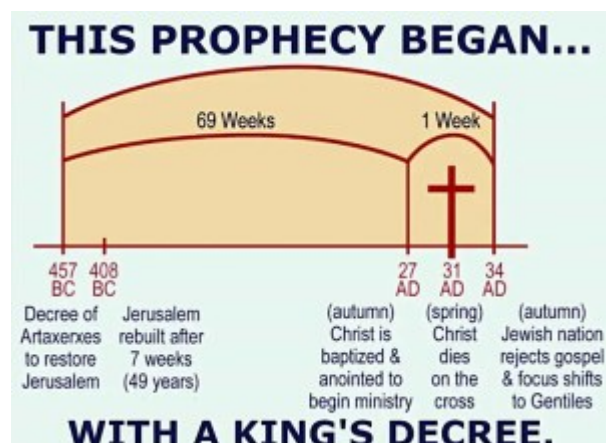


The Approaching End of the Age – Part IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter II. The Week In Scripture.



Continued from [Part IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter I. The Week in Relation to the Periodicity of Vital Phenomena.](#)

THERE IS A CHRONOLOGICAL SYSTEM IN SCRIPTURE.—IT IS A SYSTEM OF WEEKS.—THIS SYSTEM IS TRACEABLE THROUGHOUT THE LAW, THE PROPHETS, AND THE GOSPEL.—THE WEEK IN THE MOSAIC RITUAL.—THE WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY.—THE WEEK IN PROPHECY.—THE WEEK OF DAYS —OF WEEKS—OF MONTHS—OF YEARS—OF WEEKS OF YEARS —OF YEARS OF YEARS—OF MILLENARIES.

FROM the foregoing facts it is abundantly evident that the hand of the Creator has regulated a vast variety of world-wide vital phenomena, by a *law of weeks*: that a septiform periodicity has been, by God Himself, impressed upon nature.

The Holy Scriptures claim to be a revelation from the God of nature, and an orderly and consistent system of chronology is one marked feature of the sacred volume. *Now it is a most noteworthy and indisputable fact, that this system is, from first to last, a system of weeks: septiform periodicity is stamped upon the Bible, as conspicuously and even more so, than on nature.*

The whole of its chronology—beginning with the order of creation unfolded in its earliest chapters, including the entire order of Providence revealed in its succeeding portion, and the typical and actual chronology of redemption itself—is regulated by the law of weeks. The times prior to the existence of man; the times recorded by the histories of the Pentateuch; the times enacted by the Mosaic ritual; the times traceable in Jewish history; and the times unfolded by the prophets,—all are without exception characterized by this feature. The actual length of the days of creation, whether longer or shorter, does not affect this statement, for the septiformity of creation chronology is equally clear, whatever may have been the measures of the creation week; and the Bible system includes, as we shall see, weeks on a great variety of scales.

The Levitical law contained a ceremonial system which shadowed forth good things to come, and the chronology of its observances, which was one of its most marked features, was as typical as all the rest—typical of the chronology of redemption history. The Levitical chronology was a system of weeks on various scales of magnitude; one which employed the main natural divisions of time, the day, month, and year, as units for its weeks, and which also employed the largest of these weeks, as a unit for still larger septiform periods. And as the complete chronology of the typical law foreshadowed the wonderful history of redemption, so the chronology of Old and New Testament *prophecy*, has reference to the same; for prophecy is only history anticipated, as types are history foreshown in action. But the views of history given in divinely inspired prophecy, are wider, and more comprehensive than can be found elsewhere, and therefore in prophetic chronology, we find periods of vaster scope—plainly foretold, or obscurely intimated—and above all a key to the whole plan of history. In this grand prophetic chronology, we trace the same system; it is throughout septiform, it consists of a *series of weeks*.

Here, the legal week of seven years, the week whose unit is a solar year, is multiplied tenfold (70 years) and seventy-fold (490 years); and here on the same principle, only on a higher scale, as the year had been previously employed as the unit of a week, so it is now employed as the unit of a year; this is the year-day system of chronological symbolic prophecy.

Weeks of such years are appointed as the measures of vast periods of history, distinguished one from the other by moral features, and by varied degrees of Divine revelation, such as the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian dispensations.

In all these different departments of Scripture, we shall find a uniform consistent chronological plan—the *week* reigns supreme; it measures alike the briefest and the longest periods, and can be traced in various forms, in the law, in the prophets, and in the Gospel. It runs like a golden thread through the entire texture of the Bible; and this fact alone, were there no other evidence on the point, proves a *unity of design*, pervading this collection of the writings of about forty different authors of various lands and ages, which argues it the product of one inspiring mind,—the mind of the great Creator. On the world His hands have fashioned, and on the Word His Spirit has inspired, He has stamped in equally indelible characters, *the week*, as the divinely selected measure of human time.

In connection with the first appearance of the week—on the opening page of Scripture in the narrative of the creation,—we find an exposition of its profound meaning, the moral object and end of God in its selection. It is the period that leads up to, and terminates in, the *rest of God*. We read, “On the seventh day God ended his work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, *because* that in it He had rested from all his work, which God created and made.” The same reason is assigned for the enjoined observance of the Sabbath, in the law given at Sinai: “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, . . . for in six days the Lord

made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."

The rest of God, and of man his creature, with God, in the enjoyment of the results of the work of God,—results which God Himself sees to be very good,—this is the end attained, at the close of the week; this is the sabbath. This was the creation sabbath, soon, alas! marred by sin; this shall be the redemption sabbath, when the second great work of God, the new creation in Christ Jesus, is complete. No sooner had sin destroyed the sabbath rest of creation, than the great Creator, in his invincible goodness, began to work again. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said Christ; and such is still the case, for redemption is not yet complete, and the rest of God, and of man with God, is still future.

The Hebrew word translated "week" means seven, and would designate any period composed of seven shorter periods, whether days, weeks, years, decades, centuries, millenaries, or any other unit. The following were the various weeks, appointed under the Jewish ritual, for perpetual observance in Israel:—

1. The week of days. Gen. ii. 2, 3; Exod. xx,
2. The week of weeks. Pentecost. Lev. xxiii.
3. The week of months, Jewish sacred year. Lev, xxiii.
4. The week of years. Sabbatic year law. Lev. xxv,
5. The week of weeks of years. The Jubilee. Lev. xxv.

(i) THE WEEK OF DAYS.

Taking them in the above order, we glance first at the natural week, of seven days, established in Eden, and the perpetual observance of which was enjoined under the law. To this week the Divine hand has attached, as we have seen, the idea of labour issuing in rest, of the stages of creature development terminating in maturity, and thus of the attainment by the creature, of moral and spiritual perfection. The sabbath expressed the entire complacency of God, and the entire satisfaction of man, in all that God had created and made.

This was the period appointed under the Levitical law, for many of those consecrations, which were the impartation of ceremonial or typical perfection. The process of consecrating Aaron and his sons, to the work of the priesthood, that they might minister before the Lord, for Israel, lasted seven days. (Exod. xxix, 35.) That also of sanctifying the altar, that it might become an altar most holy, imparting sanctity to all that touched it, lasted similarly *seven days*, (Exod. xxix. 37.)

Thus also the period of the duration of ceremonial uncleanness, was in a number of cases, limited by seven days, at the close of which ceremonial purity was restored, On the birth of a male child for instance, a woman was considered unclean for *seven days* (Lev. xii, 2), nor could the child, during that week, be circumcised. Circumcision could not take place till the eighth day.

The firstborn of cattle devoted to God were not to be offered during the first seven days. "Seven days shall it be with its dam, and on the eighth day thou shalt give it to Me" (Exod. xxii, 30). "On the eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Lev. xxii. 27).

Various other ceremonial observances, of a similar nature, were enacted in Israel. Defilement from a running issue, or from an issue of blood, lasted seven days. (Lev. xv. 13-19.) The suspected leper was to be shut up seven days, and even after he was pronounced clean, he was still to tarry abroad out of his tent seven days. (Lev. xiii. 14.) Miriam, on account of her leprosy, was shut out of the camp seven days. (Num. xii, 14.) The house, or the garment infected with the plague of leprosy, were similarly to be shut up seven days.

Defilement by contact with the dead, also endured seven days, that is the ceremonial purity forfeited by this contact, could not be restored in less than seven days. (Num. xix. 11.) Thus the purification of the men, after the slaughter of the Midianites, lasted seven days. (Num. xxxi. 19.)

It is much insisted on in the law that the feast of unleavened bread should last "seven days." Under pain of death, all leaven was, during this period, to be put away from Jewish dwellings, (Exod. xii.) 'The feast of tabernacles also lasted seven days: "Ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days, and ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord, seven days in the year; it shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month; ye shall dwell in booths seven days" (Lev. xxiii. 36, 39).

On the occasion of the siege of Jericho, seven priests bearing seven trumpets, compassed the city with the men of war, for seven days, and on the seventh day they went round it seven times, when the city fell.

The week, with its concluding sabbath, is therefore deeply engraven in a variety of ways, on the whole Jewish ritual and history. Nor on Jewish history alone. Although in the Christian dispensation, the eighth day, or first day of a new week, is substituted for the creation sabbath, indicating that rest is to be found only in a new creation, only in resurrection, —yet still the weekly division of time, and the weekly day of holy rest, continue, witnessing as ever to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. For,—like the Lord's supper, which shows forth his death till He come,—the sabbath, and the Lord's day which has taken its place, glance both backward and onward. The first day of the week recalls the glad morning of the resurrection, the completion of the redeeming work of Christ, just as the sabbath recalled the conclusion of the creation work of God; and it foretells the remaining rest, when they that are Christ's shall rise at his coming. Thus we may say, that three hundred thousand earthly Sabbaths line the road that lies behind the people of God, pointing each with outstretched hand, like so many guide-posts, in the same direction, and agreeing with overwhelming unanimity in their testimony to the blessed fact, that there remaineth a sabbatism for the people of God.

(ii.) THE WEEK OF WEEKS.

Next in order to the week of days came the *week of weeks*. This was the period appointed to elapse between the first two of the great annual gatherings of the Jewish sacred year, Passover and Pentecost. Of the deep meaning of these ordinances, as unveiled by the sequence of events, connected with the true paschal sacrifice, we pause not here to speak, as we shall have to allude to it, in another connection, further on. We simply call attention to the ordinance, as one instance of the law of weeks, impressed on Jewish ritual. "And ye shall count unto you, from the morrow after the sabbath from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering, *seven sabbaths* shall be complete. Even unto the morrow after the *seventh sabbath* shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord" (Lev. xxiii. 15)."

Thus in every Jewish year there occurred not only fifty-two weeks of days, each with its concluding Sabbath, but a week of weeks, with its closing Pentecostal celebrations, full of hidden hopes of resurrection rest.

(iii) THE WEEK OF MONTHS.

The entire circle of the feasts of the Lord, ordained in Leviticus, is comprised within the first *seven months* of the year. The *sacred* portion of the Jewish year therefore, its complete calendar of divinely ordained religious ceremonies, prefiguring the history of redemption, occupied a week of months. It commenced with the month Abib or Nisan, on the fourteenth day of which the Exodus took place, in memory of which the annual feast of Passover was instituted. There followed each in its appointed season, the feast of unleavened bread, and the first-fruit sheaf, the feast of weeks or Pentecost, the feast of trumpets, the great day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. This last was held in the seventh month, and with it closed, for the year, the special "feasts of the Lord." Thus the period marked off for holy convocations, from the Jewish year, was septiform in character; a *week whose days were months*, contained, by Divine direction, the observances of Israel's ecclesiastical year; while the feasts themselves, and the order in which they occurred, had undoubted reference to antitypical events, on the scale of ages.

(iv.) THE WEEK OF YEARS.

It was the will of God that not only the *people*, but the *land* of Israel, should keep sabbath. "The Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, then shall *the land* keep a sabbath unto the Lord. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land" (Lev. xxv. 1-5). The Hebrew servant similarly was to serve six years, and go out free in the seventh. (Exod. xxi. 2.)

The period thus marked off had exactly the same character as the week with its six days of toil and seventh of rest; it is simply the week on the scale of years. And it is worthy of notice that the observance of the ordinances respecting the land during the sabbatic years, was *possible* only by means of a stupendous miracle, to be repeated every seven years. "If ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase. Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years" (Lev. xxv. 20, 21). Here was a law perfectly harmonious as we have seen, and shall yet see more fully, with the order of sacred seasons observed by the Jews; a law in which there was nothing foreign to their whole system, but which was on the contrary an integral part of it, and yet it was made to depend, for the possibility of its fulfilment, upon a special periodical interposition of Divine power, as wide in its range, as the necessities of an entire nation. No merely human legislation would ever have originated such a law, on account of its incapacity to provide the conditions needful for its observance. This miracle in the land, was, on the scale of *years*, what the doubling of the manna, in the wilderness, was on the scale of *days*; a miraculous arrangement, to render possible the keeping of the prescribed sabbath, There, the gift of manna was doubled every sixth day; while in the land of promise, the produce was trebled every sixth year, the object in each case being to secure the sabbath rest,

(v.) THE WEEK OF WEEKS OF YEARS.

The largest week ordained in the Mosaic ritual was the week of weeks of years, the period including therefore seven sabbatic years, with their intervening years of toil, forty-nine years.

"Thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A JUBILEE shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you; ye shall not eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession" (Lev. xxv. 8-13). This larger week is perfectly harmonious in character with all the previous ones; during its earlier portion, bondage, debt, and poverty lasted, at its close they passed away and disappeared. The jubilee was a year of rest and joy and liberty, that foreshadowed more than any preceding sabbath, the *full and varied* blessedness of the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Once at least in every ordinary lifetime, would this great prophetic ordinance arrive, laden with its wealth of joy and peace, and glowing with its beams of hope and promise.

In the light then of these five enduring ordinances,—ordinances some of which

are observed by the Jews even to our own day,—ordinances embodied in the Bible, and presented to the study of every generation of the people of God—in the light of the weekly sabbath observed from Eden onwards; of the Pentecostal sabbath; of the sevenfold sabbath of the final feast of tabernacles; of the sabbatic seventh year; and of the yet more sabbatic year of jubilee; it is impossible to deny that a *septiform chronology was divinely appointed in the elaborate ritual of Judaism*. And further, since that ritual was unquestionably typical, this fact may prepare us to find a *similar law of weeks governing the chronology of the antitypical events*.

(vi) THE WEEK OF DECADES.

But not in the Pentateuch only is this law of weeks to be traced; it pervades the Old Testament, and embraces not Jews only, but Gentiles. Of the whole human race the words are true, “The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Ps. xc. 10). Human life is a week, a *week of decades*, and the last decade, the evening of life, is the time of rest rather than of action. But there is no sabbath in man’s life, in the fullest sense of the word; no rest, till it closes in the sad dark rest of the grave; sin has introduced the curse instead of the sabbath, and death with its dreary gloom, ends the lifetime week of sinners. But the exception only proves the rule, and bears its testimony to the true nature of the week. The failure of bodily and mental power which takes place generally about the age of seventy, attests the operation of this law of septiform periodicity, on the entire human race, while the recognition of the fact by the psalmist suggests the perfect harmony of this providential arrangement, with all the sabbatic legislation we have been considering.

This period of seventy years is besides a very notable one historically. It marked the duration of the captivity of Judah in Babylon. It was predicted by Jeremiah, that in consequence of their inveterate idolatry Israel should be carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, “the whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon *seventy years*” (Jer. xxv, 11), And subsequently a second time the same limit was assigned: “For thus saith the Lord, after *seventy years* be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place” (Jer. xxix. 10). A dark and terrible week to Judah were those seven decades; the daughters of Israel hung their harps upon the willows by the rivers of Babylon, and wept as they remembered Zion. The desolate land enjoyed her sabbaths, while her sons languished in exile. But this week also closed with restoration and liberty, when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, and her children felt like those that dream, as they sang, “The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.”

(vii.) THE WEEK OF WEEKS OF DECADES.

It was towards the close of this long and dark week of the captivity, that there was revealed to Daniel a still larger week; a week each of whose days was to equal the captivity week, a week of seven times “seventy years,” or “seventy weeks” of years—a period of 490 years. This may be termed the

restoration week; it was the time that elapsed between Artaxerxes' decree to restore and to build Jerusalem, and the days of "Messiah the Prince," indeed it was revealed as *measuring the interval*, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

Had Israel known the day of her visitation, and received her Messiah when He appeared, what a glorious sabbath would have closed this week! Its seventh day did actually include the incarnation and life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and,—since when He came unto his own his own received Him not,—it included also His atoning death, His triumphant resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost; the rejection of Israel, the destruction of their temple, and the first gathering-in of the Gentiles. So that even on this scale of centuries, God has adhered to the law we have noted above, and brought in the day of the greatest blessings the world has ever known, as the seventh stage of a previous history. The period is however designated as "seventy weeks" rather than as one week—and it is therefore even more conspicuously an instance of the prevalence, even in long stretches of history, of the law of weeks.

(viii.) THE WEEK OF YEARS OF YEARS.

Scripture presents us—in symbolic prophecy—with a week on a scale of greater magnitude than any of these, in the "SEVEN TIMES" of Daniel. As we shall have to treat more fully of this in the following chapter, we forbear to enlarge on it now. It is a week of years, whose days are years, in other words a week, each of whose days consists of 360 solar years. Its second half is frequently mentioned in symbolic prophecy, under various designations which all indicate one and the same period, 1260 natural years. This gigantic week includes the entire "Times of the Gentiles," the times during which supreme power on earth, is by God committed to Gentile instead of Jewish rulers. It dates from the captivities, and is still running its course, though rapidly nearing its close.

(ix.) THE WEEK OF MILLENARIES.

And all these various weeks, are included in a *sublime week of millenaries*, which is clearly intimated, if not distinctly revealed, in the Word of God. In the Apocalypse as we have seen, the glorious reign on earth of Christ and his saints, which is to be the world's real sabbath, and Israel's real jubilee, the antitype and fulfilment of the types and shadows of the all embracing sabbatic law we have traced through Scripture—the great sabbatism—is six times over spoken of as a period of "a thousand years." This millennial age, being the true *sabbath* of the world, must be regarded as a *seventh day*—the seventh day of a week, whose six preceding unsabbatic days, were of *equal duration* with this its sabbath. So that the last page of the Bible shows, that the creation week whose occurrences are narrated on its first page, was the germ and type of the world's chronology, and foreshadowed the whole course of time; that the sabbath of Paradise, pointed to a great sabbath of a thousand years, with which God—to whom a thousand years are as one day—has from the beginning purposed to bless mankind; the seventh day of

the great week of time, which is to introduce the eternal state—the new creation.

The system of times and seasons thus unfolded, bears the stamp of divinity: there is a consistency and a grandeur about it, as well as an evident end and meaning, which are worthy of the Bible, worthy of God! Its connection with creation, with the moral law, with the chronology of redemption, both typical and antitypical; its connection with the most solemn and deeply interesting episodes in Jewish experience and history; with the advent of Messiah, and with the most important events in his human life; its relation to various and distant lands, and to so many important epochs, Jewish, Gentile, and Christian; its existence amid the eras of history, and its adoption in the visions of prophecy, all these features unite *to stamp it as Divine*; while the fact that it is identical with the system impressed by the hand of God on nature, leaves no room for doubt on the subject.

We have been considering not theories, but facts; we have adduced, not opinions or fanciful interpretations, but a mass of unquestionable scientific and authentic historical evidence. Is it by chance, that the law of septiform periodicity is engraven so widely and so deeply on the vital phenomena of the animal creation, and of the human family? Is it by chance that the existence, growth, and functional activity, of every individual of our race, is, both in health and disease, regulated by a law of weeks, of various magnitudes? Is it a mere curious coincidence, that a weekly rest, has from creation onwards been observed by men? And that the Jewish nation for three thousand five hundred years, have acknowledged and obeyed a ritual system, whose constantly recurring periods from the briefest to the longest, were weeks of diverse dimensions? Was it by accident that historical episodes like the Babylonish captivity, and the restoration era, were weeks of still greater magnitude, and that even the mighty dispensations of providence are measured by the same septiform scale?

No! These facts are too far-reaching, too all-comprehending, too universal, to admit of any other explanation than the existence of what men call a law of nature, that is a rule ordained by the great Creator Himself. A law that regulates ten thousand phenomena, physiological; and historical, from the transformation of an insect, to the majestic revolutions of redemption history—a law which no power on earth can alter, nor any lapse of ages obliterate; a law which, as we shall hereafter show, is inscribed in letters of light, by the glittering orbs of the solar system in their ceaseless revolutions, in the realms of space, such a law can have but *one* Source; to no other can its enactment be attributed, than to the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting!

Our next chapter, unfolding the operation of the law of weeks in the general course of human history, will strengthen this conviction.

Continued in [TPart IV. Section II. The Law of Completion In Weeks. Chapter III. The Week In History. Part 1.](#)

I am convicted by this article that I should take a day off once a week from working on this website.