

Newsletter February 2012

In our January 2012 newsletter, we put forth an analysis of current events and trends that could ultimately lead the world into the great apocalypse described in the book of Revelation. The monumental events in Revelation are predestined by God to occur as He has ordained, and we are only separated from them in this age in which we live by an unknown span of future time. The following paragraphs in this newsletter are excerpts taken from Book I, Chapter 3.1, *God's Sovereignty over Time*. (This chapter serves as an introduction to four additional chapters within Section 3 containing discussions regarding the sovereign grace of God in electing and confirming his redeemed in Christ through preordination).

Our knowledge of the world is insignificant when compared with our lack of knowledge of the vastness of space. Yet, we at least know that God created the heavens and the earth on which we live (Ge.1:1). The element that we call time, however, has no physical dimensions and is therefore impossible to fully comprehend. Man has devised means to measure the cyclic sequence of events that are the result of time by the use of calendars and clocks. However, the earth itself does not actually experience time, it only undergoes change as that element that we call time passes.

Furthermore, time is something that most men consider so basic that even if the earth and space itself should vanish, time would remain. In fact, some even consider that God Himself must also be governed by time, or at least that He subsists in a dimension where time exists. So intrinsic to our thoughts is that element called time, that we cannot imagine any reality without it.

Since man's attitudes and even his character changes with the passing of time, one may erroneously think that God also is somehow affected by time, or that He must "wait" for time to pass in order to determine and execute his own will based on the decisions or actions of his human creation. That would make God subordinate to time and the decisions of mankind such that He would no longer be in authority — no longer sovereign. If that were so, He would no longer be God at all.

We greatly error if we think that God is in any way subject to time since at the very least we know that God has no beginning or end. We must further conclude that God has complete control over time since God is omnipotent. Since God has control over time, He does not age nor does He change. "...One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2Pe.3:8). The present is the same as yesterday and tomorrow to Him. All things are visible to God: past, present, and future.

If we carry this reasoning to its ultimate conclusion, we must finally concede that God must have created time itself since all other things, including the earth, the stars, and heavens were created by Him. Even light, which is closely associated with time, burst forth at his command (Ge.1:3). "And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Ge.1:5). Time began when God set it into motion. "The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter" (Ps.74:16,17). God has not just created the physical universe. He has also created days and seasons. Since God has created all things by which we can know the passing of time, it is also apparent that God has created time itself.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Ge.1:1). Since God has no beginning or end, we must conclude that this is the beginning of creation — and therefore the beginning of time, as we know it. Just as God has created the physical universe, God has also created the “cosmos” of time itself. That God exists in a dimension different from ours is evident; that God exists in eternity must yet be fully appreciated. Until then, the awesome power of God the Creator cannot be fully grasped by man. God exists beyond all our understanding; his power is infinite and nothing is superior to his wisdom and strength. Since that is so, we must not fall short of worshiping Him by denying that God formed all of creation.

While all allegories must fall short at some point, they are often useful to promote an understanding of something that cannot be directly observed. As an aid to our understanding, time can be thought of as a long ribbon. The ribbon has both a beginning and an end. Rather than the ribbon being flat and smooth, it has regular ripples throughout its length that correspond to various cyclic events such as day and night and still longer ones corresponding to the four seasons and years. The various ages (which we sometimes call dispensations) are also apparent along its length. At one prominent point along its expanse is the cross of Christ that separates the two major divisions of time. That Christological division is so significant that even man has recognized it through the use of the terms B.C. and A.D. B.C. designates time that passed before the coming of Christ, and A.D. (Latin: *Anno Domini* = “in the year of (our) Lord”) designates the time that has passed since the coming of Christ.

At one end of the ribbon is the creation itself, while at the opposite end is the conclusion of the thousand-year reign of Christ that opens into the eternal ages as time ends (Revelation Chapters 21 & 22). It should be clearly understood that God has created and formed that entire ribbon of time and stands apart from it in a timeless expanse that surrounds the ribbon itself. The timeless expanse that encompasses time is what we call eternity. While time is contained within eternity, eternity is not a mere extension of time forward and backward. Time has a specific beginning and end; eternity has no bounds and is infinite.

God can look upon time full-length. From his vantage point, He can see the whole expanse or the smallest dimple. Up to this point, that is merely a restatement of his foreknowledge. However, time is his very own creation; He has formed each ripple and division. He has established each age according to his own will as He saw fit. Moreover, it is not just the greater expanse of geological history that God has ordained. It should further be evident that God has established man not only to occupy time, but that He has specifically ordained each individual soul to occupy a specific “distance” along it in a physical body on earth. That is the foundation for the understanding of predestination since God has also preordained the works that man accomplishes in that span. Therefore, no event, no matter how large or small, escapes God’s view. Likewise, no event, no matter how large or small, escapes his will!

While this allegory describes time as a physical ribbon and eternity as endless physical space (i.e. “a void”), it should be understood that time and eternity are not actually in a physical dimension at all. Eternity and the time, which it contains, are in another dimension altogether — a fourth dimension if you will. While we can just begin to grasp the concept of time, our minds would snap if we should attempt to push too deeply into the

realm of eternity. That is God's domain into which mere flesh and blood dare not venture.'
Arthur J. Smith February 2012