



The Time Machine

Being in the recovery phase of my post-operative experience, I have become acutely conscious of the passage of time, I am heavily restricted in terms of how much time I spend in front of the computer or the television, and even my time reading is restricted. This is to prevent exposure of my eye to the impact of electro-magnetic waves, as well as usage strain, while my eye heals.

For the same reason, this reflection will be necessarily short - I can only spend so much time in front of my PC.

But that thing about the consciousness of time has got me thinking - most of us experience time as a "real" phenomenon. That is, we experience time as something which exists of its own accord - we talk about time "passing", as though it came into existence with a finite, quantifiable volume that is gradually ebbing away. We "measure" time with our calendars and watches and anniversaries. For most humans, time is a reality defined by the limited duration of their own existence.

Many scientists - especially physicists - will tell you, however, that this is an illusion, that there is, in fact, no such thing as "time". Rather, they will explain that what we experience as "time" is simply a function of our velocity through space relative to all the other material objects in space. The science is complex, and based on Einstein's Theory of Relativity - but basically, what it says is that how we "experience" time is a function of the Earth's velocity

through space, its distance from the Sun, and the rate at which it spins on its axis. "Time" itself does not exist - it is a product of these other phenomena. If any of them were even slightly different, we would experience time in very different ways.

This all sounds rather mind-bending when considered next to our "common sense" understanding of time. But the truth is, Christian faith has its own mind-bending conception of time that gives modern scientific theories a run for their money!

Christian theology speaks of "Kairos" time; and Christians, in their everyday speech, often refer to "God's time". These terms refer to the fact that Christians have long understood that there is the "time" we experience as a function of our existence; but there is also the "time out of time" that embodies God's mysterious existence independent of the material universe. But it is also reflective of the tradition articulated in Scripture that God operates according to a different "horizon" than the created universe: we look to the horizon of our days and weeks and years; God looks to the horizon that articulates the faithfulness of God to covenant, and of God's will for creation.

When Jesus told the disciples that "no-one knows the hour" when the Father will make good the ancient promise to Israel and to creation, he is reminding his listeners - and reminding us - that the salvific purpose of creation is not a matter of the passage of cosmic time, nor does it belong to any predictable point in "history" or the "future". This in turn reminds us that texts like The Revelation According to John are not predictions about the future; rather, they are messages of hope that inform us that "God's time" operates independently of our notions of time, and that the last word about humanity belongs to God's faithfulness and love. Human "history" is relativised by, and contained within, "Kairos time", the "horizon of hope" that is God's salvific will for creation.

Four U Notice

The next meeting of the Four U group will be **Monday 11th September** in the Fellowship Room at HUC **starting at 2pm.**

.Full details can be found by [clicking this link.](#)

Blessings,

Brendan



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