

The Inscrutable Question: God Invents Time: Time in the Divine Decrees, Gen 1:2-5; 14-18; Three Purposes of Time

10. Even though we are events in time we are not isolated in time. We are reminded of six principles that describe the interconnectedness of events in the Divine Decree:
 - 1) The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence
 - 2) In eternity past, the sovereignty of God established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not.
 - 3) Every cause and effect is related to another cause and effect and to another and another. In this one, all-comprehensive, interdependent system of cause and effect, man's volition is the uncaused cause of human function so that the course of history is just as man thinks it, wills it, and does it.
 - 4) Omniscience knows every thought, decision, and action in human history and how they all relate to each other.
 - 5) Space and time are the battlefield, the overall setting in which we live. These concepts are in the decrees, but so are the details which reach down to the minutia of life. Even the minor detail of the fall of a sparrow is known to God.
 - 6) The decree of God is all-comprehensive. Not the slightest confusion could exist as to one of even the smallest events without confusion to all events. All events are interwoven and interdependent.
11. As an event we are therefore related to a continuous succession of events.
12. The invention of time provides us with a past from which events can be remembered for counseling in the present resulting in a more prosperous future.
13. Time was invented for the use of mankind and thus was instituted prior to the creation of Adam.
14. The invention of time is recorded in Scripture and we will note its details in Genesis 1:14-18. We will reference:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Creation, Chaos, & Restoration*. 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1995), 20-23:

Genesis 1:14 - Then God said, "Let there be lights [מֵאֹר / *maor* /] in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years

v 15 - and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and it was so.

The first day of restoration saw the creation of light and its separation from darkness.

Genesis 1:3 - Then God said, "Let there be light [אֹר / *or* /]"; and there was light.

v 4 - And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

v 5 - And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Throughout the first three days God furnished the light that shone upon the earth without energizing any illuminating agents. Then on the fourth day, God concentrated the elemental light into luminiferous bodies.

The Hebrew מאור / *maor* / ["lights" in verse 14] is distinct from the אור / *or* /, "light," of verse three. *Maor* refers to lightbearers: sun, moon, stars, planets, comets, asteroids. Since these luminaries were included in "the heavens" created in verse one, the reference in verses 14-15 is to the restoration of light to these heavenly bodies. Though the stars may be thousands or millions of light years from the earth, their light appeared instantly on the earth.

Three purposes are given for the existence of the heavenly bodies.

1. The lightbearers were to divide the day from the night. The sun is a lightbearer for the day, while the planets, stars, and moon illuminate the night.

Genesis 1:16 - And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day [**the sun**], and the lesser light to govern the night [**the moon**]; He made the stars also.

2. The lightbearers were to designate signs, seasons, days, and years. The signs are not to be construed as the astrological signs of the zodiac. The lightbearers vary their positions in the heavens, thus dividing the year in relation to seasons. These changes determine the times to plant and to harvest.

The lightbearers regulate days and years. A year is measured by the revolution of the earth around the sun; a day is measured by the time it takes for the earth to make one complete rotation on its axis.

NOTE: Purpose number 2 explains God's *invention* of time for use by mankind. Time was *discovered* by man as he observed the movement of the various heavenly bodies and began to chart their cyclical patterns.

3. The luminaries give light to the earth, thus providing not only illumination but also energy. Photosynthesis, the process by which green plants synthesize carbohydrates from carbon dioxide and release oxygen back into the atmosphere, uses light as its energy source.

Genesis 1:17 - And God placed them [**the luminaries**] in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,

v. 18 - and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.

15. Consequently, these heavenly bodies enable man to develop a system of time in order to chronologically organize the events that occur in human history.
16. God exists in perfectly organized eternity and "in the beginning" He perfectly organized time within the boundaries of the universe.
17. God so structured His creation so that man was capable of discovering His invention of time.
18. Consequently, if God invented time then He must precede time. This places Him in eternity where time is not a factor.
19. As a divine composite, eternal life has no beginning and no end. Consequently, we have learned that the love of God goes back to eternity past.
20. Actually there are no such things as eternity past or eternity future. The eternal state is not regulated by time as is the universe.
21. However, man uses these terms to orient to God's existence before or after the event called human history.

22. Time can be defined as follows: A system of sequential relationships that any event has to have in relationship to another event, ie., past, present, or future. Indefinite, continuous duration regarded as that in which events succeed one another.