

Dr. Ernest Martin's Home Study Course: Lesson 2

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped Home Study Course made between 1977-98 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D. Former Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

HOME STUDY LESSON 2 PRINCIPLES OF CHRONOLOGY

The Bible is a book of history. There are three elements to history:

1. Events, both historical and prophetic in the future.
2. Where, or location, local, region, and world geography.
3. When, or what is the time frame in relation to other events.

Be aware of the chronology or the history of the time

In English, we have the simple single syllable word 'time'. Chronology is a four syllable word which sounds a bit daunting, but means the same thing.

When studying, as we read, be alert to catch any words which refer to 'time'. For instance: minute, morning, evening, day, week, month, harvest, year, first, last, before, now, then, after, and so on.

Then consider how any of these words fits in with the context, and to the larger picture in relation to the time frame that is being referred to, and also perhaps to the overall plan of God for His children.

None of the 'time' words in the Bible are in relation to the 'Gregorian Calendar' devised by Pope Gregory that is used in our current world.

All Biblical 'time' is in relation to the Solar/Lunar calendar, and all the words for 'time' have a direct relation to God's Calendar with the exception of the 'week'. The 'week' is not directly related to the month or the year. The number seven, and this seven day period 'week' and the Sabbath made for man is one of God's 'mysteries'.

Mark 1:14-15 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

The first thing as Jesus began to preach the gospel, he is marking the time frame, and fulfilling prophecy from Isaiah 9:1-2 Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

The Olivet Prophecy in Matthew 24 was given just two days before Christ was crucified. Jesus said that the Temple would be destroyed and not one stone would be left upon another. The disciples asked “When”?

Note adverbs and the other words listed above that emphasise timing: when, then, after, before, until.

Then Christ lists the things which have to happen, wars, famine, pestilence, heavenly signs etc., in verses 4-31. Then to answer the question “when”? He says in verse 32-39:

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

All these things include the possibility of all fleshly life on earth could be destroyed.

Matthew 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Whenever the possibility of that event existed, and that time frame came to pass, it was not then! But it is certainly possible now with the formidable weapons that have been developed in our era.

Matthew 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

The phrase “this generation” has caused endless speculation. It could mean forty years, but there are different ‘generations’ lengths mentioned in the Bible. At the time of Christ, not even the angels knew the timing.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Those drowned in the flood did not see it coming! What were they doing that God decided to kill everyone on earth apart from eight people? They were “eating, drinking and marrying and giving in marriage”, people have always done these things so why mention if? Could it be that they were eating all the wrong things destroying their health; drinking and getting drunk and committing foul acts; and men marrying men and women marrying women like they are now; all of which it is a total abomination to God?

Is it reasonable to guess that something really bad was going on with those people just before the flood? Of that there is not much doubt as God had decided to destroy them all for their behaviour. that Jesus is saying it is going to be like that when He is about to come, people will think He delays His coming or not realize it is happening.

So chronology has always been a difficult subject to unravel. Chronology has been misused for aeons, with people setting dates, or alluding to them, and they have always been disappointed!

The disciples did not have the Holy Spirit at this time when Jesus was speaking to them, and they were still slow to understand, because having the Holy Spirit indwelling is a vital and crucial factor in our understanding God's Word and His plan.

How can you know that you have God's Holy Spirit? If we ask for and invite the help of the Holy Spirit, and we find that we are not only open to new knowledge and understanding of the scriptures, but also begin to see things in a new “Light”, that “Light” when it is consistent with the entirety of the Holy Bible can only come from God.

A second check is when you find others around you are either ‘not interested’, or not open to new understanding, and may even be somewhat hostile to your ‘strange’ beliefs . Perhaps criticism from those close to you of your beliefs might intensify, for as it says: Matthew 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

But Daniel said in 12:4 that **(the)** knowledge {of his prophecies} would increase at the time of the end, and it is happening right now!

Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

If you set a date you are wrong, it is pointless to do so. Christ is coming when you think not!

Matthew 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming;

Christ will not delay His coming. He will arrive exactly on schedule.

Matthew 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

All ten virgins had 'oil', a type of the Holy Spirit, but only the wise took extra oil, realizing that they could not know how long they were going to wait for the 'bridegroom'. A word to the wise! We can know the general time, but we cannot know the day or the hour.

It could certainly be on a day of Trumpets. Although that might sound logical, we cannot know! Many King's reigns started then.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Moses was used to create a calendar in Sinai. The Old Testament is for one group of people, and the New Testament is for another. Events, times, and peoples are different, but the whole plan of God is one coherent whole. Every piece of information we need is within the pages of the Bible. One day, it suggests that we might even have to ask Jews for new information!

In Genesis, God said, Genesis 1:3 "Let there be light". Light divides the day from the night that make up our 24 hour day.

Genesis 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for days, and for seasons, and years. This is talking about a calendar.

So the sun and the moon and the stars were created for signs (information), about days, seasons and years. A year is almost exactly 365¼ days. The first man and woman were created on a Friday, probably in the Autumn part of the year. The Sabbath has no astronomical basis, but it was made for man. Nor indeed has the 'week' of seven days. The number seven is one of God's mysteries.

In the Old Testament, the years, lifespans, and other year indications are counted from the 1st day of the 1st month, which is in the Autumn. That is until the time of the Exodus when God changed the basis of the calendar.

Exodus 12:1 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, 2 This month (Nisan – springing up, approximately our March/April) shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.

This was the inauguration of the ecclesiastical calendar for God's people Israel from that time then and forward.

Side B. This section is focussed on Chronology. Dr. Martin spent many years studying this subject in relation to his archeological work. He said chronology was like a very complex jigsaw puzzle in the Bible, most difficult to unravel. My notes on this subject are based on the fact that I have not spent years studying chronology. I find it very complex, and that it requires more knowledge than I have, even to begin to decipher the information Dr. Martin gives in this lecture, but I have done my best.

Then the Passover was given to the children of Israel on the night before they departed from Egypt. Protected by God, and freed from the "sin" of Egypt by the blood of the Lamb, picturing Christ's sacrifice to come.

Exodus 12:3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house:

So prior to the Exodus years were calculated from Autumn to Autumn, and after the Exodus they were calculated from Spring to Spring. The years before the Exodus from Autumn to Autumn in the first six chapters of

Genesis reveal some interesting secret clues about chronology. Everyone had the same official “birthday”, the first of Tishri, the first month of the New Year.

Genesis 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

The phrase “in the process of time” actually equals “the end of days”, or the end of one year, and the beginning of the next. This then was Autumn time, and Cain and Abel were bringing the fruits of their labours to God.

In the book of Jude, he says that Enoch was a prophet.

Jude 1:14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.

Enoch’s son was called Methusaleh, the longest living human being who lived 969 years, and he died. Methusaleh’s name given to him by his father who was a prophet. It means: “When he dies, it will be sent.” What will be sent? The flood! (It always pays to take note of the actual meaning of the names of the prophets.)

Genesis 5 gives the length of time each of the generations from Adam lived. From this list, it is possible to calculate when the flood happened. It was in the year 1656 from Creation, or 2369 B.C.

Genesis 5:27 And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years, and he died. So Methusaleh died, then the flood came.

Genesis 7:6 And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

Birthdays were counted from the first of the year, so everyone had the same birthday! Our spiritual ‘birthday’ will be Trumpets, the 1st of Tishri.

Genesis 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

The waters covered the earth, and it seems likely that water from the great fountains of the deep were added to by the melting of a band of ice that was in the ionosphere at that time causing torrential rain.

The waters covered the earth for just over a year.

Genesis 8:13 And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year (of Noah's life), in the first month, the first day of the month (and the 1st day of the year) (Trumpets), the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14 And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

The first day of the first month (Tishri) when the earth dried was the Day of Trumpets, in the Autumn.

The story of Joseph, taken from prison, and then set at the "right hand" of the Pharaoh in ONE DAY on the Day of Trumpets is also a type of what is going to happen to us at the time of our being changed or resurrected. We shall go from the "prison" of physical life, or death, to Glory in one day.

We shall meet Christ in the air, and then actually find ourselves in glory at the right hand of the Father. In a sense we are there now in allegory, in spiritual terms as we are "in Christ" who is in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

Genesis 41:1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. 14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

This happened on the first day of the new year, the day of Trumpets.

Genesis 41:39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: 40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

From the depths of the dungeon in disgrace, to number two in the land of Egypt **in one day!**

Also in the Minor Prophets, it says that the sins of Israel will be wiped out **in one day** at Christ's return.

Psalm 81:1 Sing aloud, blow up the trumpet on the new Moon.

Look at the important events recorded in the Bible that happened to the notables, they are usually on specific dates, which gives a new perspective to timing, and to chronology.

Genesis 15:12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them **four hundred years**; 14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

Gen 17: Abraham was circumcised on the 14th Nisan and that day became the Passover. From that time, it was 430 years to the Exodus and that period ended on the same day of the year that it started.

Genesis 25:8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

Abraham did die in good old years, 400 years, this was not a rounded up figure, it worked out to the day when the land was apportioned

In Joshua 14, it explains how Joshua gave Caleb the son of Jephunneh his promised inheritance on the day he was 85 years old.

6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea.

Joshua 14:7 Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. 8 Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. 10 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. 11 As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war,

both to go out, and to come in. 12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

God is watching over His chronological time periods precisely. From the first Adam to the second "Adam", the Bible gives an 'idealized' chronology of the time that elapses between these two personalities, but we can discover some interesting things about the time frame. Like the genealogical tables which are 'idealised', and there are reasons for that. The secret things belong to God, but the Holy Spirit does help us comprehend, and the veil will progressively come away and understanding will increase as we approach the time of the end.

From Creation to the flood, add up the years of the patriarchs from Adam to the flood, and Noah's age is given to the day, it comes to 1656 years. Go on from there from Adam to the 99th year of Abraham's life when he was circumcised, a very important event because that is when he became the father of the faithful, you come to 2107 years. What was Paul's teaching about in Galatians 6? It is all about circumcision, its importance initially, and its unimportance now we are no longer under the physical Law.

Then apply the 430 years after that of Gen 14: Israel left Egypt on the 14th Nisan, the first Passover, (which is also the same day of the year that Christ was crucified).

The chronological patterns in the Bible are not immediately obvious, but on study, they reveal that God is meticulous about His timing, His times, His seasons, and His ages. Everything is precisely on time, and will continue to be until "all is in all".

Not a lot of people would take any notice of the apparently unimportant mentions of 'years', 'moons' or references to a calendar most people are not familiar with that are peppered through the text. Like the comment about Methusaleh's age and the flood, but they are all important clues.

Here in Psalms is mentioned the Feast of Trumpets.

Psalm 81:1 Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. 2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. 3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time

appointed, on our solemn feast day. 4 For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.

You cannot establish a complete chronology up to the time of David from the Patriarchs ages given in the Bible. However, there are chronological 'bridges' which help us link up the apparent 'gap' times.

1 Kings 6:1 States it is 480 years written out in Hebrew letters. This is accurate, it is not an error.

Paul addressed the men of Israel in Acts and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gave an interesting reference to this time as being 'about 450 years':

Acts 13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave their testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

The 450 years does not include the time of Joshua.

Joshua 24:29 And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

Judges 2:8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

Remember, when the Bible repeats things, it is for emphasis, and can often be an essential clue to its importance.

When you take the 480 years down to the fourth year of Solomon, then you link up with the Exodus back to the time of Abraham's circumcision, and going back to the time of Noah and the flood, as we know that exact date, then all the way back to Adam himself.

Put them all together buttressed with some of the 'hidden' or 'secret' links given in the scripture, then you have a consistent and consecutive

chronology down to the 4th year of Solomon. Now since Solomon had a forty year reign, to this must be added to the 36 years of Solomon's reign after the 4th year, to his death.

When we come to Solomon's death, we find that his son Rehoboam took over as king of Judah, in the South with its centre in Jerusalem, and plus the tribe of Levi and the tribe of Benjamin, and a portion of Simeon. Three years later the Kingdom of Israel split into two.

There were then 19 king's reigns from Rehoboam to Zedekiah who was the last king of Judah of the Davidic dynasty who ruled in Jerusalem. Zedekiah ruled in the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. In the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Zedekiah was killed, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Temple was burnt to the ground. That ended the Davidic dynasty in Palestine.

The length of time those 19 kings ruled comes to 393 years, simple addition, whether you take the accounts in Kings or Chronicles, they are the same. Scholars today cannot believe that these 393 years is consistent or consecutive. They think there were some overlaps between the kings, but when you study carefully that is not the case.

These 393 must be added to the last 36 years of Solomon's reign from the 4th year when the Temple was started to when he died; then 480 years back to the Exodus; then 430 years back to the time of Abraham's circumcision, then 2107 back to the time of Adam's Creation. Put all these together and you have a consistent chronology all the way to the end of the Judaic Kingdom, and the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

From there on you have to use a prophetic indication to stay with the Biblical chronology. It is the 70 year period which Jeremiah the Prophet said would exist of the Babylonian captivity, and with that 70 years added on to the whole scheme you can have again a consistent chronology all the way back to Adam.

In the last book of II Chronicles, and compare it with what is stated in the 1st chapter of Ezra, which in our version follows immediately after 2nd Chronicles, we find that the 70 years ends with Cyrus over Babylon.

From the 1st year of Cyrus, if we went to secular chronology it would not seem to agree with the Bible at all. Now we either have to believe the Bible, or say that it is an 'ideal' chronology based primarily on prophecy for

teaching purposes, or we are going to have to say it is exactly correct and that it is the secular chronology that is wrong.

Although there are some indications in astronomical records that indicate secular chronology might be correct, but we see all through the Bible that God has given us a most intricate and accurate chronology; and observing His precision in the Old and the New Testament over and over again in the Bible, we feel that it will be proved correct when we have a more complete understanding of the Bible. There are however some scholastic problems to overcome, that is true.

The difficulties are from the time of Cyrus as far as the Bible is concerned down to Alexander the Great because it is a difficult time. There are however 'bridges', one of which is the 70 weeks prophecy mentioned in Daniel 9. This seventy weeks leads right up to the Messiah.

Daniel was given this prophecy because he expected the 70 weeks of Jeremiah to end in his time, that the Kingdom of Judea would come back into existence, and indeed that the Kingdom of Heaven would emerge on the earth and the Messiah would be here.

But Daniel was given this vision and it was interpreted by Gabriel that this was not to be the case. There was to be another seventy weeks of years, and there is no doubt that this is what was meant. It has always been understood to be so by Biblical scholars, and the Bible supports it.

Seventy weeks means seventy weeks of years. Seventy weeks of seven days or a period of 490 years. From Cyrus 1,490 years onward we would find the Kingdom of God emerging on the earth, and the Messiah appearing as well.

However, this 70 weeks period is divided into three sections, or four divisions. 7 weeks to begin with or 49 years, followed by a period of 434 years or 62 weeks, put those together and you get 69 weeks, or 483 years which leads up to the Messiah appearing. There would then be one week of seven years left, and that was to be divided in half, $3\frac{1}{2}$ on one side and $3\frac{1}{2}$ on the other. People have wondered about the 70 weeks prophecy for years, it is difficult as we are not given all the chronological benchmarks or events that would make this clear.

These periods were 'cut out' of history, does this mean there were some gaps? These are still questions.

From the 1st year of Cyrus at the end of the 70 years captivity, which is clearly the Bible benchmark for the beginning of the 70 weeks; and go on down to the arrival of the Messiah 483 years, add that 483 from the Messiah back to the 1st of Cyrus; then the 70 years that Jeremiah said would elapse of the Babylonian captivity; plus the 393 years of the kings of Judah; plus the 36 years remaining of Solomon's reign, taking you back to the 4th year of Solomon's reign when he commenced building the Temple; then 480 years back to the Exodus; 430 years back to the circumcision of Abraham covenant in his 99th year; then 2107 back to the creation of Adam, you will have an elapsed time from the 1st Adam to the 2nd 'Adam' of exactly 3999 full years as having passed as having been accomplished already. If that is the case, that means then, that means the Messiah would come onto the scene exactly at the beginning of year 4000.

There is no doubt that Jesus was born on the first day of the seventh month, the month of Tishri, which then became known as the day of Trumpets.

Isn't it interesting when you follow all the rules and the standards given in the scriptures, it comes to 3999. Does it mean when Jesus was 12 years old at His Bar Mitzvah, or when he was 20 years of age, or when He was 30 years of age and he commenced His ministry, or when He died on the tree of crucifixion, or when??? We are not told by Daniel. That is where one problem comes in which is why we cannot date his second advent.

After that 4000 years, we now have 2000 more years that have elapsed, and maybe a few more, so we come to 6000, which when you add in the 1000 years of the millennium, we come to the 7000 years that seems to be the allotted time for mankind's period on this earth. If we take it to the time of His ministry or His death, we come to somewhere around 2028 – 2032 for the beginning of the Millennium. But who knows!!!! We do not, yet.

Chronology is a perplexing and difficult study, but it is certain that Christ Jesus has put all the information we need to know within the pages of His Word, and the time will come when He will reveal more to His servants.

Matthew 24:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. Verse 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

God is still watching over His chronological intentions and purposes precisely we can be sure! We can have faith in that!!