

Ages and Cycles

“He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.” – Acts 1:7

“In the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.” – Matthew 16:3-4

“For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4

“Remember, then, what you have received and heard. Keep it and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know the hour when I will come upon you.”
– Revelation 3:3

“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.” – Genesis 7:11-12

“Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.... But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.” So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.”
– Genesis 11:1-2, 5-8

“The two men said to Lot, “Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it.”...The Lord rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the Lord out of the heavens. Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land.” – Genesis 19:12-13, 24-25

“I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.... So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.” – Exodus 3:8-10, 20

1. At this point in time, God has established five institutions for mankind to function within:
 - a. **Individual volition** with responsibility –
 - “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” – Genesis 2:16-17
 - b. **Marriage** –
 - “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” – Genesis 2:24
 - c. **Family** –
 - “Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, “I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.” – Genesis 4:1
 - “Then the Lord said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation.” – Genesis 7:1
 - d. **Government** –
 - “And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.” – Genesis 9:5-6
 - e. **Nations** (nationalism) – Genesis 10-11
 - “These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.” – Genesis 10:32
 - “And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.” So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.” – Genesis 11:6-9
 - “When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.” – Deuteronomy 20:32
2. These institutions were established by God for the wellbeing of mankind as the history of fallen man began to unfold:
 - a. Individual responsibility in the Garden of Eden
 - b. Marriage in the Garden of Eden
 - c. Families between the fall of man and the Flood
 - d. Government between the Flood and the Tower of Babel
 - e. Age of Nations after the Tower of Babel
3. Following these five natural institutions, God also established two institutions for the advancement of his presence in this temporal age and the knowledge of his kingdom:
 - a. **Israel** – Genesis 12:1-2, God said to Abraham: “*Leave your country (government and nation) and your father's household (family) and go to the land (national borders) I will show you. I will make you into a great nation (Israel)...*”

- b. **Church** – Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

The Seven Institutions

There are seven institutions established by God for the welfare of mankind:

| | Institutions | Scripture Found | Purpose |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1 | Individual Volition | Genesis 2:16-17 | Individuals can respond to God’s offer of salvation |
| 2 | Marriage | Genesis 2:24 | Foundation for the family |
| 3 | Family | Genesis 4:1, 7:1 | Foundation for society |
| 4 | Government | Genesis 9:5,6 | Create and maintain a peaceful society |
| 5 | Nations | Genesis 10, 11 | So societies can collectively respond to God |
| 6 | Israel | Genesis 12:2,3 | Preserve the truth of God’s revelation on the earth |
| 7 | Church | Matthew 13; 16:18; Acts 2 | Communicate to the kingdoms of the world the truth about God’s eternal kingdom |

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12 –

“We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— since indeed **God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.