

TEXT: Revelation 10:1-7

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and [his] left [foot] on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets
(Revelation 10:1-7, KJS).

INTRODUCTION:

A very popular and entertaining movie of a few years ago tells the story of a pilot flying over the Kalahari desert of Southern Africa in a small plane. He mindlessly tosses a coke bottle out the window of his plane. The bottle lands with a thud in the soft sands of the desert. The story revolves around a group of Bushmen who find the bottle and who had never seen glass before. This strange new thing which fell from the heavens (and thus the gods) brings many changes into the life of the Bushmen who eventually declare it to be an "evil thing" and decide to throw it over the edge of the earth.

One of the notable scenes of the movie is of a little bushman who makes his way across the Kalahari with no concept of time. It is stated, "Every day is Tuesday for the bushman, or Thursday or Saturday."

A few scenes later in the movie the hurried pace of life in the modern city of Durban, South Africa is depicted. Workers rush to get to work, take a 15-minute break, and then must look busy again. Their life is dominated by the clock.

When God's Clock Runs Down

Written by Dr. Harold R. Carpenter - Last Updated Sunday, 07 August 2011 19:06

Men have been marking time since the early astrologers of Mesopotamia marked the passage of the seasons by their observations of the heavens.

Later men began to mark more specific time with obelisks and dolmans whose shadows precisely marked the change of seasons. The obelisks eventually became sundials to divide the day into specific periods of time.

Consider the case of Hezekiah in Isaiah 38:

4 Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,

5 Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

7 And this [shall be] a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;

8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down (Isaiah 38:4-8, KJS).

Somewhere around 100 B.C. the Greeks invented the horologion or water clock to mark even more precisely the hours of the day by slowly dripping water.

By the 14th century Europeans had created large mechanical clocks which were placed in church towers to give order to its cities and the lives of their inhabitants.

Around 1675 Huygens developed a spring mechanism which replaced the pendulum of the earlier large tower clocks and somewhat smaller grandfather clocks. This made it possible to make even smaller clocks and eventually even wristwatches.

Perhaps you would like to join with me in giving a long "booo" to Huygens for his infernal invention!

In 1967 the National Institute of Standards and Technology was able to precisely define a second as 9,192,631,770 oscillations of the cesium atom. In January of 2002 the NIST's latest cesium standard was capable of keeping time to about 30 billionths of a second per year.

I was struck during the past few days by remarks from our President and our Secretary of State as they used expressions like "The clock is ticking for Iraq," or "Time has run out for Saddam Hussein." A senator remarked, "We are on a count-down to war."

A careful scrutiny of Sacred Scripture reveals that since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden we have been on **a countdown to eternity**. This morning I would like for us to **consider three times when God's clock runs down in Scripture**

I. GOD'S CLOCK RAN DOWN ON THE RACE OF MAN IN NOAH'S DAY

1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years

(Genesis 6:1-3, KJS).

A. Scripture tells us that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.¹ Man in flight from God². Man in rebellion against God^B. The descendents of Seth are generally referred to as "the sons of God" while the descendents of Cain are referred to as the "sons of men."

C. God's attitude of the descendents of Cain and of those who follow his example is found in Jude:

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward and perished in the gainsaying of Core

(Jude 1:11, KJS).

D. Moses, in the book of Genesis, describes anti-diluvium man:

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Genesis 6:6, KJS). E.

Scripture does not give us intimate detail of the wickedness of man in this period but Peter in the New Testament tells us that God was longsuffering:

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18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water (1 Peter 3:18-20, KJS). F. Sin produced a countdown!1. 120 years and counting2. A scoffing and unrepentant generation3. Noah a preacher of righteousness

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; (2 Peter 2:4-6, KJS).

G. The countdown reaches zero:1. A mist from the face of the earth--Genesis 2:62. Rain an unknown phenomenon3. Ships and shipbuilding an unknown technology4. The flood a reality / not a myth: The record of the flood found in practically every major segment of the world's populationa. The Gilgamesh Epic of Mesopotamiab. The Criteria and Atlantis of Plato and the Greeksc. Popol Vu of the Mayas and Chichicastenango of Guatemalad. The Guarani of the forests of Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Argentina5. A flood like none before and none since

17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.

18 And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that [were] under the whole heaven, were covered.

20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

22 All in whose nostrils [was] the breath of life, of all that [was] in the dry [land], died.

23 And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained [alive], and they that [were] with him in the ark.

24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days (Genesis 7:17-24, KJS). 6. Consider:a.

Walls of water for 40 daysb. Cities and towns washed awayc. Man and beasts swept away by raging torrentsd. 15 cubits above the highest mountain (Mt. Everest)e. every living substance was destroyed!7. Scoffers quit scoffing and

evil men called upon God when the clock had already run down!

II. GOD'S CLOCK RUNS DOWN ON INDIVIDUAL MAN

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A. Sinful Israel provoked God to a countdown on each sinful man.

1. Ezekiel:

4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4, KJS).

2. Proverbs:

20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, [saying],

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices (Proverbs 1:20-31, KJS). B. Rejection of conviction by the Holy Spirit results in rejection of the individual by God.

C. Repeated trampelling of the mercies of God results in the withdrawal of God's Spirit.

D. Noted French existentialist, Jean-Paul Sartre, squandered his "day of grace." He who boasted that he had killed God and had lifted the fear of hell from man wrote in one of his last works, "Oh, God, we were like two ships which passed in the night. You were there, and I missed you!"

III. GOD'S CLOCK WILL RUN DOWN ON HUMAN HISTORY

A. Revelation chapter 10 takes us to the brief interval between the sixth and the seventh trumpets in the outpouring of God's wrath in "The Day of the Lord":

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow [was] upon his head, and his face [was] as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and [his] left [foot] on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as [when] a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to

heaven,

6 And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: (Revelation 10:1-6, KJS). B. The seventh trumpet contains the seven bowls of God's wrath which are enumerated in Revelation chapter 16.

C. If you think the flood was bad, "You aint seen anything yet!" to use an Arkansas expression.

D. The expression "there should be time no longer" may be interpreted in two ways:a. No more delay.b. No more marking of the days and years of man (time).E. It makes no difference; it comes out the same in the wash!

F. Events taking place in the Middle East tell us unmistakably that we are in a countdown to eternity and God's judgment.

CONCLUSION:

Just a little over 55 years ago, artist Martyl Langsdorf, the wife of a nuclear physicist who worked on the Manhattan project, designed the cover for the June issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. It is commonly called the "Doomsday Clock." Its hands pointed to seven minutes until midnight, implying a nuclear holocaust which would bring about the destruction of the human race. Each month the hands have been moved forward or backward by a few minutes, depending upon the political situation of the moment.

Langsdorf's Doomsday Clock gives us a human perspective on an expected human catastrophe. John's Revelation gives us a divine prophecy of coming world judgment. While the sources are different the perspective is quite similar. We are on a countdown to eternity. Time is running out on God's mercy!

The message of the hour is very clear. It is the same as that of Noah's day, "Repent or be damned!"

Only a fool would risk his eternal soul for a few moments of doubtful worldly pleasure.

Words fail to give a clearer warning than the apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:

26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there

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remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance [belongeth] unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 [It is] a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31, KJS). <>

This is the outline of the sermon Dr. Harold Carpenter preached 02 March 2003. Dr. Carpenter and his wife served as missionaries for twenty years. Dr. Carpenter also taught missions for twenty years at Central Bible College. He has studied biblical prophecy for fifty years. He now serves as Pastor of Fair Grove Assembly of God, Fair Grove MO.

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity—Peter Meiderlin 1626.

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