

## UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God*

**IN KING JESUS.**

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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### ***Appointed Times***

Shortly after the Lord broke into my life, I was exposed to teaching about the **imminent return of the Lord**, which states that, since Calvary, **there are no prophecies or events that have to be fulfilled in order for Jesus to return to earth in what is called *the second coming***. In other words, He could have returned at any time after Calvary. He could have come 2,000 years ago, or 200 years ago, or, for that matter, two days ago, and He could come today, tomorrow, or hundreds or thousands of days or years into the future, as far as this teaching is concerned. Simply, the teaching on the imminent return of Christ has His return coming at any moment with no particular trigger point for it or progression of events toward it—it is open-ended with no one having the ability to know when. Generally, this thinking stems from Jesus saying that *no one knows the day and hour, but the Father alone* (Matthew 24:36), which falls in line with the concept of appointed times. But to what day did He refer? A case can be made, contextually, in this verse and others, that Jesus referred to the total destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD. He did come in that day; just not visibly for the world to see. Surely, this was an appointed time (Matthew 22:7). Regardless of how one views Matthew 24:36, the point is that Jesus' return is an appointed time, fixed by the Father, meaning His consummational arrival is not open-ended. Jesus will return at a predetermined point in history just as He came the first time in *the fullness of time* and according to *the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God* (Galatians 4:4; Acts 2:23).

With this in mind, the point to be made is that Jesus could not have come at any point in the last 2,000 years. His consummational arrival was not imminent throughout these two millennia. One proof for this point is discovered in the fourth commandment given to Moses that prophetically calls for a remembrance of the sabbath or the seventh day (Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 4), which in the long view speaks of seven 1,000-year days. The first six days are what could be called *man's day* and the last day could be called *the king's day*, the day in which King Jesus openly manifests His reign on earth over the nations. Mind you; the seventh day is not the last day but the beginning of ages to come (at least an eighth day) as the new creation manifests from glory to glory. Many have been taught that time itself ends when the new heaven, new earth, and New Jerusalem manifest, but Revelation 22:2 tells us that the tree of life produces fruit every *month*, which is a measure of time.

Do the math: There were 4,000 years from Adam to Jesus walking on earth, and there have been 2,000 years since Calvary, which yields 6,000 years (roughly). The number **six** is ***the number of man***. God has appointed six days for man to rule (have dominion) over the earth. **A seventh day—commencing King Jesus' reign on earth—follows**. The good news is that the clock has about run out of time, if it has not already done so, and we are in a time of transition that can go on for only so long. Our king is coming!

The point is this: God has set appointed times for everything that is being worked out according to His plan to achieve His ultimate purpose of being all in all at the consummation of the ages, and these appointed times are fixed. As Solomon wrote: *There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven* (Ecclesiastes 3:1). God has very deliberately and purposely appointed the times. They are not adjustments to events and circumstances that have happened on earth nor are they dependent on mankind in general or His people in particular. If God's plan were dependent on any of us, it is doubtful that it would ever come to fruition without God taking direct action in the affairs of humanity. Look at our track record for the last 6,000 years, or even more contemporary, the last 2,000 years, or even the last 100 years. If it proves anything, it proves that man's future, as well as all creation's future, is totally dependent on God, the Creator and Owner of all. ***But God!***

The fixed times (i.e., non-negotiable) are appointed by God, and all the events in between them are driving and working toward the fulfillment of His plan. God has established a progression of growth for all believers, at the

individual and ecclesia levels, as well as for all mankind, at the individual and national levels, until all mankind and all creation are brought into the glorious presence of God by experiencing tabernacles, which is entering into the Most Holy Place, that is, New Jerusalem. This is the purpose of God that He is working out in the ages through His Son.

Now, let us consider some other scripture.

In many ways and in various ways of old, God spoke to the fathers in the prophets; in these last days He spoke to us in *the Son*, whom He appointed heir of all; ***through whom He indeed made the ages*** .... (Hebrews 1:1-2 LITV [bold italic added])

Most versions translate the word *aion* into the word *worlds*, and others translate it into *universe* or *generations*. However, the Greek word *aion* should be translated as *age* or *eon*. With the proper translation, we learn that the very ages or time itself were and are made through the Son of God, the creator of all things in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible (Colossians 1:16). It all starts with our Lord Jesus.

As He was about to depart for the throne, Jesus Himself made it very clear to His disciples that God fixes the times and epochs, which includes all that pertains to His return and the coming of His kingdom. The Father fixes them, but, by the way, it does not follow that the one through whom the ages are made does not know them.

He said to them, "It is not for you to know ***times or epochs*** which the Father has ***fixed by His own authority....***" (Acts 1:7 NASB [bold italic added])

Daniel affirmed the same thought in reference to kings and their kingdoms.

"It is He who changes the ***times and the epochs***; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding." (Daniel 2:21 NASB [bold italic added])

Paul affirmed the same thought in reference to every nation of mankind.

"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their ***appointed times*** and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'" (Acts 17:24-28 NASB [bold italic added])

Having been a devout Pharisee, when he used the expression *appointed times*, Paul, undoubtedly, thought back on the appointed times given to the sons of Israel through Moses: *These are the ***appointed times of the LORD***, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them* (Leviticus 23:4). The nation of Israel was called out of Egypt (the world) and commanded to commemorate national festivals or feasts at the appointed times of the Lord. The Lord told them the exact day that they were to proclaim the holy convocations, as well as the length and required activities of the feasts. Each feast, especially the three national feasts (Exodus 23:14-17), was significant to the national life of Israel and is a type of the progression all mankind must follow to reach God's new beginning where all is new.

With these few verses, we see that there are appointed times or times and epochs fixed by the Father. These fixed, appointed times are all in accordance with God's plan to bring mankind and all creation into His all new, as expressed in new creation, new heavens, new earth, and New Jerusalem.

For more on the days of God, check out these links:

*Six Days, then the Seventh (6 + 1 = 7)* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art45.pdf>

*Eighth Day—New Creation* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/art/art41.pdf>