

WORD STUDIES ON TIME STATEMENTS

PART 1

Have you ever wondered why Christians the world over, both the layman and the scholar, are seemingly severely inconsistent in their interpretation of biblical words? If you haven't, then I kindly suggest that you keep reading. It is my desire that these studies will help the reader to confidently and unashamedly place the fulfillment of the book of Revelation in the first century. After all, that is exactly what the text itself demands.

Although these studies are primarily "word studies", I assure you that the things which we will look at are vitally important to our biblical understanding, specifically as it relates to eschatology. Throughout these articles, we will study three Greek "time words" in the book of Revelation, and we will investigate them in the following ways:

1. We will give the Greek and English definitions.
2. We will show the consistent biblical meaning of these words everywhere they are used in the New Testament.
3. We will show based on context and topic/theme, that those words must be understood in "eschatological texts" the same way they are understood in the rest of the New Testament (non-eschatological texts).

As we demonstrate the points above, it will become evident to the reader that **these words always and consistently limit the time of the fulfillment of the text in which they are found to the first century** (a near/soon fulfillment from the time the words were spoken/written). It will also become evident that one of the only reasons a person would remain inconsistent in their interpretation of these words (interpreting them differently in eschatological texts compared to non-eschatological texts), is to maintain a "futurist paradigm".

The futurist must at times (when convenient doctrinally) interpret "near" to mean "far" and "at hand" to mean "thousands of years away", in order to maintain their traditional paradigm, especially in the book of Revelation. The truth is, it's

impossible to be biblically consistent with the “time statements” in the bible and maintain a futurist paradigm. Fulfilled eschatology is the result of being consistent with the time statements in scripture.

This study will demonstrate beyond doubt that the fulfillment of the prophecy of the book of Revelation was truly “near”, and “soon” to take place in the first century; that is, “shortly” after the time of its writing. And, that to place its fulfillment future to us (2018) is to be biblically inconsistent, and to overlook, misinterpret, and even reject the clear and emphatic language of “time” found in the book of Revelation and the rest of the New Testament.

May the Lord give us all the courage and the humility to follow the truth, wherever consistency may lead. Let’s begin.

“Tachos” in Non-Eschatological Texts

The first Greek word which we will study is “**tachos**”.

Definition:

Tachos (Strong’s #5034), used 7x in the New Testament

Interpreted as: “shortly, quickly, speedily, soon (Thayer’s).

A brief space (of time), in haste, quickly, shortly, speedily (Strong’s).

According to the above definitions, the word “tachos” carries the idea of speed of action (fast) as well as nearness in time (soon). However, as we shall see, **tachos never refers to the speed of action apart from the nearness in time of that action.** In other words, when tachos is used in the New Testament, if something is going to happen “quickly” (fast), then it must also happen “quickly” (soon) in time. Below are the “non-eschatological” texts where “tachos” is found in the New Testament.

Acts 12:7

And behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “**Get up quickly.**” And the chains fell off his hands.

Now ask yourself the question, did the angel of the Lord intend for Peter to understand that he should go back to sleep and not bother waking up until noon the next day, but when he did wake up, he should jump up **“quickly”** (tachos)? To suggest so would seem ridiculous. **The angel was telling Peter to get up immediately, which implied both imminence (time) and speed (quickness).** This is proven by the immediate context.

“And the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” And he went out and continued to follow...” (Acts 12:8-9)

Peter understood that he was not to wait, he got up immediately, wrapped his cloak around him and went out.

Acts 22:18

And saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and **get quickly** out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

The question needs to be asked again. Did the Lord expect Paul to understand these words to mean that he should stay in Jerusalem for a few more months or maybe a few more years, but when he did leave Jerusalem, he was to run **“quickly”** (tachos)? Common sense tells us otherwise. **The Lord meant that Paul he was leave Jerusalem as soon as possible, implying both imminence (time) and speed (quickness),** as the Jews would not accept Paul’s testimony regarding Christ.

And once again, the immediate context proves this interpretation to be true. First, notice the words **“make haste”** in verse 18 which also carry the idea of being rushed or to hurry (Luke 2:16, 19:5-6, Acts 20:16). Paul was to hurry (make haste) and get out of Jerusalem quickly. Second, notice verse 21. **“And He said to me, ‘Go!’**. Thus, the entire text demands that Paul was to leave Jerusalem as soon as possible, not just quickly.

Acts 25:4

Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself intended to go there **shortly**.

Luke wrote that Festus intended to return to Caesarea from Jerusalem “shortly”. The next verse identifies what the Holy Spirit intended to communicate by “shortly”.

“After he had spent **not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caesarea**, and on the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought”. (Acts 25:6)

In Acts 25, “shortly” (tachos) meant eight days or less and had nothing to do with speed of action, but referred to “time” only. We are not told if Festus rode his chariot like the wind (fast), but we do know that he left for Caesarea “shortly” (soon in time). He left within eight days.

Thus, we have demonstrated that in each of the above non-eschatological texts, **the word “tachos” always and primarily refers to nearness in time (soon), and limits that time to the generation to whom the things were spoken/written.**

So the question becomes, if “tachos” is limited to this definition in these non-eschatological texts, why do many people arbitrarily change this word to mean “not soon”, and completely ignore it’s time limitation of one generation in eschatological texts? If you do this, please answer this question for yourself before reading on.

“Tachos” in Eschatological Texts

We will now demonstrate by context, that even in eschatological passages “tachos” does in fact refer to “nearness” (soon) in time, and limits the fulfillment of the text to the first century audience - to whom it was written.

Luke 18:7-8

Now, will not God **bring about justice for his elect** who cry to him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that **He will bring about justice for them quickly**. However, **when the Son of Man comes**, will He find faith on the earth?

Besides the desire to remain consistent with the above uses of the word, there are two themes in this text which demand us to interpret the word “quickly” (tachos) to refer to nearness of time, and to limit the fulfillment of the text to the first century. These themes are (1) the avenging of the apostles and prophets, and (2) the coming of the Son of Man.

The Avenging of the Apostles and Prophets

It’s important to understand that the Greek word translated in the NASB as “justice” in Luke 18, is the word “ekdikesis”, which means “vengeance, a revenging, punishment”. We must also understand Jesus’ parable concerning the **avenging (justice) of his elect** in Luke 18 within the greater context of this topic/theme. Recall the words of Jesus concerning the “avenging of the elect” (apostles and prophets), and when it would be fulfilled.

Mathew 23:31-36

So you testify against yourselves, that **you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers**. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Therefore, behold, **I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge** in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, so that **upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth**, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, **all these things will come upon this generation**.

Luke 11:48-51

So you are witnesses and approve to the deeds of your fathers, because **it was they who killed them**, and you build their tombs. For this reason also, the wisdom of God said, **“I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they**

kill and some of them will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation.... I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.

Who did Jesus say that “all the righteous blood shed on earth” would “come upon”?

Answer: The Jews of his generation

Who did Jesus say that “all the blood of the prophets shed since the foundation of the world” would be “charged against”?

Answer: The Jews of his generation

And, when did Jesus say that “all the righteous blood of the prophets shed since the foundation of the world” would be avenged?

Answer: His generation

God’s “bringing about justice for his elect” in Luke 18 must be interpreted within the greater context of the topic/theme of the “avenging of the apostles and prophets”, which Jesus limited to his generation. This is powerful evidence that this parable of Jesus must find fulfillment in the judgment of the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70. The avenging of the elect that Jesus said would take place “quickly” in Luke 18, is the avenging of the apostles and prophets that Jesus said would take place in his generation in Luke 11 and Mathew 23.

And that’s not all. When we take into the account the immediate context of Luke 18 itself, the evidence becomes overwhelming.

In chapter 17, Jesus has just told his disciples that before He (the Son of Man) would be “revealed” (v.30), he would “suffer many things and be rejected by this (his) generation” (v.25). He also told his disciples that they too would suffer for his sake (v.33). Therefore, **Jesus “connects” the avenging (bringing justice) of the elect with his own death, and the sufferings of his disciples in that generation.** This establishes perfect thematic harmony between Luke 11, Luke 18, and Mathew 23 concerning the reason for the “avenging of the elect” (the apostles and prophets).

Clearly, the justice (revenge) for the elect in Luke 18 that God promised to bring about **“quickly”**, was the first century judgment of Jerusalem - the city who was guilty for shedding all the blood of the prophets since the foundation of the world. This is exactly why Jesus referred to that Jewish judgment as “the days of vengeance” and wrath. (Luke 21:20-23).

The Coming of the Son of Man

The second theme that we find within the text is the “coming of the Son of Man”. Let’s read Luke 18:7-8 again.

“Now, will not God **bring about justice for his elect** who cry to him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that **He will bring about justice for them quickly**. However, **when the Son of Man comes**, will He find faith on the earth”?

Notice that Jesus connects God’s bringing about justice (his avenging) for the elect with his own “coming” (the coming of the Son of man). Therefore, the elect would be avenged and justice would be served to their persecutor’s when the Lord would “come”, that is, at his “revealing” (Luke 17:30). However, Jesus clearly placed the time of his “revelation” (the coming of the Son of Man) within the lifetime of his first century generation.

Mathew 16:28

Truly I say to you, **there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.**

Mathew 24:30,34

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory....** Truly I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**

Let’s look at this in a syllogism:

God would avenge (bring justice to) the elect at the coming of the Son of Man.

But, the coming of the Son of Man would take place within the lifetime of his first century disciples, in their generation.

Therefore, God would avenge the elect within the lifetime of his first century generation, at the coming of the Son of Man

This is precisely what Jesus taught in Mathew 23 (which we have shown above), and Mathew 24.

Mathew 24:30-31,34

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds** of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and **they will gather together His elect... this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**

The avenging of the God's elect was when Jesus brought vengeance upon their adversaries, and "gathered them together" to himself (v.31). This was accomplished at the coming of the Son of Man in AD70 – in that generation.

Therefore, the word "quickly" (tachos) in Luke 18 does not simply mean "fast" as in speed of action, nor can it mean thousands of years in the future. According to the context and by comparing other scriptures of the same topic/theme, we can conclude definitively that "quickly" (tachos) in Luke 18:8 must be limited to events that were actually "soon" to take place within that first century generation.

Tachos in Revelation

Revelation 1:1

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must **soon** take place; and he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.

Even if the futurist has been with us this far, this is where he must make become biblical inconsistent if he is to maintain his tradition “futurist paradigm”. In virtually every discussion I have had with people concerning either the date Revelation was written, or the time of the fulfillment of its prophecy, this is by far their “go to verse”.

They insist that “soon” (tachos) simply means “fast”, and has nothing to do with the nearness of time. In other words, **the futurist says that what John meant by “soon” in Revelation 1:1 was that when the events of the book do begin to take place they will happen fast (rapidly), but that those events were not actually “near” and soon to take place at that time.** As we have demonstrated above, “tachos” is never used or understood this way in scripture, and the book of Revelation is no exception. And as we shall see, the context of chapter 1 demands that we interpret tachos in Revelation 1:1 the same as we have done in all other texts - near in time, and limited to the first century.

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; **for the time is near**”. (Revelation 1:3)

The Greek word translated as “near” in verse 3 is “eggys”, and means “near, at hand, ready. Notice the message that we get when we combine verses 1 and 3. The time was “near” for what was “soon” to take place. In other words, **the prophecy that was soon to take place was in fact near in time, meaning it would take place within a short time period.** So, the context itself completely refutes the futurist interpretation of “soon” in verse 1.

And, even if “tachos” does mean “fast” as the futurist says, verse three still gives them problems. In this case, the text would mean that **the time was near for the prophecy to take place quickly (fast).** Either way, the futurist has a losing hand since he maintains that the time was “not near”, which is the opposite of what the text teaches.

Now, let's look at the immediate context of Revelation 1:1 which will fully establish our position.

Revelation 1:7

Behold, **He is coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him**, even those who pierced Him; and **all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him**. So it is to be. Amen.

Notice John's thematic progression within the first seven verses of Revelation.

John says that the time was "near" for what was to "soon" take place (v.1,3)

Then he says that Jesus "is (yet) to come" (v.4)

Then he says that Jesus will "come with the clouds" (v.7)

Therefore, what was "near" and "soon" to take place included his "coming". In other words, the time for Jesus' "coming with the clouds" was near, and would soon take place.

This reasoning can be confirmed by the fact that Revelation 1:7 is a quotation of a prophecy of Jesus that places his "coming with the clouds" within the lifetime of his first century generation.

Mathew 24:30,34

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and **then all the tribes of the earth will mourn**, and they will see **the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory....** Truly I say to you, **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**

Now, notice the perfect parallels between the two texts:

"... He is coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him.... and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him." (Revelation 1)

"... All the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds...." (Mathew 24)

Look at it again as a syllogism:

The “coming with the clouds” of Revelation 1:7 is a quotation of Mathew 24:30

But, Jesus said Mathew 24:30 would be fulfilled in his own generation,
“this generation will not pass away until all these things take place”.
(Mathew 24:34)

Therefore, Jesus’ “coming with the clouds” of Revelation 1:7 was fulfilled within the lifetime of the first century generation.

What this means is that since the time statements (soon, near) of verses 1 and 3 refer to the “coming of the Lord” of Revelation 1:7, and Revelation 1:7 was fulfilled in Jesus’ generation, then we have powerful evidence that when John penned the Revelation the time for the coming of the Lord was in fact near, and would soon take place.

Therefore, since “soon” really does mean “soon” (not fast), and “near” really does mean near (not thousands of years away), there is absolutely no grammatical or contextual reason to deny the plain meaning of Revelation 1:1. **Everything that John was to be shown, was about to “soon” taken place.**

Revelation 22:6

And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must **soon** take place.

Before we go any further, please notice the parallel between this text and Revelation 1:1, which we just looked at.

“...to show to his servants what must **soon** (tachos) take place” (Revelation 1:1)

“...to show his servants what must **soon** (tachos) take place” (Revelation 22:6)

For those who would say that only “some” of the prophecy of the book was “soon” to be fulfilled (and the rest is for our (2018) future), John places the exact same phrase at the end of the book as he did in the beginning. The implication is clear and powerful. The time was “near” for the entire prophecy of the book of Revelation to “soon” be fulfilled. This is the angel’s message to John from beginning to end. And, as in chapter 1:3, the immediate context of Revelation 22 confirms this.

“And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.... Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. (Revelation 22:10,12)

The Greek word for “near” in verse 10 is “eggys”, and means “near, at hand, ready. It’s the same word that’s translated as “near” in Revelation 1:3. Once again, the context demands that the appointed time was in fact “near” for the prophecy of the book to “soon” (tachos) take place. But that’s not all. Notice again John’s thematic progression between verses 6 and 12 of chapter 22.

John is told that the things shown to him (the entire prophecy) were to “soon” take place (v.6)

John is then reassured that the Lord was coming “quickly”. (v.7)

Then John is told that the time was “near” for the prophecy to be fulfilled. (v.10)

Then John is once again reassured that the Lord is coming “quickly”, to “render to every man according to what he has done”. (v.12)

Therefore, what was “near” and “soon” to take place included the “coming” of the Lord. In other words, the time for Jesus to come (return) and “render to every man according to what he had done” was near, would take place “soon” and “quickly”.

This argument can be confirmed by the fact that the coming of the Lord in verse 12 is a direct quotation of a prophecy of in which Jesus placed his “coming” within the lifetime of his first century generation.

Mathew 16:27-28

For the **Son of Man is going to come** in the glory of His Father with His angels, **and will then repay every man according to his deeds**. “Truly I say to you, **there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.**”

Notice the perfect parallels between Mathew 16 and Revelation 22.

“Behold, I am coming quickly.... **to render (apodidomi) to every man according to what he has done**”. (Revelation 22:12)

“Son of Man is going to come.... **and will then repay (apodidomi) every man according to his deeds**”. (Mathew 16:27)

Without a doubt, the coming of the Lord of Revelation 22 is the coming of the Lord of Mathew 16. So, let’s look at this in a syllogism.

The coming of the Lord of Revelation 22 to “render to every man according to what he has done”, is the coming of the Lord of Mathew 16 to “repay every man according to his deeds”.

But the coming of the Lord of Mathew 16 would occur within the first century generation, “there some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom”. (Mathew 16:28)

Therefore, the coming of the Lord of Revelation 22 was fulfilled in the lifetime of the first century generation.

What this means is that since the time statements (soon, near) of verses 6 and 10 refer to the “coming of the Lord” of Revelation 22:12, and Revelation 22:12 was fulfilled in Jesus’ generation, then we have powerful evidence that “soon” really does mean “soon” (not fast), and “near” really does mean near (not thousands of years away).

Just as we have demonstrated that there is absolutely no grammatical or contextual reason to deny the plain meaning of Revelation 1:1, on the same biblical grounds there is absolutely no reason to deny the plain meaning of Revelation 22:6. The time was “near” for everything that John had been shown to “soon” taken place.

By remaining consistent with how the word “tachos” is used in the rest of the New Testament, and by interpreting it in relation to a topic/theme within its immediate text, we have proven beyond doubt that the fulfillment of the prophecy of the book of Revelation was truly “near”, and “soon” to take place in the first century. We have also proven that to place its fulfillment future to us (2018) is to be biblically inconsistent, and is to overlook, misinterpret, and even reject the clear and emphatic language of “time” found in the book of Revelation and the rest of the New Testament.

May the Lord give us all the courage and the humility to follow the truth, wherever consistency may lead.

Continued in Part 2

Dan Dery

Titus 1:9

(For brevity sake, we did not look at “tachos” in Romans 16:20 in Part 1. For a full discussion of “tachos” (soon) in this text and it’s first century fulfillment, please see Part 2)