

Where are we on God's time line of history? Has the "earth lease" come to an end?

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God has a plan for history. As the world is moving into a new millennium, it is good to review just where we may be on His time line, which gives us a clue as to the nearness of Jesus' promised return, a passion of mine since 1971, especially since 1993.

While we may never know the exact day or hour (only a 24-hour period) of the Lord's return, the Scriptures are repeatedly clear that seekers will know at least the approximate time. For example, the apostle Paul wrote that for those in the light, even the *day* will not surprise us nor come upon us as a thief, unlike the people of the world (1 Thessalonians 5:4), for whom it will be with suddenness and surprise "as in the days of Noah" (Matthew 24:37). And millions of believers all over the world bear witness in their hearts that the Lord's return is extremely near. Here are some thoughts.

The 6,000-year earth lease. The six creation days of Genesis were undoubtedly prophetic of a planned six "millennial days" of human history, followed by the seventh, or Sabbath, Millennium. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (2 Peter 3:8). The right of "dominion" over the earth that God gave Adam in Genesis 1:28 was no doubt only a 6,000-year lease^{3/4} six millennial days^{3/4} the time period established for man's rule. After the earth lease has expired and a possible transition period, Christ, the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), will return and assume dominion of the earth as ruling King during the seventh Millennium, having legally purchased back the lease and dominion with His own blood. This would follow the 2,000 years when "God first visited the Gentiles (nations) to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). The possible transition period would provide a cleansing of the earth, what we call the Tribulation. Solomon's reign was a type of Millennium, and it began with a cleansing. Or, the transition might simply be a parenthetical period on God's calendar between the sixth and seventh millennia.

In his excellent book, *End Time Events*, Charles Capps writes, "The earth lease is about to expire." Published in 1997, this means that Capps penned those words 2-3 years ago. Based on the literal Bible chronology which God chose to reveal, the 6,000 years, indeed, may have already expired. According to the calculations of 17th century Archbishop Ussher contained in his classic, *The Chronology of the Old and New Testament*, it would have expired in 1996. This was echoed in Marvin Byers' excellent book, *The Final Victory: The Year 2000*. Maybe they were not far off. In Capps' book mentioned above, he does not suggest a year but he may have been looking to 1999. The late Dr. Lester Sumrall was looking to the year 2000, as revealed in his 1987 book, *I Predict 2000 A.D.* (Both years could be correct on the Jewish calendar because of overlap with our modern Gregorian calendar and the current Jewish year **5760**, which includes part of 1999 and most of 2000.)

Some excellent scholarship and chronology study does show the end of the 6,000-year earth lease to have actually occurred in the fall of 1999, probably on Rosh haShanah (the Feast of Trumpets), beginning the Jewish year **5760**. (There is an explainable reason why the modern Jewish calendar is 240 years off.) If true, we have just recently seen the end of the sixth (millennial) day on God's calendar! As explained below, the current Jewish year **5760** does seem to have special significance.

Assuming the earth lease has already expired and the return of the Lord is shortly ahead, I am moved by author Bonnie Gaunt's profound words: "Time-wise we sit somewhere between these two events." What an awesome thought! What an incredible, tiny window of time in which we live! It is mind-boggling to think how privileged we are to be alive at this time. How can anyone not be diligently watching the signs and excitedly "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Jesus' 2,000th birthday. In addition, while commentaries vary, the best scholarship I have found puts Jesus' birth in 2 B.C. Compensating for the no-zero year between B.C. and A.D., this would make His 2,000th birthday (two millennial days) also in 1999, some believe the very same day as the end of the 6,000-year earth lease, on Rosh haShanah! This may be a fulfillment of Hosea 6:2: "After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." The "two days" probably began when the King first arrived on the earth.

The Jewish year 5760. What is so unusual about the current Jewish year **5760**? First, with this year, we may have an unprecedented convergence of three of the most profound events in all history: (1) the end of the sixth millennial days of creation and beginning if the seventh; (2) the end of the second millennial day since Christ's birth and the beginning of the third; and (3), the year of, or just after, Israel's Jubilee year (depending on counting method), no doubt of great prophetic significance.

Second, the following, which came to me from various sources, seems amazing:

- The gematria, or letter/number equivalents of the Hebrew language, for the words SIX DAYS multiplies to **5760** and also the words THIRD DAY multiplies to **5760** (both with extra zeros). The statistical improbability of such an outcome must be astronomical.

- Creation was in six days. Six days X 24 hours = 144 hours. If these six days were a type of the 6,000-year earth lease, and assuming 1 hour = 1 generation, and 1 generation = 40 years, we have 144 X 40 = **5760!**

- Verse number **5760** in the Bible is Deuteronomy 32:7: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations...." But that's not all: This verse exactly follows 50 verses from Deuteronomy 30:5 which speaks of Israel's rebirth in 1948, and the year **5760** exactly follows 50 years from Israel's rebirth! This is truly amazing.

- Israel, the "fig tree" of Matthew 24:32, "put forth its leaves" in the June 1967 miracle six-day war by acquiring the Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, also a fulfillment of Luke 21:24. Jesus said the generation which saw this would not pass away until "all these things have happened." June, 1967 was Jewish year 5727. If a generation is 40 years, then 5727 + 40 = 5767 (which coincides with A.D. 2007). Year 5767 minus seven years (possibly Daniel's 70th week) = **5760**.

- Counting multiple books as one (e.g., 1 and 2 Samuel), Revelation is book number **57** in the Bible. Book **57** verse **60** happens to be Revelation 3:11: "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown." Counting numbered books also, Revelation is the 66th book of the Bible, making verse 3:11 verse number **66:60!**

- Finally, here are some more fascinating tidbits: (1) A cube has six sides, eight corners and twelve edges, and 6 X 8 X 12 = **576**, showing the importance of the number in God's design. (2) The gematria of "Messiah the Prince" in Daniel 9:25 = **576**. (3) Similarly, "He shall appear in His glory" in Psalm 102:16 = **576**. (4) Oddly, there are **5,760** grains in one pound (troy) of gold. Gold is symbolic of royalty and the coming King. (5) On the first day of the Jewish year **5760**, monster hurricane Floyd was born, one of the largest in history, menacing

the entire East Coast of the U.S. Multiplied, the Hebrew gematria for FLOYD (pe, lamed, vaw, yod, dalet) = **5760** (00), a pointed reminder of Psalm 98:7-9: "Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it... For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness he shall judge the world."

• **Added later:** This is really strange. Just as I was finishing this report, I received a news item from Israel about an Israeli-based organization calling Jews all over the world to "come home to the land of Israel before it is too late." The source was quoted as saying, "... classic Jewish sources indicate that during the Jewish year 5760 natural disasters, man-made catastrophes and international conflicts could occur throughout the world in an unprecedented manner."

Are all these things merely coincidences? Knowing the sovereignty and omnipotence of God, rabbis have said, "Coincidence is not a kosher word." We do not know what it all means, but there seems no doubt that the Jewish year **5760** is somehow important in God's economy. On the modern Jewish calendar, the year runs from September 11, 1999 to September 30, 2000. However, on the true biblical calendar as God prescribed to Moses, the beginning date varies slightly. The year **5760** would have begun on the seventh new moon, October 9, 1999.

More on Solomon. If Solomon's reign is symbolic of the Millennium, there may be further symbolism in Solomon's temple, a symbolic picture of God's perfect temple (the church) which He has been building. The temple was 120 cubits high. There were also 120 priests blowing trumpets (2 Chronicles 5:12), and the queen of Sheba gave Solomon 120 talents of gold (9:9). Jewish history is marked by Jubilee periods of 50-year duration. The 120-cubit height and other 120s may represent $120 \times 50 = 6,000$, the period allotted for the earth lease. [Note: The people were "clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres" (5:11). It sounds like a picture of a heavenly scene to me!]

More on 120 Jubilees. Genesis 6:3 says that man's "days shall be limited to 120 years," which Dr. Reginald Cherry says in his book, *The Bible Cure*, is the full limit of man's cell duplication capability. However, this 120 may likewise refer to the full limit of man's capability to duplicate himself $\frac{3}{4}$ 120 Jubilees, or 6,000 years. Israel's Jubilee celebration (Leviticus 25) was filled with end-time typology: (1) It began with a "trumpet" sound. (2) It was a proclamation of liberty throughout the land. (3) It was a holy time. (4) It was a time of rest. (5) It meant the return of possessions to its owner. (6) It was a time of enjoyment of the harvest. Sounds like the Millennium?

13th century rabbi prophecy. A prophecy from a 13th century Rabbi Simeon recently came to my attention. It was found in an article by the respected Bible scholar J.R. Church, who properly includes caution, as with all prophecy:

"When the sixtieth year shall have passed over the threshold of the sixth millennium, the God of heaven will visit the daughter of Jacob with a preliminary remembrance. Another six-and-a-half years will then elapse, and there will be a full remembrance of her... Then all the nations shall combine together against the daughter of Jacob in order to drive her from the world. It is that time that is written, 'And it is a time of trouble unto Jacob, but out of it he shall be saved (Jeremiah 30:7).' The children of Ishmael will at the same time rouse all the nations of the world to come to war against Jerusalem to battle (Zechariah 14:2)... Happy are those who will be left alive at the end of the sixth millennium to enter on the Sabbath, for that is the day set apart by the Holy One on which to effect the union of souls and to cull new souls to join those that are still on earth, as it is written, 'And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written into life in Jerusalem' (Isaiah 4:3)." (Emphasis supplied.)

When Rabbi Simeon said, "Happy are those who will be left alive at the end of the sixth millennium," he was talking about us! It is interesting that this was written some 700 years ago. Unless God supernaturally showed him, the rabbi had no idea that the nation of Israel would be restored in 1948, or that Jerusalem would finally come under Jewish control in 1967. Of course, he could have calculated that the end of 6,000 years and the year 5760 would coincide. If this prophecy is from God, something each much judge, what will be the "preliminary remembrance" in the year 5760? Then what will it be six and one-half years later? We can only speculate, and watch. But surely no one can accuse this rabbi 700 years ago of being guilty of "millennium madness." Nor can anyone so accuse those early century Jewish and Christian writers who looked to the end of the second millennium $\frac{3}{4}$ not the first, third, fourth or any other millennium $\frac{3}{4}$ for the coming of Messiah.

From Adam to Messiah. Ancient rabbis believed that as there were 3,000 years from King Adam to King David, there would also be 3,000 years from King David to King Messiah. Scholars say the latter 3,000 years from David's coronation concluded in 1999. We must be closer than most imagine!

"**Jesus is Coming**" is the title of a torn, tattered, yellowed, coverless old book I have in my library. Published in 1908 and written by William Eugene Blackstone (1841-1935), the book is endorsed by historical giants of the faith such as R.A. Torrey and A.B. Simpson. Written 40 years before the reestablishment of Israel, it speaks of weakened Turkish rule over Palestine and with interesting foresight says, "there is considerable talk of a Jewish state." The author says, "May we not conclude that the Lord is even now setting 'His hand a second time' for the restoration of His people?" A postscript written in a later edition a few years later spoke of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, and Zionists declaring "the beginning of redemption" and "the days of Messiah."

In his endorsement to the book, R.A. Torrey said that this book made the coming of Jesus a living reality to him. He added these intriguing words: "I had already become convinced that our Lord's coming would be before the millennium, having reached that conclusion in studying the works of the Danish theologian, Martenson."

Torrey's words were written 91 years ago. Will they prove prophetic? We shall soon see. If not before the millennium, then surely soon. When will the new millennium begin? Some will observe it at midnight, December 31, 1999. Others argue that technically it will not begin until midnight, December 31, 2000. Most of the entire intervening period falls within Jewish year **5760**.

We do not know what if anything will transpire in Jewish year **5760**, but no doubt we are in a small and unique window of history. The "blessed hope" may not be many days away.

ADDED NOTE, OCTOBER, 2001. I considered removing this article; however, the period 1998 until now has been so prophetically profound I decided to leave it. I believe the Jewish year 5760 was, indeed, an important prophetic year. We are in a very pregnant window of time. The latest Palestinian Intifida began at the end of year 5760, in September 2000, with the World Trade Center disaster one year later. Keep looking up!