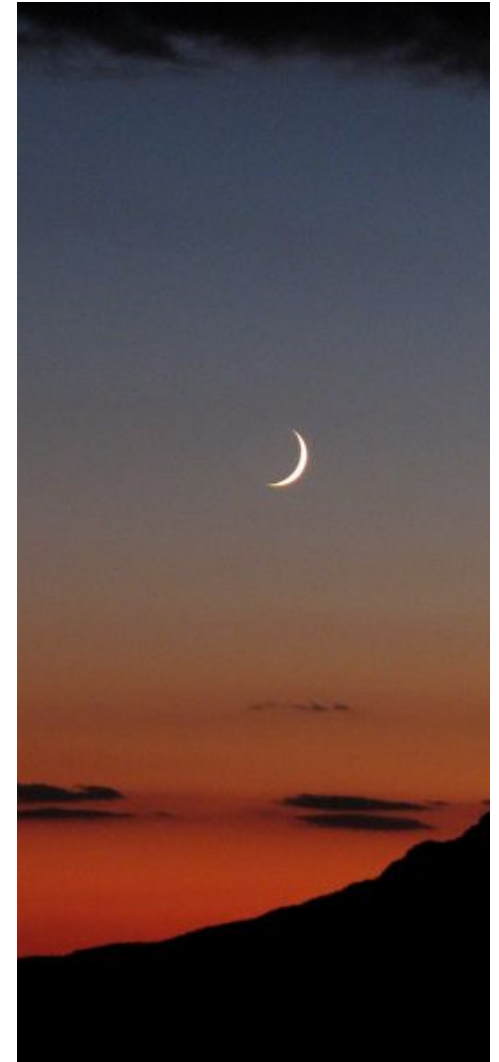
Although the Roman calendar is fairly closely aligned with the solar year, it completely ignores the moon.

On the other hand, the calendar of the rabbinic Jews attempts to be in sync with *both* the sun and the moon. But it falls short in both cases.

Unlike the ancient Hebrew practice, which defined months and years by *observation*, the rabbinic calendar is a *calculated* calendar that is out of sync with the moon most of the time (commencing most months a day or two *before* the crescent moon can be seen in Israel). And it is also occasionally out of step with the solar-regulated crop year (off by a month from when the barley in Israel actually begins to ripen).

So what about us? Are we in sync with nature's heavenly clock? Or would we rather adhere to artificial, human calendars? Does it really matter which days we keep "holy"?

For additional information on this subject see:
[*Part 7: Heaven's Holy Times*](#)



A Day that Lasts Forty Years

In Hebrews 3, quoted below, the forty-year period of Israelite wandering in the wilderness after their departure from Egypt is specifically referred to as a “day” of testing. Dwelling in booths during the feast of tabernacles illustrates a direct parallel between that wilderness “**day**” of trial and the thousand-year “**day**” of the seventh millennium (Leviticus 23:42-43).

The account in Hebrews also tells us, “For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,’ although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works’ ” (Hebrews 4:3-4, NKJV). “For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle [*our physical bodies*] were dissolved,

we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1). Believers (those who are “called, and chosen, and faithful”) *do* enter God’s rest, being given eternal life at the time of the first resurrection, when Jesus returns to rule the earth with the saints during the seventh millennium (Revelation 17:14; 19:11-16; 20:4-6).

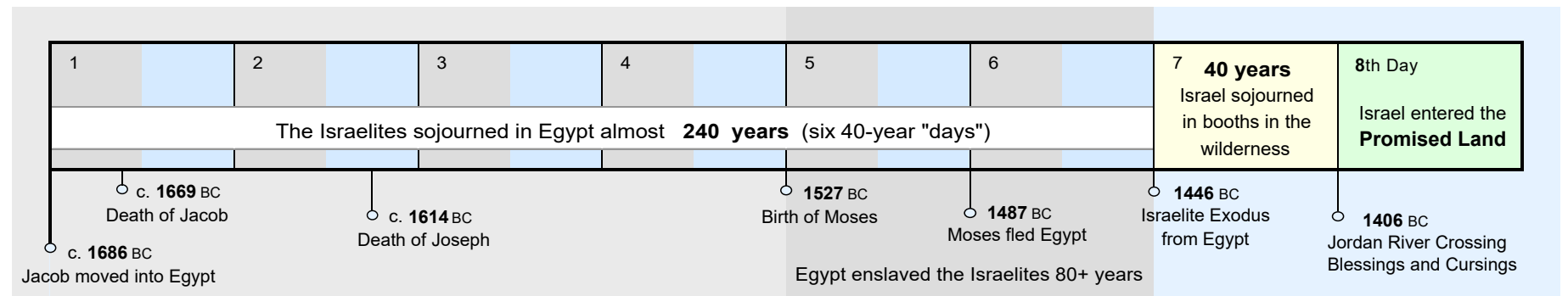
But, just as the ancient Israelites did not enter into the Promised Land until the eighth forty-year period after Jacob went down into Egypt, so the modern-day nations of Jacob will *not* enter into the glorious rest of eternal life when Jesus returns. Instead, those who survive the plagues at the close of this age will remain in mortal fleshly bodies until their time of testing is complete.

When the seventh millennium is over, all who remain asleep in the dust of the

earth will awake to their time of judgment (Revelation 20:5). It will be like it was when Israel entered the Promised Land and stood before Mounts Gerizim and Ebal. The Books of the Law were opened and read to them; they heard all the blessings and the curses (Joshua 8:30-35; Deuteronomy 11:29; chs. 27–30); and then they had to decide which road to take: the Way of Death or the Way of Life.

The lesson from the example of Israel at Mount Ebal is that all who stand before God’s great white throne at the seventh millennium’s end (Revelation 20:11-15), although found guilty (“for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”, Romans 3:23), will be judged based upon whether or not they accept correction, become as little children (Matthew 18:3; cf. Numbers 14:31), *choose life*, and sin no more (Deuteronomy 30:19; John 8:1-12).

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, when you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on **the day of testing in the wilderness**, ⁹ where your fathers put me to the test and saw My works for forty years’ ” (Hebrews 3:7-9, RSV, compare Psalm 95:7-11).



An Hour that Lasts 42 Months

“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Revelation 3:10 NKJV).

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---------------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 42 month hour | | | | | | | | | | | the last hour |
| one night = c. 40 years | | | | | | | | | | | | one 12-hour day = c. 40 years | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 80 years = one full day | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

By comparing the above verse with the ones quoted below, we discern that the “hour of trial” is forty-two months in duration, the corresponding “day” of which would last about eighty years:

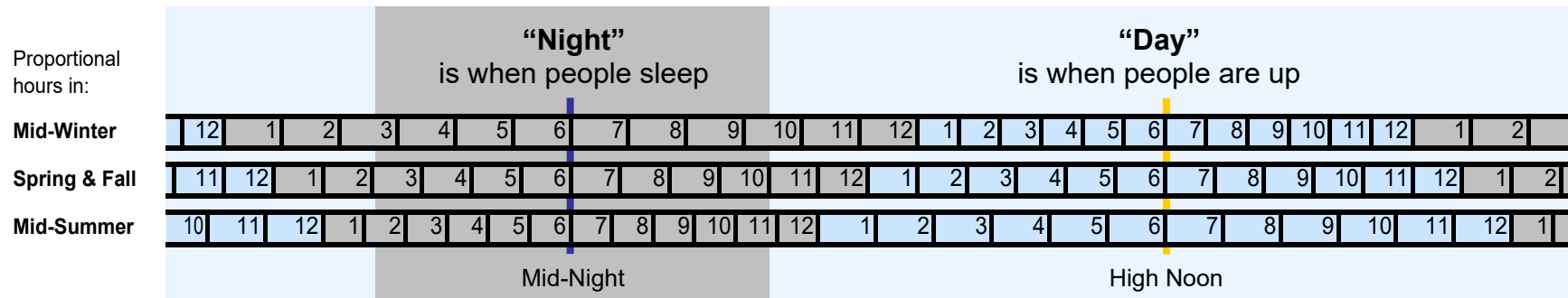
“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a **beast** rise up out of the sea... ³...and all the world wondered after the beast. ⁴ And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? ⁵ And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;

and **power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.** ⁶ And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. ⁷ And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. ⁸ And all that dwell

upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:1-8).

“And the **ten horns** which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but **receive power as kings one hour with the beast**” (Revelation 17:12).

Yet another Biblical use of “Day” and “Night”



Heretofore, all of our illustrations have shown how the 24-hour day in Scripture begins at sunset. This is the way that calendar days, Sabbaths and holy days are reckoned, as further explained in the paper: [Sunset — the Beginning and End of the Biblical Day](#). Similarly, the 12-hour “night” begins at sunset, and the 12-hour “day” at sunrise. However, there is also a *common usage* of day and night in Scripture that essentially matches the way we use those terms when we “call it a day” and go to bed “for the night”. In this usage, “night” is when people hit the sack, and “day” is when they are up going about their business:

David cried, “I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears” (Psalms 6:6).

The Shulamite rejoiced, “A bundle of myrrh *is* my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts” (Song of Solomon 1:13).

In Judges 19:25 the concubine was abused “all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. ²⁶ Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man’s house where her lord *was*, till it was light.”

Ruth followed instructions to “Tarry this night”, and go home in the morning, while it was still too dark to be recognized (Ruth 3:13-14).

Samuel “cried unto Yehovah all night” and yet “rose early to meet Saul in the morning” (1 Samuel 15:10-12).

At the conclusion of a war “Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day [*dawn*]” (2 Samuel 2:32).

“In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever” (Psalm 44:8).

“Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Psalm 25:5).

“And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long” (Psalm 35:28).

“They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.” (Psalm 38:12).

“Oh how I love thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

“My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day... ²³ My lips shall greatly rejoice... ²⁴ My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long” (Psalm 71:15,23-24).

Jesus said: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

While many people do work in the “night” hours after sundown, none can work when sound asleep — or when asleep in the grave. It is this *common usage* of “night” that Jesus was referring to — speaking of the time when He would rest in the grave.

And it is the common usage of “day” (meaning the time when people are up and about) that is sometimes used in the law of the sacrifices. One must discern which usage is intended by the context, and by comparison with other verses.

First, let’s examine the giving of the manna where the bread of each day was to be for food up until at least bedtime (not sundown), as it is written:

“And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning... [*But on the seventh day he said*] ²⁹ See, for that Yehovah hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on [*the morning of*] the sixth day the bread of two days [*for two wakeful periods*]; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day” (Exodus 16:19,29).

Similarly, at the ordination of Aaron and his sons, the holy offerings were to be eaten only in the same wakeful period in which they were offered:

“And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain

unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it *is* holy” (Exodus 29:34).

Personal offerings followed similar rules:

“And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving [*slain in mid-morning for lunch or in mid-afternoon for dinner*] shall be eaten the same day that it is offered [*until bedtime, not sundown; this is day one*]; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. ¹⁶ But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day [*wakeful period*] that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow [*second wakeful period*] also the remainder of it shall be eaten: ¹⁷ But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. ¹⁸ And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity” (Leviticus 7:15-18).

Offerings presented during the daytime could be eaten after sundown, as seen in the following instruction to the priesthood:

“The soul [*of the seed of Aaron*] which hath touched any such [*unclean thing*] shall be

unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water. ⁷ And when the sun is down, he shall be clean, and shall afterward eat of the holy things; because it is his food” (Leviticus 22:6-7).

Those who were *clean* could partake of the same holy things before sundown, but none of the meat of a required offering was to be eaten the next morning.

This was the same as for the Passover:

“And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning [*i.e. until after midnight when they were to get the little ones up and flee*] ye shall burn with fire” (Exodus 12:10).

“And there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy borders seven days [*seven calendar days, counted **sunset to sunset***]; neither shall any thing of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst at even [*in mid-afternoon*]¹⁰ on the first day [*or, “in the beginning day” — that is, in the wakeful period wherein the seven-day feast begins at sunset*], be left over night until the morning [*of Nisan 15*]” (Deuteronomy 16:4, Darby).

¹⁰ The timing of the sacrifice is explained in: [Resolving the Passover Controversy](#)

What Should Our Focus Be?

In the study of times and seasons it should be pointed out that there are many, many time elements embedded in the Bible prophecies and in the words of Jesus Christ. And *every* word God speaks is true (cf. Numbers 23:19; Psalm 119:160; Proverbs 30:5; John 17:17). When Jesus said, “at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (Matthew 25:6), the time element in His words was not without prophetic significance. As noted earlier, although Jesus told the original twelve disciples that (like Daniel) it was not given for them to understand the times or the seasons (Acts 1:7), it is also written that, at the time of the end, the wise *will* understand the times (Daniel 12:5-13). They will seek to view the times and seasons from God's perspective, and they *will* understand!

The “prayer of Moses” (Psalm 90) immediately preceding a psalm about God's protection in tribulation (Psalm 91) and another one “for the sabbath day” (i.e. regarding the millennial rest, Psalm 92), has great meaning for our day. We, with Moses, can pray from the heart, “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. ¹³ Return, O Yehovah! How long? And have compassion on Your servants. ¹⁴ Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our

days! ¹⁵ Make us glad according to the days *in which* You have afflicted us, *and* the years *in which* we have seen evil. ¹⁶ Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children. ¹⁷ And let the beauty of Yehovah our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands” (Psalm 90:12-17 NKJV¹).

Under Moses, the people put their hands into the work of building the tabernacle and all its furnishings. The parallel “work of our hands” today is the building up of the Church of God into “an holy temple in Yehovah” (Ephesians 2:21).

Those at the time of the end who serve in that work in a way that is pleasing to God can expect to understand the answer to the question of the holy men of old. “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” (Daniel 12:6). The end is upon us *now*. The words are no longer closed and sealed (Revelation 22:10). It is our responsibility to seek God “while He may be found” (Isaiah 55:6). The door to the kingdom of God will soon be shut to those who take off their shoes, lie down on the job of preaching the gospel, and foolishly just wait around for the master to come knocking (cf. Ephesians 6:11,15; Mark 6:7-9, Song of Solomon 5:2-6). It behooves all God's

people instead to “get to work!” — in the great work of rebuilding the temple of God, the temple prophesied in the book of Haggai which must be completed (with *all* the living stones put back together, 1 Peter 2:5; cf. Lamentations 4:1) before the Most High will fill this house with glory (Haggai 2:7). God give us the sense to wake up and get on with His Work! For the time is very, very short. And there is *much* work yet to be done!

First those who are to build God's house must “go up to the mountain, and bring wood” (Haggai 1:8), that is, bring God's *people*, to be “fitly framed together” as “an holy temple in Yehovah” (Ephesians 2:21). Then the builders must cleanse themselves from contact with those who are called brethren but whose fruits *prove* that they are spiritually dead (cf. Haggai 2:10-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 6:9-11; Jude 3-23; Ephesians 2:1-5; Matthew 18:12-17, 21-35; Numbers 5:2-3; 19:11-22; Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:22; Ephesians 5:25-27; Titus 3:4-7).

The builders must also be cleansed from the influence of spiritually dead religious leaders (Matthew 23:27-28; Luke 11:44). And the right foundation, the pure Word of God, must be fully restored (cf. Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Luke 6:46-49). This is the very same foundation on which Herbert Armstrong sought to build when

he said, “Don't believe me, believe what you find written in your own Bible!”

We certainly do want to prove all things and hold fast what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21). But the tendency these days is to slip into the trap of thinking that we are “rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” spiritually (Revelation 3:17). It is so much easier to build on the foundation of Herbert Armstrong — *assuming* all we were taught was true, and all of our practices right. But in so doing we reject any right and proper *growth* in understanding of the Word of God in favor of 20th century church traditions. And we also reject Mr. Armstrong's own words in the last days of his life when he told us that there is more in the Bible than any man can learn in a lifetime.

The Word of God is the foundation of God's temple and throne. It is a foundation of love, as expressed in righteousness (personal integrity) and justice (proper dealings with others). (See Psalm 89:14; 97:2; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; and 2 Timothy 2:19.) Once the right foundation is securely back in place — as the basis of both how the builders live and what they teach, God *will* bless their efforts to build up His family through the gospel work — through sowing of the seed for the kingdom of God (Haggai 2:18-19; Isaiah 28:16-17; Zechariah 4:9-10). While the people do say, “The time is not come, the time that Yehovah's house should be built” (Haggai 1:2), God's own instruction in the first chapter

of Haggai (for a time when His house lies in ruins) is that His people *should* be busy building. The rest of the book tells *how* to build — in purity and on the right foundation, as just explained. And the message includes the following encouraging thoughts:

Who is left among you who saw the Church of God in its former glory, when it stood 150,000 people strong? And how do you see the Church now? In comparison, is it not in your eyes as nothing? ⁴ Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, says Yehovah; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of spiritual Israel, says Yehovah, and work;

It is not the words of any human writer that are important. Unless the reader actually looks up and studies the Scriptural references herein, the most important part of the message will be missed. For the part that really matters is what God has to say.

for I *am* with you, says Yehovah of hosts. ⁵ According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of the world, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear! ⁶ For thus says Yehovah of hosts: Yet once more (in a little while) I will shake the heavens [*the spirit realm including both spirit beings and spirit-begotten sons of God whose names are written in heaven*] and the earth [*the unconverted world*], the sea [*the Gentile countries*] and the dry land [*Israelite countries*]; ⁷ and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all

nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, says Yehovah of hosts. ⁸ The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, says Yehovah of hosts. ⁹ The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, says Yehovah of hosts. And in this place will I give peace, says Yehovah of hosts (paraphrasing Haggai 2:3-9).

God speed the day when He will fill His temple with glory! For now, those who desire to build must gather “wood”, cleanse themselves (James 4:8-17; Numbers 19:11-22), and restore the foundation of truth and love laid by apostles and prophets (1 Corinthians 3:10-11; John 14:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:11-16). Then God will bless their efforts in building up the Church of God into a holy temple far more splendid than what was seen in the past.

There is a great work yet to be done. And for those who please God, for those who wisely build upon the Rock (Matthew 7:24), who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (1 Peter 1:18-19), who stay sober and watch unto prayer, loving God *and* one another (1 Peter 4:7-8; 1 John 4:20), their loins girded with truth, shoes on their feet as messengers of the gospel of peace, and shepherd staff in hand (Exodus 12:11-12) — for them, there is a promise. They *will* understand the times and be delivered from the difficult trials that lie ahead (cf. Daniel 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Ephesians 6:10-20; Revelation 12:11; Daniel 3:17-18). □

Time... From the Biblical Perspective

An Overview of God's Many Clocks

| Scripture Reference | Hour | 3-hour Watch | 12-hour Day (or Night) | 24-hour Day | Week | Lunar Month | 50 Days | Hebrew Year | 7 Years | 19 Years | 40 Years | 50 Years | 1000 Years |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| One day is with Yehovah as 1000 years 2 Peter 3:8 | | Redeem the time! → | To Yehovah 1/8 second is like 12 hours | 1/4 second is like a day | 2 seconds is like a week | 7 seconds is like a month | 12 seconds is like 50 days | 1.44 minutes is like a year | 10 minutes is like 7 years | 30 minutes is like 19 years | 1 hour is like 40 years | 70 minutes is like 49 years | one day (24 hours) is like 1000 years |
| Are there not 12 hours in the day? John 11:9 | | 3 hours in a NT night watch (4 hrs in OT?) | 12 hours in a day (or night) | 24 hours in a full day | 7 days in a week | 29 or 30 days in lunar month average 29.53 | 49 days to Pentecost | 12 or 13 lunar months c.354 or 384 days ave. 365.242 days | 7 solar years = 2556.69 days (7 x 360 = 2520) | 19 Hebrew years = 19 solar years = 235 lunar months (6939.6 days) | 40 years | 49 years is a Jubilee cycle | Millennium |
| A year for a day and a day for a year Numbers 14:34 Ezekiel 4:4-6; Genesis 5 | 15-day hour — (360 hrs) | 45-day watch — (1080 hrs) | 6 dark months — 6 sunny months | Yearlong Day | 7-year week | 30 years is like a month | 50th year Jubilee is like Pentecost | A "time" of 360 or 365 years (or 354, 384 or 390) is like 1 year | 2520 years (or c. 2557 yrs) is like 7 years | 6939 or 6940 years is like 19 years | | | |
| 42-Month Hour of Trial Revelation 3:10; 17:12 | 42 lunar months hour (3.39 years) | 10-year watch | 40-year night | 480 years = six 80-year days from exodus to temple foundation | 560-year week | 2400-year month of 30 80-year days | Christ 1st came on 50th 80-year day after creation | | | | | | |
| 40-Year Day of Trial in the wilderness Hebrews 3:7-9 Psalm 95:8-10; Luke 21:32 | 20-month hour (1.66 yrs) | 5-year watch | 20-year night | Israel was in Egypt six 40-year days (240 years) | 280-year week Israel entered Promised Land on 8th day | 1200-year "month" of 30 40-year days | Christ returns on 50th 40-yr day after His baptism or death | | | | | | |
| With Yehovah 1000 years are as one day 2 Peter 3:8; Psalm 90:4 | 40-year hour | 120-year watch | 500-year night | 1000-year day | 7000-year week in God's plan for man | | | | | | | | |
| The days are shortened some nipped a bit — some cut in half Matthew 24:22; Mark 13:20 See: God Has Shortened Man's Days | | 500-year watch | 2000-yr night from death of Jesus to His 2nd coming | 4000-year day | | | | | | | | | |
| 1000 years are like a watch in the night Psalm 90:4 | 330-year hour | 1000-year night watch | After a night of c. 4000 years Christ brought light to world | 8000-year day | | | | | | | | | |
| In 1 John 2:18 (NKJV) "the last hour" is 2000 years | 2000-year hour | 6000-year morning watch | Night began when Satan fell, perhaps 24,000 or more years ago | | | | | | | | | | |

The only time element mentioned in Scripture that is less than an hour is a "moment". Equated with a twinkling of an eye in 1 Corinthians 15:52, this is a very brief and indefinite space of time, an instant. (See also Exodus 33:5; Isaiah 26:20; etc.)

M. J. Beattie

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