

#8 Northside Natter

13 May, 2020

For something different, I thought I'd look into **God's Time**.

Sometimes it's hard for us to imagine just how quickly things happen, as far as the Lord's timing is concerned. To us, history is like an ancient, decaying and faded memory. But to the Lord it probably feels like a mere week ago.

When I went to Rome in 2016, I saw the colosseum, the renowned arches and where the Basilicas once stood - along with Caesars forum and many other famous sites. The one thing they all had in common was that they are old, crumbling away and it's a miracle any of the lonely old pillars are still standing. Yet it was only a short time ago that they were new, robust and full of life.

Perhaps, using some timelines I spotted on the **Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs** website, we might get a sense of what God sees when he looks on us. (*Yes, I was surprised to find a government department posting this too*). However, I can't vouch for the accuracy of the times stated, but I decided they'd be close enough given Israel's fondness for record keeping.

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| 1800BC-1701BC | Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in this time and believed in God. They settled in the land we think of as Canaan until a widespread and fierce famine caused an elderly Jacob and his sons to move to Egypt for survival. |
| 1300BC–1201BC | God called the Israelites to leave Egypt under the leadership of Moses and his brother Aaron. During their 40-years in the wilderness, they were provided with the 10 Commandments and put into practice many of God's ordinances for healthy living. At the end of 40 years, they entered the promised land. |
| 1020BC | Saul was anointed as the first King of Israel. His reign didn't last long. |
| 1000BC | King David assigned Jerusalem as the capital of his kingdom. God called him a man after his own heart, even though he was not perfect. |
| 960BC | King Solomon built God a magnificent temple in accordance with his father, David's, wishes but things went downhill from there. Solomon worshipped other gods and as a respected leader of the people, his actions taught others to do the same. They turned from God. |
| 586BC | The Babylonians destroyed God's temple along with the city of Jerusalem. If that wasn't bad enough, most of the Jewish people were taken as slaves to Babylonia (now Iraq). |
| 538-515BC | God showed his wayward and faithless children mercy – he gave them yet another opportunity to get things right. He made it possible for them to return from their captivity and rebuild Jerusalem – as well as a |

nice new temple. Sadly, it was nowhere near as beautiful as Solomon's. But at least they were back in their land.

(Big timeline-jump here because, as we know, Israel does not acknowledge Jesus as God's Messiah)

70AD Jesus, the Christ of God, Messiah, Saviour and son of the Most High had been born, healed the sick and lame, raised the dead, showed numerous miracles, was murdered by his own people and rose from the dead to open a way for all mankind to be reconciled to God. The Holy Spirit was given to all who sought the Lord.

Seventy years after Christ had returned to his heavenly father, the temple, built by the returned Jews from Babylonia, was destroyed. No stone was left unturned. Jerusalem was set alight by the Roman soldiers and 1.1 million civilians were killed. The survivors of this devastation were exiled and dispersed among the nations. They had refused God's Messiah preferring their old traditional ways.

All these things had been foretold by the Lord through his prophets. How quickly things decayed, just like the ancient buildings I saw on my trip to Rome.

In a similar timeframe, God's children have been brought from 70AD to the year 2020AD. Just as men's hearts corrupted and turned from God after faithful Abraham, so too have latter generations become corrupted and godless as they chose to worship anything other than God. All this in the blink of an eye.

Yet God promised us salvation on new terms following the death and resurrection of his son. Those who choose Life over death will not be cast out into darkness. Those who choose to live, rather than to die, have no need of a physical temple for they are the temple. Those who choose God's Way, over the devil's way, have no need to fear the judgement of God for they are held blameless. As quickly as the life of Abraham and his descendants came and went, just as quickly will the time for the Lord to arrive be upon us.

Whatever you do, brothers and sisters, don't let the Lord find you unprepared, lacking, or not walking in God's ways. The time to be ready is now. Not tomorrow. Not the next day or in a week's time – or when COVID isolation ends. But NOW. For no man knows when his life will be required of him. **Ecclesiastes 9:12.**

Amen.