

BIBLICAL Last Days—When?

The Last Day

John 6:39, 40, 44, & 54
John 11:24
John 12:48

The Last (or Latter) Days

Gen. 49:1
Num. 24:14
Deu. 4:30
Deu. 31:29
Isa. 2:2
Dan. 2:28
Dan. 10:14
Hos. 3:5
Mic. 4:1
Acts 2:17
2 Tim. 3:1
Heb. 1:2
Jas. 5:3
2 Pet. 3:3

The Time of The End

Dan. 8:17
Dan. 11:35 & 40
Dan. 12:4
Dan. 12:9

The End of The Days

Dan. 12:13

The End of The Age

Mat. 13:39 & 49
Mat. 24:3
Mat. 28:20

The End of This Age

Mat. 13:40

The End of The Ages

Heb. 9:26

The Ends of The Ages

1 Cor. 10:11

This Age

Mat. 12:32
Mat. 13:40
Luke 20:34
1 Cor. 1:20
1 Cor. 2:6 (2x) & 8
1 Cor. 3:18
2 Cor. 4:4
Eph. 1:21
Eph. 6:12

That Age

Luke 20:35

The Age to Come

Mat. 12:32
Mark 10:30
Luke 18:30
Heb. 6:5

The Present Age

Gal. 1:4
1 Tim. 6:17
Titus 2:12

The Present Time

Luke 18:30
Rom. 8:18 & 11:5

The Ages to Come

Eph. 2:7

Before The Ages

1 Cor. 2:7

Hidden from The Ages

Eph. 3:9 (generations v. 5)
Col. 1:26 (and generations)

The Last (or Latter) Times

1 Tim. 4:1

These Last Times

1 Pet. 1:20

These Last Days

Heb. 1:2

The Last Time

1 Pet. 1:5
Jude 18

The Last Hour

1 John 2:18

This Generation

Mat. 3:7
Mat. 12:41, 42, & 45
Mat. 23:36
Mat. 24:34
Mark 13:30
Luke 3:7
Luke 11:31, 32, 50, & 51
Luke 21:32
Acts 2:40 & 8:33

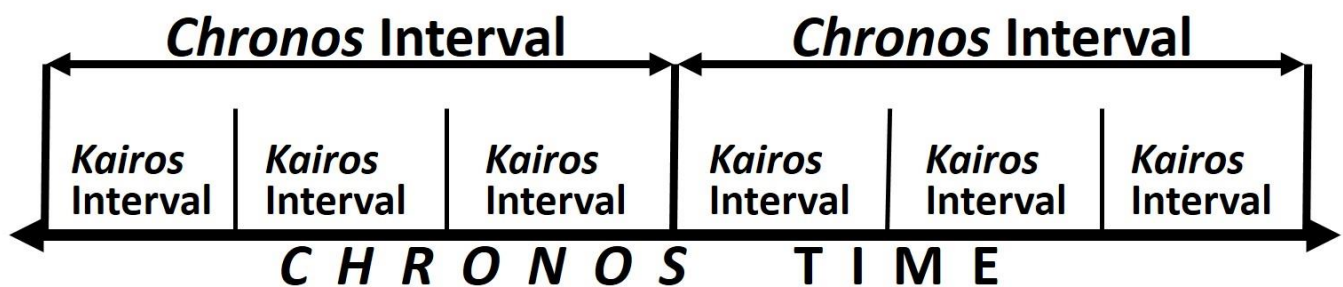
Relationship w/ Time Indicators
Like *Mello* (Ax 24:25, etc.)

Time. What a term. Without anything mentally tangible to comprise it, there's nothing more abstract to the mind than time; in fact, if you try to find a definition for just "time" in its most generic sense, you're hard-pressed to find anything more defined than "a nonspatial, inevitable, linear continuum." Hmmm. See, time is essentially nothing to humans apart from events &/or experiences. Our clocks and watches keep track of seconds, minutes, and hours, but they have no meaning outside of nouns and verbs, that in/by which we have our very existence. For humans time is history, whatever context of history we're contemplating. So in the context of this study, time is all based upon biblical history and how it unfolded.

The words "time" & "times" are found in 203 instances in just the New Testament portion of the NKJV of the Bible alone, and many of those are found in phrases (e.g. second time, third time, convenient time, times past, etc.), phrases that are translations of one of several, single Greek words. However...

There are actually only two chief Greek words for "time": *chronos* and *kairos*, *kairos* referring to a short period of time (as even thesaurus.com indicates) and *chronos* referring to a long period of time (usually comprised of multiple short periods of time defined by one or more events in some sort of *chrono*-logical series). (Now while *kairos* is normally the one that's employed to refer to a set &/or right times for an event/events, *chronos* may also be used to represent that concept, just on a larger scale; and, by the way, this brings to my mind the word "dispensation," carrying with it in the Bible [e.g. in Eph. 1:10] a specifically appointed time for an additional pillar-administration by God within the fulfilling of His overall redemptive scheme [cf. Gal. 4:2 & 4].) So, from a biblical/eschatological/soteriological perspective...

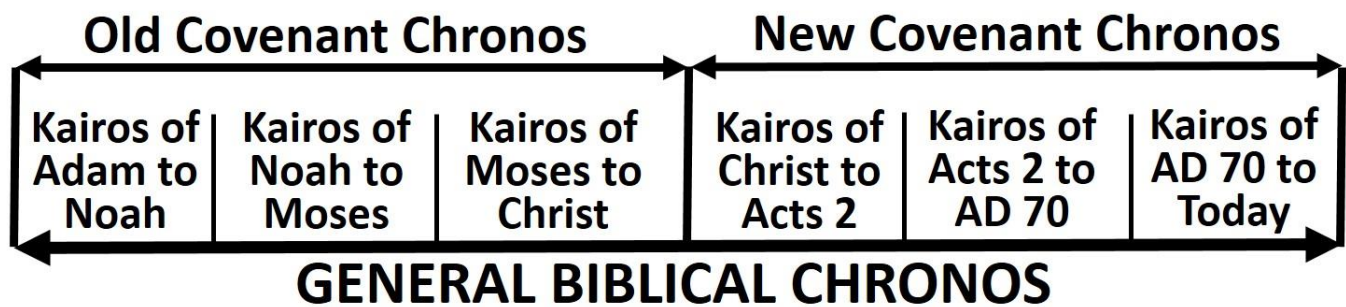
Chronos time in general was comprised of several phases, both (respectively speaking) long ones that I'll call "*chronos* intervals" and short ones that I'll call "*kairos* intervals." Here's a depiction of what I mean:



Now, biblically speaking, some periods (whether *chronos* or *kairos*, i.e. whether long or short) included or were even called (in the NKJV) by such phrases as the following:

- ~ the last hour (as in "it is the last hour," John 2:18)
- ~ the last day (as in "I will raise him up at the last day," John 6:40)
- ~ the last days (as in "these last days," Heb. 1:2)
- ~ the last times (as in "the Spirit expressly says in the last times," 1 Tim. 4:1)
- ~ these last times (as in Jesus "was manifest in these last times," 1 Pet. 1:20)
- ~ these last days (as in God has spoken "in these last days," Heb. 1:2)
- ~ the last time (as in "salvation is revealed in the last time," 1 Pet. 1:5)
- ~ the time of the end (as in "seal the book until the time of the end," Dan. 12:4)
- ~ the end of the days (as in "arise to your inheritance at the end of the days," Dan. 12:13)
- ~ the end of the age (as in "so will it be at the end of the age," Mat. 13:49)
- ~ the end of this age (as in "so will it be at the end of this age," Mat. 13:40)
- ~ the end of the ages (as in Jesus died "once at the end of the ages," Heb. 9:26)
- ~ this generation (as in "save yourselves from this perverse generation," Acts 2:40)
- ~ the present age (as in "deliver us from this present evil age," Gal. 1:4)
- ~ the present time (as in "the sufferings of this present time," Rom. 8:18)
- ~ this age (as in "the children of this age marry," Luke 20:34)
- ~ that age (as in "those counted worthy of that age," Luke 20:35)
- ~ the age to come (as in blasphemy "not being forgiven in the age to come," Mat. 12:32), and...
- ~ the ages to come (as in God demonstrating His grace "in the ages to come," Eph. 2:7) So...

Since general biblical time (*chronos*) was divided up into intervals called hours, days, times, & ages, then we might picture time from Genesis to Revelation something like in this chart (*just to illustrate!*):



So, does all this help in moving the abstractness of time to the more mentally concrete/tangible? I hope it does because henceforth I'll be depending upon this to discuss several biblical *chronos*-and-*kairos* type statements in relation to God's timing as He accomplished His redemptive purposes beginning with the first Adam and ending with the second/last Adam. OK...

I opened up with a paragraph about "time" and how that, in its most generic sense, it cannot seem to be defined, which is why, when you look it up in a dictionary, definitions are based around something mentally tangible, viz. nouns and verbs found in history. And, because of that, as I implied earlier, the abstractness of time is comprised of events/experiences that are generally labeled by various dual-syllable "e" words, e.g. eras, epochs, and eons; but the word the NKJV (and most other versions) chose to employ is a single-syllable "a" word—"age," so it's very important that we define it for this study of Bible time. What exactly is an "age"? Or what is it that characterizes an age? Well...

Per the definition of "age," lexicographers seem to have little problem conceding that an age refers to the interval between the beginning and the ending of something distinctive that a person or group of people elect as a distinguishing criteria, for example a set of events (e.g. the Industrial Age), a political office (e.g. the Age of the Caesars), or even a leap in human knowledge (e.g. the Age of Enlightenment). Just name it, and one can create an age; for example I could say that, for my wife and myself, between 1997 and 2013 was the Age of Homeschooling. Biblically speaking...

We could refer to the Age of the Judges, the Age of the Kings, and the Age of Miracles if we wish to do so. And the Scriptures do actually employ the plural term "ages" to refer to sets of events in the biblical narrative; in fact, Paul specifically even stated this: Speaking of the long-awaited revelation of the mystery behind how Yahweh would create a relationship with us, he wrote in First Corinthians 2:7 that God devised His plan "before the ages." Now don't allow that statement to pass into one ear and out the other without it slowing down at least a tad. OK? This plan was devised "before the ages." What ages? Not just regular old generic or secular or historic ages of the various peoples all over the globe, but the contextual biblical narrative ages—the ones having to do with the fulfillment of God's eschatological &/or soteriological plan through national Israel to create a relationship with all mankind; and *those* ages were ones that He formed in the process of bringing that plan to fruition: In Hebrews 1:2 (again in the context of Yahweh's execution of His strategy) Paul wrote that God "created the ages"; in fact, later in 11:3 he said that "the ages were framed by God's Word." It's sort of like how, by my wife's and my decision (or "by our word") to homeschool our kids, we created our "age of homeschooling"; likewise, while implementing His plan (which of course was far greater than our homeschooling three kids) God required various phrases (whether *chronos* or *kairos* ages) within that implementation in order to accomplish His ultimate task. So...

What might those ages have been? Well, the Bible has no names for those ages like the ones I just mentioned a moment ago (e.g. the Industrial Age or the Age of Enlightenment). HOWEVER..., as I actually already cited, there are other less descriptive expressions such as "this age" and "the present age" as well as "that age" and "the age to come." So at the very least we can know that the Hebrew people, including Jesus Himself who employed such expressions, had the view that there were at least two ages, which leads us on into the main point of this study about the Bible's last days, i.e. the biblical end times as opposed to Christendom's traditional perspective. So...

Since there are at least 80 passages with time markers related to biblical eschatology (the study of end times or last days), to keep this study down to one lesson I must deal only with the most relevant terms, phrases, and passages. So, because they're found within the context of the *completion* of God's plan of salvation (as it's often called), the two logical terms to start with in my mind are "beginning" and "ending," the obvious two points between which that plan was executed.

In Revelation 21:6a, after John recorded seeing the result of God's entire plan come to fruition with all things having been made new with the arrival of the New Heaven and Earth as well as the New Jerusalem in which God is finally able to dwell in peace with humans, he quoted the enthroned Lord saying, "It's done! I'm the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending." In other words, it was Deity who both initiated and finalized the means by which man and his Creator may dwell together in harmony.

The original word for "beginning" is *arche* which refers to the origin, the source, or the starting point of something, while the original word for "ending" is *telos* which refers not to the mere end of something like a piece of rope, but to the realization of a goal; whereas Greek words like *akron* and even *eschatos* don't necessarily carry the idea of a goal to be reached, *telos* (and its related *sunteleia*) do carry that concept—in fact, the verb *teleo* means "to fulfill" as in the fulfilling of prophecies. So...

At the beginning of Revelation (1:8) and at the ending of it (22:13), we find Deity behind the conception and the consummation of the method resulting in God's ability to have a relationship with His human creation. So it's all about time in relation to the execution of this plan, not time in relation to the creation of physical existence, for to have the beginning (the *arche*) pointing to the creation of the material universe, while having the ending (the *telos*) pointing to the creation of God's relationship with us is an incongruity, meaning that they aren't parallel with one logically following the other. See...

The *arche* and the *telos* of Revelation 21:6 hearken back to verse 1, being founded in and thus equivalent to the first (Gk. *protos* as in proto-type) heaven and earth (the *arche*) which realized its fulfillment and therefore culminated in the new (Gk. *kainos* or the goal [of *neos*]) heaven and earth (the *telos*).

We already discussed that God's plan was conceived "before the ages" (1 Cor. 2:7), and now we have Revelation 21:6 indicating that it began to take functional form with the initial heavens and earth which introduced Adam, the first father of Old Covenant Israel (Isa. 43:27): Genesis 2:4a says, "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created," after which Adam (the one who kicked off these "generations") was brought into focus; we then recall of course that he was pictured as breaching God's covenant (Hos. 6:7), whereupon Genesis 3:15 provides what's considered the very first prophecy concerning how God would accomplish His plan to create a harmonious relationship between His human creation and Himself. In other words...

Genesis 2 pictures for us the beginning of the very first age in the phrase "before the ages": With the original Adam of the first heavens and earth, God initiated the execution of His plan which, over a period of thousands of years with multiple ages, would finally come to fruition in/with the second/last Adam and His establishment of the second/new heavens and earth in which, as Peter stated, righteousness would reside (2 Pet. 3:13). (Jesus is of course the second/last Adam [1 Cor. 15:45 & 47]; cf. Rom. 5:14.)

Following those many generations between first Adam and second Adam (cf. Luke 3:23-38), the Bible says there were multiple ages, but they are never given names; scholars have given them names, but since those weren't inspired they can't be considered to be the ages God had in mind when He inspired the idea of multiple ages: Speaking of the last/second Adam, Jesus, Hebrews 9:26 says that "at the end of the ages, He had appeared to put away sin." So all we know for sure is that there were two or more ages by the time of the coming of the Messiah. However...

Even though there were multiple ages before Jesus, in His time (as discussed earlier) He and His people the Jews concerned themselves with two main ages—the Messianic age of glory and the pre-Messianic age of waiting, waiting, and more waiting (e.g. Mat. 12:32 & Luke 20:34-35). Continuing to keep the biblical-contextual, relationship-creation narrative of time in mind, the question is this: *Were the last days the end times of the Messianic age or the pre-Messianic age?* Well, right off the bat one would logically surmise that what those folks were looking forward to was the consummation of the pre-Messianic age which would of course result in the Messianic age, and that makes sense when one considers that we're talking about a *telos* (a grand goal to be met) instead of a mere *akron* (a word with no goal in mind, just the end of one's finger). See, the end-goal of the pre-Messianic age was the whole point, meaning *that* was the age they so desired to see come to fruition! Can't ya just feel the eager anticipation of those who accepted Jesus as that promised Messiah who taught them about eternal life in "the age to come" (Luke 18:30) when they asked Him: "Tell us! When will these things happen? That is, what will be the sign of Your presence and the end of the age?!" So...

When would that age reach its goal? When the Messiah was born or when He died or when He sent the Spirit or when Judaism met its demise or at some still future time? Well, pretty much everyone in Christendom would agree that the pre-Messianic age was the age of the Old Covenant—the schoolmaster which was bringing the Old Covenant remnant babes up to the point of being viable, mature heirs in and by virtue of the promised Messiah: When writing of this very thing between Galatians 3:18 & 4:7, Paul spoke of how that the Law was their tutor and guard, bringing them to Christ so that, at the appointed time, they might be heirs with Him and thereby be justified or made righteous ... and thus of course receive the eternal life of the age to come that He told them about. So...

One of the purposes of the Old Covenant economy was to bring the entirety of the remnant that was being sought/called-out at that time (Rom. 11:5) to the point of when—in Christ—they'd receive their heirship (4:6), resulting in redemption (4:5), justification (3:24), righteousness (3:21), and, yes, everlasting life (3:21 & 6:8). However, some may say, "But as Christians they already had all that, didn't they?" Evidently not, for Paul went right on to write to these same brethren of their "hope of righteousness" (5:5). Even to the Christians in Rome Paul said that Christ's righteousness was "about to be" imputed to them (4:24). So...

Where does this all leave us in relation to the placement of the biblical last days? Well, since the age of the Old Covenant was that which would exist until it had fulfilled its part in bringing the faithful remnant to the point of the reception of its inheritance (i.e. righteousness, etc.), then, when people like Peter referred to the last days, they were referring to the days when all Old Covenant jots/tittles were finally being fulfilled—a complete fulfillment of which Jesus, in Luke 21:22, placed at the time of the events of the demise of Judaism at AD 70. Consider these passages for a few examples:

"This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit'" (Acts 2:17). In what days were the events of the Day of Pentecost of Acts 2? Right, AD 30.

"Listen up, you rich.... Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you.... You have heaped up treasure in the last days" (Jas. 5:1 & 3). In what days had they heaped up these destructive treasures? "In the last days." And about when did James write his letter to them? Around AD 62.

"God ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (Heb. 1:2). In what days had He spoken to them? "These last days." And about when did Paul pen Hebrews? Around AD 63.

"Christ ... was manifested in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:20). In what times had Christ been manifested for them? "In these last times." And about when did Peter write this letter to them? Around AD 63.

"It is the last hour.... Many antichrists have come by which we know that it's the last hour" (1 John 2:18). Wow! Now that's powerful! And when was this? Around AD 62. Now...

Think about it: We have dates from AD 30 to 63 which is almost ... what? ... about a generation, which Jesus mentioned in verse of the context of Luke 21:22 about when all things written would be fulfilled. So...

The Point Is This: Biblical last days, eschatological last days, soteriological last days, the last days of completing God's plan for the creation of a way for Him to have a peaceful relationship with man transpired during the last generation of Old Covenant Israel's existence; i.e., the Old Covenant could not expire before national Israel expired or vice versa, for the remnant that was being called out and, as a bride, going through her purification in preparation for her wedding, continued until all things written were fulfilled. So...

We've discussed why the actual last days spoken of in the Bible were in direct connection with the last generation of national Israel. But let's even more briefly consider some reasons why those days could not be otherwise.

There are two times when the Bible speaks of the end (as in consummation) of the ages devoted to God's salvation plan: Paul told the Hebrew Christians that Jesus had died for them "at the end of the ages" (Heb. 9:26), and he told the Christians at Corinth that they were living in "the ends of the ages" (1 Cor. 10:11). So since all biblical ages related to God's redemptive/salvific plan met their goals in the last generation before the demise of national Israel in AD 70, then to claim that we're either living in the last days or that the last days are in our future implies that the Old Covenant is still in power, that Jesus didn't fulfill it as He said He would (Mat. 5:17-18), and that we still don't have salvation or the ability to be in a relationship with our Creator even yet today. Further...

The Bible never refers anywhere to "the end of time," but it does refer to "the time of the end." Why? Because it doesn't concern itself with time in some generic, secular manner; it's only concerned with time as it relates to the ages involved in redemptive/salvation narrative. This "time of the end" phrase is found five times in Daniel: The first time is in 8:17 in relation to a vision that depicts a snippet of things related to the end-times of Israel; the remaining four times are in 11:35 & 40 and 12:4 & 9, all of which follow on the heels of an angel saying to Daniel, "I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people [Israel] in *the last days*, for the vision refers to many days yet to come" (10:14). And, after the angel led him through quite a bit of detail in chapter 11, what did Daniel discover in chapter 12 about what would occur in "the last days" of "the time of the end"? Well, in verse 7 the angel spoke of "when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered" and in verse 11 about that being "the time when the daily sacrifices would be taken away and the abomination of desolation would be set up," that which Jesus Himself referred to in Matthew 24 about the destruction of Jerusalem with its temple, priesthood, sacrifices, genealogical records, etc. in AD 70. Well...

Since I just brought up Jerusalem's demise, and since I've spent some time dealing with how that the last days were the time in which redemption became an accomplished fact, then let me close with a passage I've mentioned in passing a couple of times that seems to tie it all together: Luke 21:22. In the midst of His *Olivet Discourse* in which He spoke about the demise of the temple and so on (i.e. the things that would transpire in the last days according to Daniel 12), Jesus said that "These are the days." What days? "The days ... when all things that are written will be fulfilled," after which He went on to say in verse 28, "When these things begin to happen ... lift up your heads." Why? "Because your redemption is drawing near."

[Tony Everett Denton, 11/17/17; ASiteForTheLord.com]