

170 "After eight days"

Easter time approaches once again. In John 20.26 we read that Jesus' second visit to His gathered disciples, now including Thomas, came, in an apparently throw-away phrase, "after eight days". Why are we told this? We will hope to come back to these eight days in a couple of weeks, but first we need to explore some background to the many dates and times given in the Scriptures.

In the 1930s, six faithful Christian men were set aside by the Lord to study Time within His Word. These "watchmen" duly set to work, and, step by step over the years, were shown deep and wonderful Time patterns within the Scriptures.

They learned that on and beneath the surface of the Scriptures there are various, different, "time clocks" operating under the Lord's authority, each one displaying Time from its own God-appointed perspective. At key moments in God's dealings with His creation, such as at the Exodus or the Lord's crucifixion and resurrection, one or more of these clocks wonderfully coincide. This phenomenon is so far beyond human capability that it comes as close as anything we could ever hope for as being absolute proof of the divine authorship of God's Word, if any more such proof were needed.

But does any of this matter? Are these things just coincidence, brought to us by a few obsessed fanatics who find patterns wherever they want to find patterns? Perhaps some will think so. Now we are right to remain cautious in these matters, checking everything, as the watchmen themselves constantly urge, in the light of the Scriptures, but we would be foolish to swing too far the other way and write off their work as misleading nonsense. It is clearly nothing of the sort, as any inspection of their books quickly demonstrates (book details given at the end of this Reflection).

The watchmen believed that the Holy Spirit chose to reveal these deep truths to them in the 1930s for one simple reason - that the pace of things was "hotting up", as the final chapters of God's dealings with His creation made their steady progress. World events since the 1930s fully bear this out: the rise of Hitler; World War II; the Holocaust; the re-establishment of the State of Israel; the Six Day War of 1967; the Yom Kippur War of 1973; the great increase in "natural disasters", and so on. Even the various Apollo missions to the Moon, apart from one, was found to be significant in the biblical time-scales based on the Moon; (the one with no significance was Apollo 13, the mission that was aborted and came so close to disaster).

Frank Paine, the last of the six, died in 1983 - at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Were Mr Paine continuing his studies, I for one have no doubt that he would have found that more recent events - such as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, "9/11", the Boxing Day tsunami, the Fukushima disaster - would all be found to mark, to the day, significant points within the biblical clocks. We remember that those clocks in themselves matter little: they matter because of what they vitally reveal concerning God's journey towards His revealed goals for His creation - goals in which every person who has ever existed will be involved.

If these things mattered in the 1930s, how so, so much more they must matter in the current 2010s! The Lord wants His redeemed people to know these things, for assurance and urgency; to be watching for the Lord's coming for His own (I Thessalonians 4.13-18 / I Corinthians 15. 51-52); to be found faithful, warning those who are still outside the redemption of Christ. If November 1983 was an "eleventh hour", then midnight is now a great deal closer.

That simple phrase, "after eight days", like all other Time references in the Bible, is there for a reason. Although understanding the working of the Bible clocks is seriously complicated, as we shall see in future Reflections, we can be heartened right now in our Bible reading whenever we come across a reference to a date or a time: for there before our eyes is a small, lovely reminder from the Lord that all events occur within His Time plan, and that even in these wild days, He knows precisely what He is doing.

Truly, "Come unto Me, all ye who are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest".

(A good introduction to the watchmen's work is: www.fsmins.org / Our Publications / 01 Trusty Bible? / 3a, = free to read online or free download / and see also 3b for free access to Frank Paine's book)

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