The Lord Jesus said ... My Sheep

God reveals a structural time program for each of the three types of humanity: Israel; the Gentile nations; and the church. We will now consider each timetable.

The Gentile Timetable

It is Daniel chapters 2, 7, and 8 that reveal the structural, prophetic timetable for the Gentile nations until the coming of the kingdom of God. The dream image of the Gentile king Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2 and its interpretation provide the chronology of the nations.

“The Times of the Gentiles”

Babylon - 606 - 538 BC
2:37-38 - The head of gold represented the Babylonian empire that ruled over all the earth. It, however, would not be permanent. It would give way to a second kingdom.

Medo-Persia - 538 - 330 BC
2:29a - The chest of silver with its two arms represented the Medo-Persian empire that ruled over all the earth. It too would not be permanent but would give way to a third.

Greece - 330 - 30 BC
2:39b - The waist of brass represented the Grecian empire that ruled over all the earth. It also would not be permanent but would give way to a fourth and final Gentile power.

Rome - 30 BC - Present - ? AD
2:40-44 - The two legs of iron depicted the Roman empire that ruled over all the earth (east and west). At its end (feet) it takes the form of ten nations (10 toes) of iron and clay - maintaining its identity but forming a loose union. This is when Gentile rule ends.

“The Kingdom of God”

“In the days of these kings [the 10] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” 2:44-45 - The “stone” cut without hands will crush the Gentile empire in its feet stage. This “stone” will become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. It, God’s rule, “shall stand forever.”

hear my voice, and... John 10:27

Israel’s Timetable

It is Daniel chapter 9 that reveals the structural prophetic timetable of God’s chosen nation, Israel. The angelic visitor to the Jewish statesman and prophet, Daniel, gives the understanding that provides the timetable from Israel’s perspective.

The prophecy involves 70 weeks, i.e. seventy units of time x seven (7 days in a week). This equates to 490 units of time (which turn out to be years). This prophecy explicitly states that it concerns Daniel’s people, Israel, and the holy city, Jerusalem. It will take all 490 years to accomplish the events that bring about the judgment and anoint the most Holy: the kingdom.

The angel Gabriel breaks this 490 years into sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Times of Israel</th>
<th>Clock Starts / Rebuilding 445 BC 9:25a</th>
<th>The official command to rebuild Jerusalem and her wall will start the time program. This command was given in Nehemiah 2 by King Artaxerxes.</th>
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<td>Clock Continues / to Messiah - 32AD 9:25b</td>
<td>After the city is rebuilt “unto the Messiah the Prince” will be an additional 434 years from the royal command to rebuild Jerusalem.</td>
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<td>Clock Stops / 3 Main Events of Present- 9:26</td>
<td>“After” the end of the 483 years (7426 + 69 weeks) but before the start of the 70th week – a. MESSIAH IS CUT OFF. b. Rebuilt city and temple destroyed. c. Further desolations on city to the end.</td>
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<td>Clock Restarts / Covenant - Final 7 yrs. 9:27</td>
<td>The prince (of the people who destroyed temple – Rome) will make a 7 year covenant to allow temple sacrifice again. But in the middle of the 7 years the Roman prince will break his word to Israel, and the temple and people will be desolated again.</td>
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“All and now I have told you”

What an amazing prophecy! The timing of Messiah’s appearance is given which brings one exactly to the time of Jesus. No wonder the Lord Jesus told Israel on the exact day of His presentation as king that this was “thy day” but “thou knowest not the time of thy visitation” (Luke 19:28-44). But disregarding the weeks of years for a minute, this stunning prophecy clearly reveals:

The Messiah is historical – for to fulfill prophecy He had to appear before the destruction of the rebuilt Jewish temple.

All 3 things prophesied during that gap period (vs. 26) have happened. a. Messiah Jesus was cut off but not for Himself. It was for our sins. b. Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed ending earthly sacrifice and priesthood. God no longer requires earthly sacrifices and mediators (priests). His Son’s blood sacrifice and His priestly intercession at God’s right hand is enough forevermore. c. Under the discipline of God, Jerusalem has not been a city of peace but war. It has been constantly desolated since Christ.

It is during this gap, as we shall see, that the New Testament reveals the mystery of the church as God’s kingdom on earth.

Once Israel’s national clock resumes for the 70th week, one will observe the absence of the church on earth. The prophecy is for Daniel’s people, the Jews. The church never experiences one day of the 70 weeks. It was after Israel’s clock paused at 69 weeks that the church started: fifty days after Messiah’s resurrection.

During the 70th week (last 7 years) is when “the prince” (Roman) of Daniel 9 will deceive Israel. He is the same as the king of Daniel 7:8, 23-25 – the little horn of the final nation Gentile world empire. He is also the beast (Antichrist) of the New Testament.

During Israel’s time structure there are several things that must be accomplished before the Antichrist is destroyed and the most Holy is anointed to start God’s kingdom through Israel. Sin must be dealt with: Israel’s transgressions must be punished and a reconciliation must be made for iniquity (9:24). All this is accomplished in Messiah Jesus. This brings us to the church age.
before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass,

The Church’s Timetable

It is the book of “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” that reveals the structural prophetic timetable of God’s chosen spiritual “nation”, the church. The risen Lord gives the Christian apostle, John, this revelation.

This book is written to the church and reveals God’s program from the church’s perspective (1:4, 19): “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”

The Times of the Church

Past / Glorified Christ - 96AD
1:12-20 - What John saw was not Christ in the manger, nor His sermon on the mount, nor His hanging in humiliation on the cross. John saw Him clothed in heaven’s royal robe as God’s judge. The risen Lord will judge four major areas in Revelation.

Present / The Churches - 96AD- present
Chapter 2 & 3 - #1. The churches. The Lord as Judge is presently involved in the arena of the condition of His churches: as represented by seven Christian assemblies. Here He is judging the attitudes, actions and beliefs of His local churches as they shine in giving testimony unto Him.

Future / The 7 Seals Opened - ???
Chapters 4-22 - “I will show thee the things which must be hereafter” (#41). After what? After the time of the churches on earth. Then comes the next 2 judgments that fall into 7 years made up of two 3-1/2 yr. periods (13:5) . #2. The world. The Lamb opens the seven seals and judges it for its sins (6:1-8). #3. The Antichrist. The returning Lord judges the coalition of rebellious nations led by him (ch. 19). #4. Finally - The dead. At the great white throne the Lord judges them (ch. 20).

That’s the eternal kingdom established as Christ and the church reign forever.

The things that thou hast seen. Here John saw the glory-clothed Lord in the position of God the Judge. He had the keys (authority) of hell and death. John saw the risen Lord Jesus in association with the churches. His position was in the midst of the 7 golden lampstands.

The things that are. Here John saw the risen Lord speaking and walking. Not speaking and walking in the palaces of kings nor the stadiums of heroes nor the stages of stars but among the churches. Here He is not judging or changing the world, but the churches. For judgment must begin at the house of God (1Pet. 4:17). His current concern is the condition of His churches.

Are the churches important to Him? The metaphoric picture of gold conveys the character of the church. The church is not represented by copper, brass or iron, but gold. The churches are His treasure, for He has washed them from their sins with His own blood (1:5).

Being a lampstand conveys the calling of the church. It is to be light. Not only an outer ministry to a dark world but an inner ministry. Since the Lord walks in the midst of the churches, the light reveals Him in His glories. The internal workings of the church are vital issues for they reflect the Lord Jesus Christ and His ways: fulfilling the church’s calling. The functions of an assembly are to glorify Him in a world that doesn’t.

To be faithfully involved in a biblical local church is to be involved in the center of Christ’s program for the present.

To be in a local assembly is to “walk where Jesus walks today.” The 7 churches answer the question: “What would Jesus do?” Here the Lord is equipping, building, and training a people for reigning. In this present age, the issues revealed in the 7 churches are of eternal magnitude: our first love, truthful teaching, faithfulness under pressure, overcoming Satan’s strategies, not tolerating what Christ hates, spiritual adultery, women’s teaching, deadness, keeping His Word, not deifying His Name, materialism, spiritual blindness, etc.

In the local church, the Lord is the authority. We are to listen to what His Spirit speaks to the churches—not what religion and popular polls say, but what the risen Lord says. And we are to do this till He comes for us.