

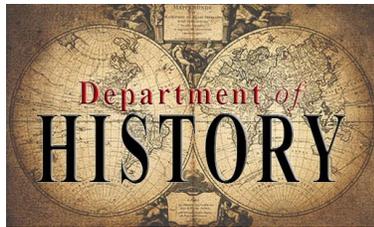
It's About Time

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Over the years of doing my “Nehemiah work,” I have acquired a thirst for seeing things historically. History was not a favorite subject of mine while attending school. I was content to leave things of the past in the past. That all began to change when I became a Christian at age 33. I became an avid reader of Scripture and soon found many reasons to think about things from a historical perspective.

I especially appreciated the opening words of the Bible, “*In the beginning ---*.” I also appreciated the view (espoused by a few theologians) that the Christian faith needed to be learned *as a story*.



Stories are supposed to have a beginning and an ending. In between are people, places and things that make up the story.

After a couple years of reading *in scripture*, I decided to read *through the scripture*, from beginning to end. That proved life-changing. I developed a method of reading through the Bible once per quarter and did that several times. In the process of doing so, *the story* began to take shape, with a view of time.

After several years of Bible reading and with the development of worldview materials for Nehemiah Institute, I starting make note of key events and key people used of God for the unfolding of His Story. I found a few study Bibles that supplied the chronological order of things, including specific dates of key events.

I eventually developed a timeline chart listing what seemed to me to be the “big events” of the story, the key people involved and also the period for when these things occurred. A pattern began to surface, particularly beginning with Noah. What developed was a series of key events occurring at approximately 500-year intervals- amazing. Some of the events occurred a few decades before or after the 500-year mark, but always within the 500-year interval. My chart including the following:

Period	Event	Key People
2500 BC	The Great Flood	Noah
2000 BC	Creation of Israel	Abraham/Jacob
1500 BC	Exodus from Egypt/The Law	Moses
1000 BC	Creation of Kingdoms	David/Solomon
500 BC	Rebuilding of Jerusalem	Ezra/Nehemiah
0	The Cross/The Church	Christ/Paul
500 AD	Fall of Rome/Christendom	St. Augustine
1000 AD	Light in the Dark Ages	St. Bernard of Clairvaux ¹
1500 AD	Protestant Reformation	Luther/Calvin

¹ Clairvaux means, Valley of Light

Surely there are other important events and important individuals that have been part of *the story* in how God has been advancing His Kingdom through time. But I argue that these events and these individuals are the biggies. I think it would be difficult to identify other events that would rise to the level of importance in shaping the course of history as these nine have.



The development of this chart substantially heightened my appetite for seeing more things in the context of a historical perspective. It also caused me to think about time itself. "Time" is something we learned about as children with things such as birthdays and holidays. We learned about calendars and periods of measuring time. Perhaps in a junior high science class we learned the following:

Period of time	Basis of measurement
Year	One revolution of earth around the sun
Month	One revolution of moon around the earth (approximately)
Day	One rotation of the earth on its axis
Hours/minutes	Smaller units of the day

All of these "time measurements" are based on planetary motion.

There is however, one other important measurement of time that does not come from planetary motion: the week. How did we get *the week*, seven days?

There is only one explanation for the week, the Bible. The idea of "seven days" is first revealed in Genesis: In Genesis chapter one (*in the beginning!*) we find the account of God's creation of the universe; things happening on Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, etc. After six days of creation work, it says:



And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. Gen 2:2

I have learned that *the week* has actually been modified by various cultures over time including a 4-day "week" and a 10-day "week." But they have always come back to the traditional (biblical!) 7-day week. And done with virtually no understanding of it all being based on scripture of the Christian religion. There is something about the *week* that seems to be embedded deep in the soul of man.

The scripture goes on to say,

So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. Gen 2:3

From then on God's people practiced the observance of what was called The Sabbath. The cycle was six days of work, one day of rest/worship.

The first occurrence of the word "week" occurs here:

“Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.” Gen 29:27 This is the account of Jacob receiving his wife Rachel but also her sister Leah as a wife. There was a custom of *the week* for consummation of a marriage.

There are an additional 16 uses of the word week in the O.T. All occurrences have to do with either the Feast of Weeks (worship ceremonies) or the “end of time” in the Book of Daniel.

There are only eight occurrences of “week” in the N.T. In all but one case, the use is in the phrase, “The first day of the week.” Seeing this led to another important discovery regarding the matter of “time.”



In the O.T. we find the phrase, “first day of the month” occurring 12 times but never in the N.T. In the N.T. we find the phrase “first day of the week” eight times but never in the O.T. What are we to make of this complete change from *first day of the month* in the Old Covenant to *first day of the week* in the New Covenant?

I don’t claim an answer to this. However, I suspect it has something to do with marking time based on planetary motion (the month, moon around the earth) vs. gathering at the Table to rest in Christ every seven days, as God rested from His work on the seventh day.

JANUARY

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

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6 and 1

YEAR						MONTH
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

1 and 6

With the resurrection of Christ occurring on the first day of the week, the practice of work/rest went from six and one, to one and six. This too has significant theological importance. In the Old Covenant man worked first (from his own strength) for six days and then at the end of the week, was given rest. In the New Covenant man begins with rest at the beginning of the week and then works for six days from strength received by being renewed in Christ. Perhaps a key reason for the wheels coming off of our culture is that we are largely ignoring the command to keep the holy the Sabbath. Restless people make big mistakes.

In other words, instead of thinking about time as revolving around the sun, it really is about *revolving around the Son*. One thing seems clear- when it comes to understanding the nature of Christ’s Kingdom, it truly is *about time*.

I welcome other thoughts on this interesting matter.

