

The Fulfillment of Time

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The time is fulfilled

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God,
¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” (Mark 1:14-15)

Sabbath structure

- **Sabbath day:** Every seventh day, people and animals must rest. This expressed creation rhythm and Exodus liberation.
- **Sabbath year:** Every seventh year, the land must rest. No tilling or planting was allowed.
- **Jubilee:** Every 7x7 years, a super-Sabbath year, Jubilee, was a time to free all slaves, cancel all debts, restore to each family their land, and get life back on track. This was a once-in-a lifetime Exodus for everybody.

Jubilee: year of God's favor

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ... And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:17-21)

Lord of the Sabbath

On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. ² But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” ³ And Jesus answered them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴ how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?” ⁵ And he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.” (Luke 6)

Lord of the Sabbath

⁶ On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered.

⁷ And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. ⁸ But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” And he rose and stood there.

Lord of the Sabbath

⁹ And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” ¹⁰ And after looking around at them all he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored. ¹¹ But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.
(Luke 6:1-11)

Healing on the Sabbath

Luke 13:10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹ And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself.

¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.” ¹³ And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.

Healing on the Sabbath

¹⁴ But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” ¹⁵ Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?”

Healing on the Sabbath

¹⁶ And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" ¹⁷ As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him. (Luke 13:10-17)

Sabbath work

So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed.” ... the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.” This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:10-18)

Sabbath breaker?

“We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”

¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” (John 9:4-5, 14-16)

The original Sabbath

When God made the world, he “rested” on the seventh day. This doesn’t just mean that God took a day off. It means that in the previous six days, God was making a world—heaven and earth together—for his own use. Like someone building a house, God finished the job and then went in to take up residence, to enjoy what he had built. Creation was itself a temple, *the* Temple, the heaven-and-earth structure built for God to live in. (N. T. Wright)

A sign pointing forward

And the seventh day rest was therefore a sign pointing forward into successive ages of time, a forward-looking signpost that said that one day, when God's purposes for creation were accomplished, there would be a moment of ultimate completion, a moment when the work would finally be done, and God, with his people would take his rest, would enjoy what he had accomplished. (N. T. Wright)

Human time meets God's time

The sabbath was the day when human time and God's time met, when the day-to-day succession of tasks and sorrows was set aside and one entered a different sort of time, celebrating the original sabbath and looking forward to the ultimate one... the sabbath was the time when God's time and human time coincided. (N. T. Wright)

The future is here

The sabbath was the regular signpost pointing forward to God's promised future, *and Jesus was announcing that the future to which the signpost had been pointing had now arrived in the present.* In his own career. He was doing the "God's-in-charge" things. He was explaining what *he* was doing by talking about what *God* was doing. The time was fulfilled, and God's kingdom was arriving. (N. T. Wright)

The walking, victorious Sabbath

You don't need the sabbath when the time is fulfilled... the future, the new creation, was already here. The sabbath law was not, then, a stupid rule that could now be abolished... It was a signpost whose purpose had now been accomplished... If the sabbath now has a purpose, it won't be for rest from the work of creation, but rather for celebrating God's victory over the satan... Jesus is the walking, celebrating, victorious sabbath. (N. T. Wright)

The hour is now here

“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father... But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. (John 4:21-23)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” (John 5:25)

The hour has come

“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified... Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name... Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (John 12:23-32)

The hour has come

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (John 13:1)

“Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him.” (John 13:31)

Fulfilling times of yearly feasts

- **Passover:** A lamb's blood was poured out so that people would not perish. Jesus died the day Passover lambs are sacrificed.
- **Feast of Firstfruits:** The first day of the week after the high Sabbath following Passover. Jesus arose on that day as "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20)
- **Feast of Weeks (Pentecost):** 7x7 days after Firstfruits, it was a day to celebrate fuller harvest. Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on this day, seven weeks after his resurrection.

Fulfilling seventy sevens

²⁴ “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

²⁵ “Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ ... ²⁶ After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. (Daniel 9:24-26)

Fullness of time

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

At the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:6)

... his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Ephesians 1:9-10)

The end of the ages

... according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed (Romans 16:25-26)

These things... were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:26)

The Last Days

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son. (Hebrews 1:2)

You have laid up treasure in the last days.
(James 5:3)

Children, it is now the last hour. (1 John 2:18)
Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor 6:2)

Time and eternity connect

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens... He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart. (Ecclesiastes 3:1,11)

Eternity touches time, filling it with purpose and life. Your time on earth is not an empty routine. Christ is the fulfillment of time.