

Theological time

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[0:00] With the intention of meeting with the Lord and hearing his word and edifying one another and being blessed and being a blessing.! And we have sought to draw near to God and you say that if we draw near to God, God will draw near to us.

So we very much pray that over and above perhaps our energy levels or even concentration levels, that you would make this a worthwhile time this evening.

That we will be able to say it has been good to be, as it were, in the Lord's house this evening. So we commit this time to you in Jesus' name. Amen.

I'm trying to explain the thoughts as we go forward, but let's read scripture. So last time we got as far as chapter 19 and around verse 5.

So let's read 19.5 to 10.

[1:30] And I'll say, I'm actually not going to try and look at these verses this evening, but it's almost for the sake of completeness. Let's read them. At least we have read them. And who has got the microphone?

Right. Somewhere around there, would somebody volunteer to read 19.5 to 10. Just those five verses. Then a voice came from heaven.

Sorry. Then a voice came from the throne saying, praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both great and small.

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like peals of thunder shouting, Hallelujah, for our Lord God Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory. For the wedding of the lamb has come and his bride has made himself ready.

[2:35] Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people. Then the angel said to me, write this, blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the lamb.

And he added, these are the true words of God. At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, don't do that.

I am fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for it is the spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.

Amen. Thank you very much indeed. I've thought of some possible songs to sing. And I think being a warm evening, we should sort of intersperse what we were saying with some different activity, with some singing.

And it strikes me that we could sing, at your feet we fall, mighty risen Lord. Because that's exactly what he didn't do, what he should have done. So let's see if we can find the number for that.

[3:55] 479. 479. 479. 489.

Amen. As we come before your throne to worship you, by your spirit's power you now draw our hearts, and we hear your voice in triumph ringing clear.

I am the who lives, who lives and was dead. Behold, I am alive forevermore.

There we see you stand, mighty risen Lord.

Clothed in garments pure and holy, shining bright. Eyes of flashing fire.

[5:44] In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. All right, for those who are sort of new to it, we've been looking at the book of Revelation.

We've been going through section by section. And this evening, what I'd like to do is sort of review all that we've looked at from the point of view of time references.

So time references like three and a half days or three and a half years or something like that. I started on this. I'd got a book and read the particular article.

I bought the book just for the one article. I'm not sure whether I'd say that this counts as a finished piece of work. I thought this would be a trail to investigate. I'm not sure whether I got to the end of the trail.

And sometimes you think, well, this was a funny trail. I'm not sure whether it was going down here, actually. We shall see. So maybe it'll go down as a worthy effort rather than a fully formed conclusion.

[6:49] And I'd definitely like you to do a lot of the work this evening. And hopefully, as we look at time references in the book of Revelation, there will be some cash value in the sense that this will help us in the Christian life.

It will help us in our devotion. So what I've tried to do is think of a hymn or a song that will go with each section because we can turn that into praise or prayer or whatever it is.

So just to remind ourselves of the way this book works, it is a book in the Bible. It is for our edification. It is for our survival and our progress as Christians.

Apocalypsis means unveiling. And in the particular context of these people in the Roman Empire, it's unveiling to them the true nature or some of the true nature of the empire where they are living. The truth behind the appearance, as it were. It is in the form of a letter. It has the marks of a letter. A letter to seven churches.

[8:02] You could say that in your sleep now, couldn't you? To seven churches. And the thing about letters is they are relevant to the people who receive them. They might be relevant to other people as well.

But usually, when we look in the New Testament at letters to particular places, we look at the context. And that's how we can understand how it applies to us.

It is also in the form of a prophecy. It says it's a prophecy. It tells them what is shortly going to happen. And we'll look at that word shortly. And it gives them behavioral implications of the picture that is painted, which could be the very big picture.

And the horizon of the book is from the time of writing right up to the last day, the end of the world, and all the times in between. And so I put there including the middle because I think there's a reference when we're thinking of Babylon, particularly relevant in that shape and form to those people in those places at that time.

There's the letter. And one of the exercises and intriguing things about Revelation is to listen to his accent.

[9:17] The way he says things, sort of conventions that he uses. And rather than determine in advance, oh, this is what he must mean. And you'll say, well, let's listen and pick it up as we go along.

He uses images and symbols, most of them but not all of them from Scripture. He's prepared, and I think this is useful to remember, to use images and statements that appear contradictory.

Can anybody think of a fairly famous... Pardon? The town and the city. Yes, okay. The city, yeah, and Babylon.

Yes, any other things that seem to contradict each other in way of a vision? Because he heard something and he saw something. Do you remember that one? The lion and the lamb, yes.

He heard that there was a lion, and when he turned and looked, he saw a lamb as if it had been slain. So those are two apparently contradictory images. But he uses the tension or the contradiction to make an important point, that Jesus is both conqueror and sacrifice.

[10:25] He uses symbolic names like Babylon and numbers like seven and times. That's what we're going to look at this evening. And themes like plagues.

And the more I've thought about it, the more I think these symbols are theological. They carry a bundle of theology with them, like the plagues is the theology of judgment on Egypt.

And back in the time of Exodus. And he says, well, this is a good way of understanding what God is doing now, not in Egypt, but across the known world at the time of writing.

And then prophecy. And then prophecy. We looked at the way that he uses prophecy. And I think I became more convinced that he used the prophecies of ancient places as fulfilled in these last days.

That's the ascension of Jesus to the final coming. And all the things that were prophesied in various shapes and forms. He says, these last days are the fulfillment of all of that.

[11:30] So the things that Daniel saw, well, that's going on now in a fuller form. And the things that occurred to Babylon in the past, that's now going on in a fuller form, etc., etc.

And so this is what I would like us to look at today. What should we understand about theological time, the times that he refers to?

So just to remind us of the context, what we've seen is the seven churches. And they're the people to whom he particularly writes. That's where the rubber hits the road.

What should they be doing or repenting of, in particular, being aware of in their situation? We saw the lamb upon the throne opening the seven seals of world history.

We saw seven trumpets sounding for repentance. We saw the war between the dragon who gets cast out and the woman and her seed. And the agents that the dragon uses, the beast, the false prophet, the image of the beast.

[12:36] We saw quite an extended chapter or chapters on final judgment. And then coming back to the beast, which I think simply put is the military force of Rome and Rome-like setups.

And we saw the prostitute Babylon, the sort of commercial cultural web in which they were living, which doesn't force people away from worshipping Christ, but can seduce them and tempt them and so on and so on and so on.

Make them drunk. So that's something else that they had to look out for. Well, that's what we've done so far. So look at some times. We're looking at times. There are some exact points of time then, three o'clock in the morning.

There are long periods of time. So half-term holidays, school holidays, a long period of time. Got shorter as I grew older.

Short periods of time, little short periods of time. And this is the thing that I came to. Times with a particular flavour. And I'd like to come back to that thought.

[13:57] Some of them are reasonably understandable. Some of them, I think, are still baffling. I've spent quite a while trying to find out. I'm still baffled by some of them. And what I'd like to put to you and see whether you agree with me, or maybe you'll say that could be put better.

But what I'm putting forward this evening is various times signify quality, if you like flavour, and activity rather than duration.

So when Jesus says, my hour has not yet come, he didn't mean 60 minutes. He didn't specifically mean that duration, but he meant that something very special was going to happen at a certain time.

So I'm saying like the flavour and the quality and activity in the time rather than its duration.

That's where I'm trying to go, so I hope you get the idea. And also, to complicate it, the times are often linked with theological numbers.

[15:04] So 5, 10, 3,500, 1,000, 1,260. 1,260. Can anybody remember what the 1,260 was?

Yes, we should use the microphone if anybody has an answer to that. 1,260.

I think Steve's got the answer. If I recall correctly, is it three and a half years? Correct. It's three and a half years. And the 42, anybody know what the 42 was?

Pardon? Well, if it was days, yes, if it's 42 days, it would be, but it's actually... 42 months. 42 months, which turns out to be...

Three and a half years. Three and a half years, yes. So we'll come back to that one. And 666, which was, everybody knows this one, was, what's this?

[16:06] The mark of the beast. Yes, the number of the mark of the beast. Did I tell you about when the Evangelical Alliance had a youth group? Did I tell you about that? It was a youth group.

So it was the EA youth group, Evangelical Alliance youth group. And so the Brighton Evangelical Alliance student team was Brighton, B-E-A-S-T, B-E-A-S-T.

And the leader of it was Mark. And somebody wanted to know his telephone number. So they wanted to know the number of Mark of the beast.

That really happened. So I did look up some Greek words.

I'll try not to baffle you with them, but I think it's, try and get as deep as you can on it. There's two main Greek words for time. Chronos.

[17:09] From which we get? Chronometer. Chronology, yeah. And what they usually say is that this means time in a sort of conventional sense.

And the other word is, however you pronounce it, keros, kairos. Chronos, which people will say means a season. To everything there is a time. Turn, turn, turn, or whatever it is.

To everything there is a season. A season. But that's Hebrew. You know what I mean? Where is that in? To everything there is a... Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes, yes.

And people will say that those two Greek words are differentiated by one meaning sort of conventional time and one meaning season of a certain thing.

However, this is not true in the book of Revelation because chronos is used four times and each time it is something like season. And actually, in the authorised version, it is translated season.

[18:10] So it just shows you mustn't take... You've got to be careful about saying what Greek words mean. Anyway, those two Greek words are the main Greek words. Oh, I was going to say, how many times do you think kairos is used?

Yes, seven. Is that significant? I don't know. Day and night is an expression used. Okay, it's an expression of time. Anybody like to guess how many times that's used?

It's not seven. It's actually four. It's not seven. It's not seven. It's not seven. And then there's others, and I couldn't find any significance in the number of times they're used.

Day and days. Hour. Aura. That's used ten times. So Jesus would have used that.

My hour has not yet come. Not meaning my 60 minutes, but my particular time when I'm doing something significant, special. Month is used.

[19:10] Month in the singular and months plural six times. Year is used once, if I've got this correct.

However, years plural is used only in connection with. Anybody like to risk a guess? The plural of years is only used in connection with?

Thousand is correct. Yes. Was that Richard? It's only used in connection with the thousand years, which is puzzling, because I was rather hoping I'd get some help in understanding the thousand years, because we're not going to do that this evening.

But I was hoping this would build up towards it. But I think I might be a bit disappointed in that.

Anyway, years. Minutes. Any times that are not used, that strike you as not being used?

Minutes. There's no minutes, and there's no seconds. And I presume it's because in those days they didn't do time down to that precision. So you would have time marked out in hours, you know, in the sixth hour.

[20:28] But you would... Sorry? Is there half an hour? There is half an hour. There is half an hour. Yes, there is half an hour. Silence in heaven. Pardon? Silence in heaven.

Silence in heaven for half an hour. That is absolutely correct. Right. So a little exercise. If you'd like to turn to the opening chapters and look at the seven churches.

And would you like to find two or three other people to sit and do this with? Are there any time references for these churches?

Don't spend a long time on it. No pun intended. But could the people on this side of the room start at the top of the list? And the people on this side of the room start at the bottom of the list?

And we don't want to spend a long time. So we should have like three minutes, four minutes. So are there any time references? Does it say like 72 years or anything like that?

[21:43] Do it any time? Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Okay, so let's look at Ephesus. Was there any time references in Ephesus? No, I don't think there were. I think I agree with you.

[23:56] And Smyrna, any time references there? We should use the microphone because then people can hear it on the recording. Have you got the microphone?

Ten in verse ten. Yeah, in verse ten. Ten what? Ten. Ten how many? Ten years? Ten days. Ten days. Yeah, ten days.

It's an interesting number, isn't it? Ten days. It doesn't really fit with anything that had been nice and neat to say. Yeah, okay. Thank you. Anything else in Smyrna? Yes, no?

No? Pergamum? Anything in Pergamum? Yeah. Which? Verse 16. Verse 16. Thank you. I will come soon.

There's two words that I think are related. Taki. From which we get the English word? Tachometer.

[24:55] There's a sort of speed thing. So there's two. I haven't written down which one's which. There's one that says taki and one that says takis or something like that. But that's the soon word. So thank you for that.

Verse 16. Soon in Pergamum. Anything else in Pergamum? Going, going, gone. Thyatira. Sorry, say it again.

Verse 13. Sorry, I'm in. Verse 13. It says days of Antipas. Ooh. Not even in the days. Thank you. Well done. Yes.

I think that deserves a round of applause, actually. But I haven't spotted that. Yes. The days of Antipas. Yeah, thank you. Again, not meaning like seven days, but the time period when he was, when things were getting hot for Antipas.

Thank you very much. Thyatira. So can we have the microphone so that people listening can pick it up? 21.

[26:00] 21. Thank you very much. I've given her time. Thank you. I think that's probably Kairos, actually. No, I think that's Kronos. I've given her a space. David, what does it say in the authorised version for chapter 2, verse 21?

Time. Thank you. Time. Time. Time. Time. Time. Time. Time. Time. Time. Time. Space. Yeah.

So time translated as space, meaning an opportunity. Thank you very much. Well done. Anything else on Thyatira? No?

Okay. Sardis. 3-3. Microphone, please.

Yeah, verse 3. It says, in the ESV, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. In the ESV, but I think in the NIV it's time.

[27:03] Yeah, what time I will come to you. Yeah, that's an interesting reference, isn't it? Because it's to the church in Sardis. Is it a reference to Jesus' final coming, or is it saying that in his providential and sort of overseeing role for individual churches, he might come to a particular church at a particular time and judge them and perhaps extinguish that church at some period in actual space-time history, which is coming like a thief, and you do not know what hour I will come to you.

Thank you very much. Philadelphia? Anything? Anything? I think, verse 10, it says, later, I will also keep you from the hour of trial.

Thank you. The hour of trial, meaning a season, a spell of trial, do you think? Was there another one that was an hour? Have we missed one somewhere?

The persecution in 2.10 was for 10 days. Maybe it's yet to come.

So we have the hour of trial. That's in 3.10. Thank you very much. Any more in Philadelphia? It does say, I'm coming soon in the following verse.

[28:39] And that coming and soon seems to be a pair that gets put together a lot. I haven't got it in front of me, whether it's tacky or tacky-switching charities, but I'm coming soon.

Thank you very much. It's a reminder to use the mic because it helps something like Julia has been listening on the internet, and she needs to know what people are saying.

Laodicea, any time references for Laodicea? Nope. Okay.

It's interesting. It makes you look, doesn't it? It makes you look carefully what is being said. I don't think there was any references in Laodicea. So it just gives us a little idea of the way time is used when it's applied very practically to those churches.

I was going to say a little bit about how to do this study, but I think I'll move on. Do you know what a concordance is? I'm sure you know what a concordance is.

[29:51] It's a sum, like a database, it might be a printed thing, with all the words in the Bible so that you can search them out. Search for all the uses of the word hour, for example.

And so I used a computer-based search to search out. And I used Strong's numbers because Mr. Strong gave all the Greek and Hebrew words their own individual numbers.

So you don't have to know Greek and Hebrew. You just have to know the number. And then you look it up and it will tell you all the uses of the word number 534, which happens to be aura or whatever it is.

Anyway. I'm sorry? Yes. The question was, is that computer-based? And the answer is, I use a freeware, very clunky, quite old-fashioned online computer concordance.

And you can do searches of something and or something without, which is quite useful. Aaron? Yeah, BibleHub has some really useful tools for that.

[31:08] That tends to be my go-to. Thank you. That's the more modern version. Right. Here are four to look up. Day and night. 4-8, 7-15, 12-10, and 20-10.

Will you join with your couple of partners? And the question is, what significance does this time period have? So day and night is used specifically those four times.

What significance do they have? So... Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[33:14] Thank you. So, 4.8, what did you make of 4.8? What's the, what's that time period characterized by in 4.8?

Yeah. Something that's non-stop, continual. Thank you. Something that's non-stop.

And what is the non-stop thing in 4.8? Praising, the angels, the creatures praising and worshiping.

Yeah, that's, I think that's a grand thought, isn't it? That there is something that continually happens. And that is that God is praised. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come. So there's a non-stop honoring of God.

You know, they never run out of things to say. Yeah, thank you very much. And 7.15? What do people make of 7.15?

[34:26] Serve him day and night. Yeah. Do you know who the people are who serve him day and night? Corinne's got it, I think.

Oh, they are they who have come out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and bade them white in the blood of the Lamb. Thank you. So it's the redeemed, isn't it?

The redeemed people serve him day and night in his temple. That's another sort of grand worshipping, honoring God, day and night thing.

Yeah, jolly good. Thank you very much. 12.10. What did you make of this one? Well, I just, I noticed that it seems again to be a perpetual period, but one with an end.

Yeah. Which is interesting. Say a little bit more about that then. Yeah. So, where is it? Yeah. That for the accuser of our brothers and sisters who accuses them before our God day and night has been hurled down.

[35:49] They triumphed over him, which suggests that there was an end to his accusations. Yeah. I thought that too. It was non-stop, but there's a sense in which there's been an answer to that.

I don't know whether he means us to think that there's still sort of a sense in which there is a potential for ongoing accusation. I suppose it says something about the intensity of that accusation if there is no blood to give an answer to it.

Would that make sense? But you're absolutely right. It's day and night, but it's not forever and ever. There's a cessation of that because Satan has been hurled down because Christ's blood answers the accusation.

Yeah. Does that make sense to everybody? Anybody else want to chip in on that? Okay. And 2010. What do we make of this one?

It's the exact opposite, really. Say this again. It's the exact opposite to the last one. It's the exact opposite. Yes, carry on. Because it says they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

[37:09] Yes. And it's the people who didn't. It's a devil. It's a generation. It's a devil who will be attached to. I don't know. The devil and the beast and the false prophet are tormented day and night forever and ever.

Yes, it's an eternal punishment, isn't it? So there's no cessation of that, no end to that. That is, as it says, day and night forever and ever.

Interesting, isn't it? So he uses day and night with several different scenarios. The ongoing worship of God, which is without ceasing. The worship of the redeemed, which is without ceasing.

The activity of Satan, which was perpetual, but has now got an answer to it by the blood of Jesus.

And the future punishment of the enemy and his agents forever and ever.

So, I mean, just those few words give us quite a vista, don't they, of God's purposes. Pete? Did you want to go first?

[38:17] Yeah, I'll pass my go. Yeah, day and night. And there's no night there in the New Jerusalem. So that's an interesting facet. Yeah, there is no day and night.

Also, I'd say it indicates there's no rest. Because at night we get some rest, don't we? Yeah. But they're tormented throughout the whole of the night as well as the day.

Thank you very much. Yes, there's no rest, says the Lord, for the wicked. Yes. Yeah, that's right.

Well, it struck me we could sing... Angelic spirits night and day, adore your name on high.

Eternal Lord in majesty, you hear their ceaseless cry. That's 166. Shall we sing that just to celebrate the ongoing worship of heaven?

It's 166. Oh.

[39:39] Okay. In awe and wonder, Lord our God, we bow before your throne.

Such holiness and burning love are yours and yours alone.

Angelic spirits night and day. Let's sing that just to celebrate the ending of the night.

God of power and might, all glorious in heaven and earth.

You reign in realms of light. Your holiness inspires our fear, invokes and heals our shame.

[40:57] Your boundless wisdom, awesome power, unchangeably the same.

Salvation comes from you alone, which we can never win. Your love revealed on Calvary is cleansing for our sin.

There is no grace to match your grace, no love to match your love.

No gentleness of human touch like that of heaven above.

On earth we long for heaven's joy, when bowed before your throne.

[42:03] We know you, Father, Spirit, Son, as God and God alone.

Let's go a little bit further. 2.10 was the 10 days.

I'm looking at days. There's 10 days. There's three and a half days now then. The 10 days was in 2.10.

I'd be interested if you have any thoughts on that. Of course, I didn't. And 11.9 and 11.11.

Let me just see whether your next-door neighbour's got any thoughts about those time periods.

These are the days. I think they're the only time days is mentioned. Thank you. Let me just see if we can.

[43:23] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Any thoughts on that, Steve?

Oh, right. Sorry. I've always wondered whether, because it's all about suffering, persecution, God is saying it will happen, but it's just for this short time.

Yeah. I think that makes sense. Ten days is not a long time. I was going to say the same thing about the other ones, the three and a half days. Yep.

[45:02] That seems to imply a limited time. It does, doesn't it? But just the ten, the other uses of the ten is the ten horns and ten crowns on the dragon and on the beast.

And I wonder whether ten is a number associated with beastliness. Because I would have thought three and a half would be a good one there for a short period.

But ten, I wonder whether that might be. We're sort of trying the thought on and see whether it gets any reinforcement. And then Steve would talk about the three and a half days.

Three and a half is half of seven, isn't it? Yeah, make sure you're in the microphone. Three and a half is half of seven. Three and a half is half of seven, yeah. Yeah, so. I mean, there are references in Daniel to times, times and half a time, aren't there?

But it seems to be a limited time to suggest in the last days a period of time, but not the whole. Yes. Something like that. Yeah, if it was seven, you'd think it was the whole thing.

[46:06] But the three and a half is like half of it, not the whole thing. A fraction of it, yeah, that's right. And this is in 11.

These are the witnesses who, they are disgraced for three and a half days, aren't they? Because they are extinguished, killed, refused burial.

And then at the end of the three and a half days, they're revived and they stand on their feet. And to everybody's surprise, they're alive. My take on that would be a little bit like when a state tries to persecute the church and thinks that it's killed the church.

And then all of a sudden the church sort of comes back to life again and everybody's quite amazed. I wouldn't be surprised if the Chinese government has tried to do that in the past to extinguish the church.

And then find actually it pops back up again. So three and a half days. I think that's probably as far as we can get with that one. Just on what you were saying, quite interesting thought.

[47:15] I think it's interesting when often people tend to rejoice when the church is down, don't they, in the world?

People are quite glad. Yes. To speak about the downfall of the church. Yes. Just a thought. Yes. Yes. That's right. Last week, my favourite radio programme, the statistics programme more or less, was giving quite a critical assessment of these statistics that talk about the quiet revival.

And I couldn't help thinking that he was rather glad about it. He was saying, oh, there isn't a revival of Christianity. But I think there was something in his tone of voice. I think, you know, he was quite glad there wasn't a revival.

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Let's move on. Is this the one I wanted? I'm going to go past that. Let's do the three and a half years.

I've got loads of these. And I'm not going to keep you all evening until we finish them. But let's do this one. Which is what Steve mentioned. Time, times and half a time.

[48:34] This is Kairos or Kairos, however you pronounce it. Daniel used it, not Daniel here, the book of Daniel to mean years.

And so a year, two years and half a year, making three and a half years. In the book of Revelation, it doesn't say three and a half years. It just says time, times and half a time.

And then we've already established that there was the 1,260 days. So using 360 for the number of days in a year and 180 for the number of days in half a year, if you work it out, it's 1,260.

And then there's 42 months, which is 12 times 3 and a half. And I actually haven't told you the references.

Shall we look at those references? 11, 2 and 3 and 12, 6 and 14 and 13, 5. So it's the same time period, but it's just put in different ways.

[49:43] Would you like to take a look at those with your next door neighbor? Just look at the references. And why do you think it's put in different ways?

Why doesn't he just say three and a half years and have done with it? And look at the James 5, 17 as well while you're there. Let's go.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Shall we see what people have come up with?

[51:56] So the James 5.17, what's going on in James 5.17? Microphone. Elijah was praying fervently for three and a half years.

Yeah. Drought, yeah, there was a drought. There was a drought. So it was under God's judgment that Elijah was praying. So it's a time of judgment and prayer.

And did Elijah succumb to the drought? Did he die of thirst? No. Do you remember what happened to him?

I think it was. I think it was the cruiser of oil that didn't run out and something else that didn't something else. It was provision.

He was looked after while the rest of everything was under judgment and he was praying. And he was being a prophet as well. So I think that's a sort of significant thing that was happening.

[53:04] What did you make of these references? This is 11.2.3.12.6.14.13.5.

What's going on in those periods of time? Anything?

It doesn't have to be a profound answer. What sort of things is going on in those periods of time?

Roger, could I have had the microphone? Periods when there is opposition to God and God's people or God's active force.

Yeah, thank you. It's opposition to God's people and the witness of God's people. Should we put it that way? Yes? Anybody want to take that any further?

Is it partly other numbers? This is for Julia. Sorry about the...

[54:21] The number difference is the positive actions of God's nourishing and prophesying. 1,200 and 60.

Yeah. And are the more judgment-y type things. The other... Sorry, I'm really tired. You're doing well though. Carry on. 42 months.

Yes. Speaks more of judgment and wrath. Has more of a negative. Yes. Whereas the more positive speaks in terms of days. Because I initially thought days is that about kind of emphasising frequency. Yeah.

But... I would go with that. I think it's the time looked at from different points of view. So from the point of view of satanic activity, that is 42 months.

From the point of view of the people of God being sustained, it's 1,260 days. Just see whether that works.

[55:19] So 11.2. They will trample the holy city for 42 months. And I appoint my two witnesses and they will prophesy for 1,260 days. What's the next one?

12.6. The woman is taken care of in the desert for 1,260 days. So that's God's people being looked after.

And verse 14. The woman is... Well, here she's taken care of for a time, times and half a time out of the snake's reach.

So that says that the time, times and half a time is also looked at from the point of view of care. And then 13.5. Have I got the right one?

Yes. The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for 42 months. So the 42 seems to be linked with satanic activity.

[56:18] And the 1,260 is the same period of time, but it's looked at from a different point of view. From the point of view of God keeping and people witnessing, but God keeping and nourishing while that's happening.

So you might say the 42 is satanic time and the 1,260 is God's providential time. Does that make sense? It sort of helps for some things coming up later on.

Yes. Can we... Microphone. Are we saying that it's an actual, literal number of days or months or whatever?

Or are we saying it's a specific time known to God? And that's the important bit about it. Yes. This is my thesis that these times are known by their flavours rather than their duration.

So these numbers are giving the flavour rather than the literal chronology of it. Yeah. With Elijah, it was literally three and a half years.

[57:31] But the theology of that is it is a period with the flavour or the characteristics of witness, provision, opposition, being cared for.

And so that's the theology of it. And then the theology of it is taken over into Revelation and say, let's use those numbers. But I'm meaning that the church will witness, be opposed, be looked after and cared for.

And that's... I would say that's this time that we're living in. You know, we're living in that period. Does that make sense? Yeah. Yeah. Shama?

Shama? Shama? Shama? Shama? Okay. I would just like to... I would also like to add that in terms of whether it's the same period of time, what I can see is that for the equal amount of time there's oppression, there's an equal amount of time of God's provision.

So whether it's literal or symbolic, there's just the general provision of God for as long as it continues, that's how much God will also continue to provide.

[58:40] Yeah. Yeah. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. When I listened to Sinclair Ferguson on this, and he put it this way, and I'm not quite sure whether I agree with him, but this is what he said.

42 months doesn't sound like too long. So the satanic opposition we shouldn't think is too long. It's not going to go on forever.

1,260 days of witnessing, he said, that's day in, day out, just honouring the Lord, walking with him, standing for him, testifying to him, day in, day out.

And I mean, I like the idea of it. Whether that's what John meant, I don't know. But it helps us, doesn't it?

Our witness is day in, day out, for as long as it takes. I had a song that we could sing for that, which was 774. Shall we sing?

[59:39] A sovereign protector I have. Phil. Phil.

Just an addition on the 42. Yes. Some people have said that from the period of the beginning of creation until Christ was three and a half, and from Christ to the end, the second coming, would be seven.

Okay. People have said that. Do you agree with them? I agree with them, yeah. And the three, that's symbolic. And the three, but going to the genealogy of Jesus, it's a bit tenuous, but 42.

Yep. It's, well, it's sevens, isn't it? Is it sevens or is it fourteens? Fourteens. Is it three fourteens?

Okay. Make of that what you will.

Let's sing 774. I chose this because it talks about God's sovereign protection of us.

[60:55] That's the connection. I hope that makes sense. A sovereign protector I have, unseen yet forever at hand.

Unchangeably faithful to save. Almighty to rule and command.

His smiles and my comforts abound. His grace like the... And walls of salvation surround the soul he delights to defend.

Would you like me to take that down a little bit? Yes. Let's see if I can do that. Let's see if I can do that.

If you are my shield and my sun. The night is no darkness to me.

[62:33] But fast as my moments roll on, They bring the first year of me.

Creator and ground of my hope. To your name alone shall I bow.

A new Ebenezer set up. And a new earth floor, feel still now.

The year of the years that are past, When all my defence you have proved, How will you relinquish at last, A sinner so blessed and so loved?

To your dream. Thank you.

[64:04] astronomy as we know it today basically, certainly in the West. I'm not an expert on this, I've forgotten a lot of it, but I think there were Babylonians who introduced 360 degrees for a circle.

I think so too. Nobody knows quite why. They must have known that it wasn't the exact number of years. Presumably they were thinking one degree would be one day basically, for an observation. People think maybe because 360 is lots of factors where 365 doesn't. But there may be a Babylonian connection there that is worth thinking through.

Daniel would have known this of course. Yeah, that's an interesting thought. 360 is a nice round number. And I could think it very tempting to think that God has made the world with a perfection that is expressed in nice round numbers.

So let's make it 360. And probably if we refine our measurements, we'll realise that 360 was correct.

[65:17] However, it was 365 and a quarter in the end, wasn't it? It would take a few microseconds. Yes, that's right. Yes. Okay. I wonder if we could just press forward to these two.

Would you like to look at 12, 12 and 23? And who is this particularly referring? And what does it say about this person?

12, 12 and 23. It's not the same word. One is oligos kairos and one is mikros kronos.

But it means a short time or a little time. What do you think about that? Have a look. Have a look. So whose time is this?

And what are we told about this time? Anybody? Yeah. Let's just say it again for the microphone.

[66:56] The devil's time. It's the devil's time. It's interesting, isn't it? Here in 12, 12, he knows his time is short.

Now then, I'm puzzling over that. Does that mean duration short? Or is it flavor?

Is it saying that there's something about Satan's time which is fleeting, transient, not permanent, and it's expressed by putting it as a short time?

Rosemary? Rosemary, and... I think it means limited.

Limited. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Limited and... I was... A short time, to me, might carry the impression that it is brought to an end suddenly by something separate from perhaps the person and, you know, just, boom, the end.

[68:20] And... Unexpectedly brought to an end. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Curtailed. Unexpectedly curtailed. That's a good word. Yes. I'm just wondering...

I might be pushing this too far because can we have that same thought in 23, chapter 20, verse 3? he's locked in the abyss and keep from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years are ended after that he must be set free for a short time is it saying that you can think of time again from two points of view there's a long you can think of it as a long time of success for the gospel and a short time of deception for satan so you might think i'm pushing this too far is that almost as it were the same period of time looked at from two points of view from the triumphant point of view is the gospel age where the gospel is successful and there is a satanic point of view but that's much less to be celebrated that's a short time that's a little time i think it's a possibility but i'm not i'm not going to nail my colors to that mask particularly at this point but um you know we've seen times looked at from different points of view so that three and a half years 42 months is satanic time 1260 days is god's providential time so i'm wondering whether the same sort of thing might be happening with the short time and then um let's finish with this one the the quickly word or the soon word do you know who to whom this time statement particularly belongs it's not in 25 in in the niv hmm how interesting 216 it is though so so so so this particular time reference seems to attach to one person and one person only who's the person jesus and what does he say about himself in relation to timing it says i'm coming soon and it's repeated again and again isn't it i'm coming soon i suppose we could say jesus idea of soon and ours might be different because he said that two thousand years ago but it's still true isn't it he's coming soon we don't know when it might be before we've gone to bed tonight it might be tomorrow it might be another thousand years but he's on his way soon uh ray

yeah to god a thousand years is as a day yes so it's just been a couple of days yes yeah a thousand years is as a day i was thinking the same and you know because i guess peter's talking about a thousand years just being a a long time to us yes because elsewhere in the psalm it says um what does he say um god owns the cattle on a thousand hills symbolically yes yes anyway we're going off to something else but yeah yeah um aaron i was just mulling over in the psalms where we read that our lives are but a breath like a tiny amount of time and i'm wondering as we see all these things that talk about the devil and the his kingdom compared to god's eternal nature yes it's just it well it is incomparable we see all of those things that are under his feet are um kind of short-lived except for jesus and how we have access to that eternity through jesus but i mean that's an aside that's just going through my mind but i was wondering about the alpha and the omega if that's saying something about time because he says that doesn't he says i'm the alpha and the omega and i'm the beginning and the end yes that's that's a good point and he says i the one who was and is and is to come the almighty yeah that's a time reference isn't it that's all of time that's all of time yes yeah well we will stop i mean that's that's that's helpful i mean it at least gets the brain cells going doesn't it uh and uh yeah i think 888 was the one to finish with not not 666 we've sung

this before but it i think it's it it's quite right in in verse 3 of song 888 the tyrants of this age strut briefly on the stage their sentence has been passed we stand unharmed at last a word from god destroys them god's word and plan which they pretend is subject to their pleasure will bind their wills to serve god's end which we who love him treasure and then it says i mean this is worst case scenario isn't it it's not it's not a prayer for tomorrow um then let them take our lives goods children husbands wives and carry all away theirs is a short-lived day even if they were to do all that it's a short-lived day ours is the lasting kingdom yeah so let's let's close by singing this and could jerome close with a prayer when we've uh when we've sung this please a prayer when we're sung this is a [REDACTED] like a fortress rock with walls that will not fail us.

He helps us brace against the shock of fears which now assail us.
The enemy of old In wickedness is bold This seems his victory are He wears no earthly power And arms himself with calling We win no battles Through our might We fall at once Ejected The righteous one will lead the fight The one who God erected You ask who can this be
[77:30] Christ Jesus it is He God's true and living word God's true and living word No one can stand against Him And though the world seems full of ill With hungry demons prowling Christ's victory is with us We need not fear their howling The tyrants of this age Shot briefly on the stage Their sentence has been passed We stand on time We stand on time At last And what health Lord destroys them God's word and plan Which they pretend Is subject to their pressure Will bind their wills To serve God's end Will we who love Him Treasure Then let them take our lives Good children On and wives And carry all away
Theirs is a short-lived day Ours is the lasting kingdom Almighty God and Father We thank you for all That we have considered This evening Lord thank you For the theological richness And depth of these considerations As we consider time From this perspective Of your redemptive purpose For your church Lord And thank you That our times are in your hands Thank you that we do live In this day In the gospel age Thank you that your gospel Is going forth Thank you for the victory That we can know in Christ That we're so reminded of In this beautiful And wonderful prophecy And Lord thank you That Satan's days Are short
And thank you For the coming Of our Lord Jesus Christ That we can look to And we can pray Come Lord Jesus soon Bless us Lord For the rest of this week Give us strength To face the tasks That we have before us Please uphold us And keep us In the love And the grace And the mercy Of our Lord Jesus Christ Until we meet again And we ask this In Jesus name Amen Amen Amen Amen Thank you.