

THE TARRYING TIME

If the 6000-year plus 1000-year *Great Week of Time* is a precise system of reckoning, how does one reconcile the numerous “tarrying” allusions in the Scriptures? Wouldn’t they lengthen or alter the “sacred seven” millenniums? What could such a “delay” relate to? Does this force God to move to plan “B” in His redemptive timing? Is it simply a perceptual issue? Or – is it a “delay” in some other “timed” manner?

The “poster-child delay” parable is recorded in the end-time chapter, Matthew 24.

“But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming ...” (vs 48).

The setting of this verse surrounds the little Greek word *ean*, which means “if.” Jesus has just been describing a good servant who suddenly switches to being an evil servant. That servant is head of other servants:

He abuses them.

He still calls his master “My Lord.”

He may say, “My Lord delayeth his coming.”

In the context, it is a warning to anyone who chooses to assume that Jesus’ coming is in the far distant future. His actions, described in subsequent verses, betray that very conviction. He lives carelessly and is insensitive to others. Does this statement present a timing truth? Any thought or lifestyle that suggests a delay is fatal. When the master returns, judgment comes to this servant. The subliminal warning is to not function as though the coming of Jesus is postponed or delayed.

Does that mean it could be postponed? *We are to live as though it is imminent. A delay in Jesus’ return is not the message portrayed!* It is important to note that Jesus gave this parable after telling us **timing prophecies** and **events** that would say “His coming is near.” In the light of that knowledge, there is no reason to say that the eschaton is delayed. The “how” and “when” are open information. A denial of a soon return as an excuse to live carelessly is the issue.

Peter, reflecting on truth that had already been “*spoken before by the holy prophets, and ... of us the apostles,*” said: “*Knowing this first [the foundational principle], that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?*” (II Peter 3:3-4). These scoffers **perceived** that Jesus’ coming was “put off.” Scoffers also include those who marginalize talking about or studying end-time issues.

The imagery portrays those who declare “the Lord delays His coming” as sinners! Then God makes the point that He operates within His own timing sphere: “*A day is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day*” (vs 8). Yet in prophecy he constantly tells us how to enter His timing realm.

To the godly, Paul provides the context of how God’s timing occurs: “*For yet a little while [a small space of time] and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*” (Hebrews 10:37).

Soon, in a little while – in God’s time – He’ll return. That could be years or it could be one day.

But Jesus does not operate in the sphere of the vague. There is specific timing information that He gave, found in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. He outlined two distinct ends of time that we are to focus on – one for the Jewish people within the apostles' day and one for the end of the world at the Second Advent. They are spelled out with great detail. For the *end of time era* the “rest of the story” is found in Daniel (Matthew 24:15). Jesus stipulates that those end-time prophecies would each be fulfilled within one generation – or – 40 years.

When Jesus told the inquiring disciples that “*It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath in his own power*” (Acts 1:7), He never said it was going to be delayed, nor did He say it would come with mystical suddenness. Nor did He say it would never be known. Jesus already gave detailed signs related to when it could be declared that “the season” has arrived, “*even at the door.*” The “*beginning of sorrows*” is the signal for the beginning of the end!

What then did Jesus allude to in Acts 1:7? This is vital to grasp! Looking forward in time, one cannot predict when the consummation of events will begin – that was in the Father’s hand. But – *when* the predicted developments *begin* to occur, it’s going to happen within one generation. When looking at Daniel, we see even further information refinements within a three-and-a-half year *appointed-time* setting!

Within the timing structure of God’s end-time prophecy there are built-in *waiting periods*. God does not want us to call them delays! He has given us permission to call them **tarrying times**.

There are many tarrying times, such as:

1. Between the two end times noted in Matthew 24
2. *Within* the timing of one generation to the three-and-a-half-year appointed time
3. All prophetic times that still must be completed

It is vital to note that *in* God’s predictive time periods there are **no** delays. He does recognize the waiting time between prophecies or within specific time periods. A notable example of this was recorded by Habakkuk: “*And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: **though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry***” (Habakkuk 2:2-3).

The vision is tarrying – the prophecy has an *apparent* delay to its fulfillment. But wait for it, it really will come to pass, and then it won’t appear to tarry any longer. Thus a specific prophecy can tarry *within* the greater framework of God’s fixed time. There simply is a time that we must “wait” through.

The parable of the ten virgins is instructive. The bridegroom tarried (*chronizei* or *chronizo*) (Matthew 25:5). What was the delay or lingering in reference to? The people who were waiting. The bridegroom is Jesus. It does not say that God’s plans were delayed. It does say from the perspective of the virgins that they waited so long that they “slumbered and slept” (vs 5). While the foolish virgins tried to play catch-up, the “appointed time” had already come and they were barred from the marriage.

Imminent Return in Revelation

In the book of Revelation is this repeated theme:

- Revelation 1:1 – *“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must **shortly** [en tachos] **come to pass**; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”*
- Revelation 1:3 – *“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the **time is at hand**.”*
- Revelation 1:19 – *“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things **which shall be hereafter**.”*
- Revelation 11:14 – *“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe **cometh quickly** [tacho].”*
- Revelation 12:12 – *“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but **a short time**.”*
- Revelation 16:15 – *“Behold, **I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame**.”*
- Revelation 22:6 – *“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which **must shortly be done**.”*
- Revelation 22:10 – *“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: **for the time is at hand**.”*
- Revelation 22:12 – *“And, behold, **I come quickly**; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”*
- Revelation 22:20 – *“He which testifieth these things saith, **Surely I come quickly**. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”*

On the surface it appears as though the message to John decrees a soon return of Jesus in his day. He did appear to him in 1:13-17, but that is not the meaning of the above verses. Also, a similar message goes to the seven churches.

- Revelation 2:25 – *“But that which ye have already **hold fast till I come**.”*
- Revelation 3:11 – *“**Behold, I come quickly**: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”*

“The time [kairos – last opportunity] is at hand.” “Behold I come quickly” [tacho – soon] – without delay. At the end of the Bible, in that apocalyptic book, the message is “no delay!” There has been a forward movement of prophetic thought from Daniel through the gospels to this final unveiling of the end. Is this prophecy a declaration that Jesus was coming in John’s day? Clearly not. There was an expectancy by the disciples. But *their timing prophecies* related to the “end” of time for the Jewish nation. The eschaton is defined as distinct and separate by the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Revelation 1:4-6 is a commentary insert. There is a break in the introductory thought to extend greetings from the Trinity to the seven churches. When verses 1-3 and 7 are combined, which

they should be, the “*shortly come to pass*” (vs 1) and “*time is at hand*” (vs 3) refer to Jesus’ coming in the clouds when every eye will see Him (vs 7).

The apostles had the privilege of knowing that there would be a wait – just as Daniel did! Daniel 8:14 makes it clear that the final restoration of God’s people would not occur until after the 2300 evenings and mornings – distinctly 2300 years. (That is in atonement–sacred–legal language.) Daniel did not understand at first. Several years later he did (Daniel 10:1). That was part of the *mareh* vision, which was *not* sealed.

For the apostles there was an imminent *end* within one generation. But for the great *eschaton*, when all will be made new, that was far in the future. The “end” of Jerusalem had already occurred in 70 A.D. The Revelation was penned in approximately 96 A.D. The time when Jesus would come was John’s focus. The angel made that clear in Revelation 1:7: “*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.*” **As consummation-event prophecy unfolded as revealed in the prophetic books**, He would come quickly. That is the exact concept outlined in Daniel and Matthew 24.

Daniel’s Appointed Time

Few have paid attention to the amazing information that Gabriel opened to Daniel. He said: “*At the time of the end (eth qets) shall be the vision*” (Daniel 8:17). The *chazown* vision within Daniel 8–12 revealed how the Mystery of Iniquity would work right at the end of time.

“*I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation (zaam – God’s wrath): for at the time appointed, the end shall be*” (Daniel 8:19). At the “time appointed” is the end of time – at the time of God’s wrath.

Habakkuk said the tarrying time or waiting period would end at the “appointed time” (*mowed*). Therefore, we can see the following outline emerge:

- The finale of the Mystery of Iniquity of Daniel 8–12 is at the end of time.
- The appointed time is at the end of time.
- The appointed time is when the tarrying time ends.
- The end of time is when God’s wrath terminates.

The information continues to pour in. Daniel asked Jesus in chapter 12, “*How long to the end of these wonders?*” (vs 6), referring to Michael standing up, the time of trouble, deliverance of God’s people and the special resurrection (Daniel 12:1-2). When will all this occur? Jesus said simply: “*It shall be for a time, times, and an half [mowed, moweds and half mowed – 1260 days]; and when he [king of the north (Daniel 11:40-45)] shall have accomplished to scatter [persecute] the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished*” (Daniel 12:7).

The *chazown* vision with all the oppression of God’s people and church will come to an end at the end of 1260 days – at the deliverance of God’s people. From Habakkuk to here it is now clear that there is a waiting period – but **no** delay:

This coincides exactly with Jesus’ message to John in Revelation 10:6. There will no longer be a wait. Both times Jesus gives end-time timing messages – first to Daniel and then to John – He swears by heaven with the hand uplifted. Those timing messages are so vital, so sacred,

so important that Jesus didn't leave them to that mighty angel, Gabriel. He came personally to present them.

The honor and reputation of heaven itself stand against the truth of those *time* prophecies. When the *appointed time* comes, it is a prophetic, literal-time countdown to the deliverance of God's people. There is no prophecy that sets a time/date for the Second Coming of Jesus. Everything ends at the "deliverance!"

"The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days. The Scripture says, 'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased' (Dan. 12:4). When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, 'Time shall be no longer.' (See Revelation 10:6.) The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come [future] to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days."[\[1\]](#)

"As we near the close of this world's history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. 'The wise shall understand' (verse 10), was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God's people all through the centuries, the promise is, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.' Revelation 1:3."[\[2\]](#)

"Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel's prophecies have their proper place in the *first, second, and third angels' messages* to be given to the world. The unsealing of the little book was the *message in relation to time!*"[\[3\]](#)

Summary

The Great Week of Time is not marred or impinged upon by the tarrying-time message. The *apparent* "delay" is between the two great end-time prophecies of Matthew 24. It represents a waiting time *within* the Great Week of Time of seven millenniums. The prophetic "tarrying time" started at the Cross. A new era began that would culminate with a holy people (last three and a half years of earth's history). A one-generation warning has already begun. The next time period will be the three and a half years. Then time no longer waits and His coming is imminent.

An analogy can be seen from Noah's day. God delayed from the fall of man to Noah to deal with violence and rebellion. Once the preaching began, there was a distinct tarrying or waiting time that God had foretold. There would be a 120-year "wait" before the wrath of God started. Noah built, preached and prepared during that "tarrying time." Then a final call seven days before the flood. When the animals and Noah were in the ark, the door was shut. That began the appointed time of seven days. They were safe in the ark, sealed from harm. When God's wrath was poured out, they were under His protecting care within the ark.

References:

- [1] White, Ellen G.; *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 105 (1896).
- [2] White, Ellen G.; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 547-548.
- [3] White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 320 (1887) (emphasis added).