

TIME IS LOVE (by Jacky Lam)

PREFACE

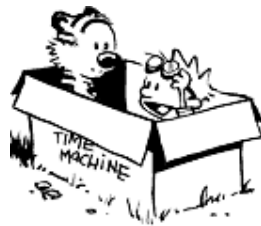
"Time... is what keeps everything from happening at once" – Ray Cummings

Time. When people say this one word, it elicits a response often either of opportunity, or dread. "If only I had more time!", "Why can't time pass more quickly?", "Time passes fast when you are having fun", or even "Time will tell" or "Time heals" - as if "time" is itself a living organism. Or, the classic and sterile dictionary definition will tell you, it is *"the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole"* - i.e. a seamless succession of moments.

The purpose of this essay is to reveal how our reading of Scripture is (heavily) impacted by our views on "time". Little do we know that Scripture tells us "time" is very different to what our popular presumption may tell us.

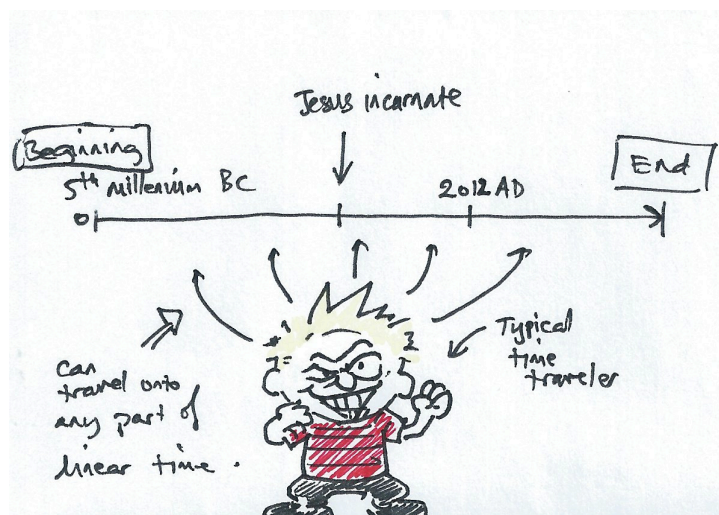
What is Time?

"Time" as a concept, and as fed to the mass, is most easily digestible under the common dramatic context of "time-travel". A few notable examples in media include (science-)fiction such as Urashima Taro¹, Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, H.G. Wells' The Time Machine, Ray Cummings' Girl in a Golden Atom, Audrey Niffenegger's The Time Traveler's Wife; movies such as the ever delightful Terminator series, Back to the Future series, JJ Abrams' Star Trek, Source Code, the upcoming Men in Black III; video games such as the Chrono series, Final Fantasy XIII-2, The Legend of Zelda series, the upcoming Time Traveler; and comics such as Captain America and Calvin and Hobbes. Put simply, no crowd is un-catered for.



Typical time-traveling device.

Let us visualise how "time" is popularly portrayed in such media (**Fig. 1 - Popular view of "time"**):



¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urashima_Taro

Let's also look at how God's time is popularly portrayed (often people use 2 Peter 3:8 as the sole supporting text):

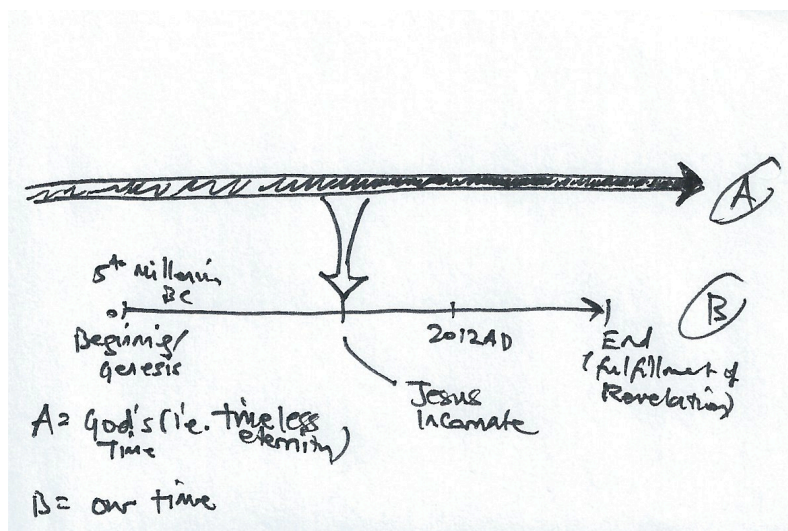


Fig. 2 - Popular view of God's "timeless eternity" against Our time

It would seem, then, that God's time is far removed and high above ours; that God created the world *before* and *outside* of time (and often, God being the creator of "time" itself!). He would have to condescend and be a "time-traveler" of our time if He wishes to interact with us now (or, say, with Abraham in the past). Figure 2 allows us to see how God remains eternal while we appear to be under the shackles of time, and how He can remain omniscient as he oversees all time periods (and can see the Day of His Son's Second Coming, after which our time completely ceases).

However, aside from the visual portrayals above and the science-fiction element which makes some of us nerds feel all giddy inside, what makes "time" (or time-traveling) such an attractive dramatic tool? Simply because it is often a concept used to allow us to witness the "what-if's" in life, the missed opportunities, the possibility of saving a loved one from death, to re-live a sentimental moment of one's youth, the butterfly effect of one's action in the past leading to an inevitable string of optimistic (or detrimental) consequences. As a tool, it allows the story-teller to evoke a bittersweet mix of nostalgia and the ability to defy one's "fate" (or in some cases, the inability to do so). Better yet, your better half (men, I am speaking to you) would tell you that "love" is spelled as "t.i.m.e". It is clear that "time" is by no means an emotionless scientific terminology. Even the Teacher tells us as much (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8):

1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

2 a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Yet, is that how does Scripture specifically define time?

How is Time defined in Scripture?

A summary of what the Word tells us about “time” could be found in Paul Blackham’s² article on “Trinity and Time”³. In short, the position is as follows:

- People often collapse the terms “time” and “history”, for fear of interpreting God as a “mere player in the history of the universe” when He should be seen as utterly sovereign over the whole of creation and independent of human history. Further, God’s timelessness is tied to his unchanging nature. This is because a God who changes due to experiencing time (as a succession of moments) implies an imperfect and ever “growing” LORD. Many therefore swing to the other end of the spectrum and portray God as “standing over the line of history seeing the end and the beginning all at once from His timeless point of view” (often using these Scriptures to imply His timelessness: Psalm 90:2-4 & 2 Peter 3:8; Job 36:26; Revelation 1:8, 4:8; John 8:58 and Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 46:9-10).
- However, Christ speaks to us in time-specific terms (i.e. “I *was* dead, and behold I *am* alive *for ever and ever*.” – Revelation 1:17-18). The Three Persons seem to speak to one another in similar terms (i.e. Genesis 1:26; Psalm 68:14; Psalm 80:17; Psalm 110; Revelation 21:2-3). Blackham states that “...*Each member of the Trinity looks back and forwards to events... a time when a member of the Trinity lived in Nazareth... a time when the Trinity had no creation at all... a time when the Son looked ahead to His incarnation... a time when the Son looks ahead to His return to His home on earth and the Father looks ahead to living on earth too with us*”;
- A timeless existence therefore implies an existence without personal interactions with the LORD. This creates a query as to whether there is any true dialogue between the Father and the Son, if successive moments cannot be experienced by the Trinity, despite Scripture stating the contrary;
- Therefore, instead of collapsing the terms “time” and “history”, we should describe the LORD as being *from everlasting to everlasting* (Psalm 90:2, 103:17, 105:10, 106:48). God indeed has an infinitely long history (past and present), *from everlasting to everlasting*, but that is not synonymous to being timeless. Any texts apparently supporting this “timelessness” should, instead, be referred to as His *everlasting* nature, allowing the Trinity to engage in dialogue and experience successive moments, without creating a contradictory scenario of the “timeless” God speaking to a “time-full” (in contrast to “timeless”) man;
- The implication of an *everlasting* rather than a *timeless* God is that He is not rushed or taken by surprise by events; He is sovereign over events to happen, and has prepared for such events when they come to pass; unlike man, the succession of moments has no down-side for God. Contrarily, time is a *limitation* for us, because we are fallen and dying.

It is clear that Blackham's article already explores some negative implications of an unbiblical understanding of time. However, in this essay, I would like to explore the implications even further by answering the following three questions:

- 1. Does God therefore experience time like us, or is time different to Him?**
- 2. How does God know the future if He is “in” time?**

² Pastor of Tarleton Farm Fellowship: <http://www.farmfellowship.com/>

³ http://web.me.com/paulblackham/Following_Jesus/Articles/Entries/2008/11/18_The_Trinity_and_Time.html

3. What “happened” when Christ took on flesh and completed His incarnate work?

The questions are by no means addressed independently; the answer to the first question will assist my answer to the second, and so forth. Right now, you may wonder why the third question is even asked - hopefully the answer to the second question shows you why.

1. DOES GOD EXPERIENCE TIME LIKE US, OR IS TIME DIFFERENT TO HIM?

For this portion of the essay, I have turned to Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics (Volume 1, Part II - hereafter “CD 1.2”) for assistance. Firstly, Barth does not see time as an independent (scientific) concept. He sees time as intricately linked with the biblical doctrine of God’s revelation to us. Only in this way can Barth answer what is meant by “God’s time” and “our time”:

*“If by the statement, “God reveals Himself” is meant the revelation attested in Holy Scripture, it is a statement about the occurrence of an event. That means it also includes an assertion about a time proper to revelation. If stated with reference to this, it is equivalent to the statement, “God has time for us”. The time God has for us is just this time of His revelation, the time that is real in His revelation, revelation time. **Moreover in the interpretation of the concept of this time, which is now our task, we shall not have to take as a basis any time concept gained independently of revelation itself.** If our consideration of the question as to the time of revelation is serious, we shall at once be aware **(1) that we have no other time than the time God has for us, and (2) that God has no other time for us than the time of His revelation.** Thus we must let ourselves be told what time is by revelation itself, and only then, and with that reference, form our idea of the time of revelation as such”* (my emphases included)

Note how Barth sees time as *relational*, that he never looks at time merely as an independent concept but sees it as a tool exclusively undergirding God’s relationship with us (i.e. “God has time *for us*”, as opposed to “God’s time” full stop). He therefore pleads that “time” is meaningless and empty as a concept for outside of a relationship with Jesus, for the non-Christian would not receive God’s revelation, where He has time for us. In other words, the non-Christian is, in fact, timeless.

By contrast, God cannot possibly be “timeless” as long as we are part of His story (as indicated in John 3:16 and John 17:24). Instead of God being timeless and us being under the “bondage” of time waiting to be released from its shackle, Barth’s understanding of “God’s time *for us*” means that we are instead to move from being “timeless” to being “timefull” - from being “timeless” to taking part in God’s everlasting nature.

Adam, Fallen and Redeemed-time

At this point, it is useful to introduce Barth’s terms of “Adam-time”, “Fallen-time” and “Redeemed-time” (he does not name the concepts as such, and I have provided these terms for ease of reference).

Firstly, to Barth, “Adam-time” is the time that Adam experienced before the Fall. This Adam-time is a *covenant* (taking Jeremiah 33 verses 20 and 25 for example) initially made with Adam as the first man - when God and Adam related to one another, and the latter received His Word and His revelation). An analogy to this is the covenant of nature made with day and night, both of which are governed “*in their season*” (Genesis 1:14). Yet, this covenant was broken by Adam’s sin, ushering us into timelessness (Fallen-time), which is completely alien to Adam-time and removed Adam from God’s presence. Contrary to the order of creation (c.f. Genesis 1:14, 8:22), we have fallen out of the “season” imprinted in the other natural covenants, and mankind has subsumed itself into a chaotic disorder, spiraling downwards into a succession of events and moments into timelessness.

This leaves us, secondly, with Fallen-time (aka “timelessness”) which is experienced by the living dead (i.e. non-Christians c.f. Ezekiel 37), or as Evelyn Waugh puts it, the *handful of dust* (c.f.

Genesis 3:19). According to Barth, this means that from birth and in our sin (as promulgated through Adam, the first man c.f. Hebrews 7:10), we have rejected the time which God has for us - we have rejected His revelation (which undoubtedly includes a rejection of His promise of His Son through Adam and Eve's offspring in Genesis 3:15). Barth describes it as such:

*“Our” time, as Augustine and Heidegger in their own ways quite correctly inform us, is the time produced by us, i.e., by fallen man. If on the basis of God’s Word being in this time of ours we believe that God created time, this belief does not sidetrack our time; yet we cannot in any way identify our time with the time created by God. **Our time, the time we know and possess, is and remains lost time, even when we believe that God is the Creator of time.**”*

This rejection means that we opted to stand outside of God's time, which to Barth is the *only* time. By contrast, as we the *redeemed* stand in Christ, we are time-full (full of the time He has for us) - thus partaking in what Barth, thirdly, calls the “Redeemed-time”. Therefore the movement from unbelief to belief in Christ is a movement from Fallen to Redeemed-time. Blackham phrases this better in his PhD thesis The Pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin⁴:

*“Again we can see that Goodwin is quite happy with the concept of time, even describing God as existing in Himself in “time without interruption”. **This must be because the concept of timelessness is so noxious to the concept of personhood, there being no possibility of personal interaction in a timeless realm of pure being.** The way in which Goodwin collapses the immanent Trinity into the economic Trinity⁵ seems to partly stem from his strong antipathy to conceiving of God in any other way than the lively personal inter-action and action that is found throughout the Biblical narrative. The idea of the three persons of the Trinity engrossed in one another’s company, but not to the exclusion of others, from everlasting to everlasting so grips Goodwin that he seems to abandon standard models of a division between God in Himself and God for us in favour of God-in-Himself-who-is-for-us.”*

It would appear then that Goodwin's model is not altogether that different from Barth's - both are proposing that God's time is a time-for-us, and that this is best seen in the context of His interaction with us through His revelation (whether written or otherwise). Goodwin therefore also proposes a model of time which is *relational*, revealing a God who is not schizophrenically deistic⁶ and relational but the Three Persons who are through and through for us, as classically expressed in John 17:20-26:

20 *“I do not ask for these only, but also **for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 **I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.**”*** (emphases included)

⁴ A pdf soft copy could be searched and downloaded from <http://ethos.bl.uk/>

⁵ Simply put, the “immanent Trinity” regards God as something external to creation (i.e. God in Himself); the “economic Trinity” regards God in interaction with His creation (i.e. with us).

⁶ Simply put - this means God has left creation to its own devices; a thoroughly non-personal and non-relational God.

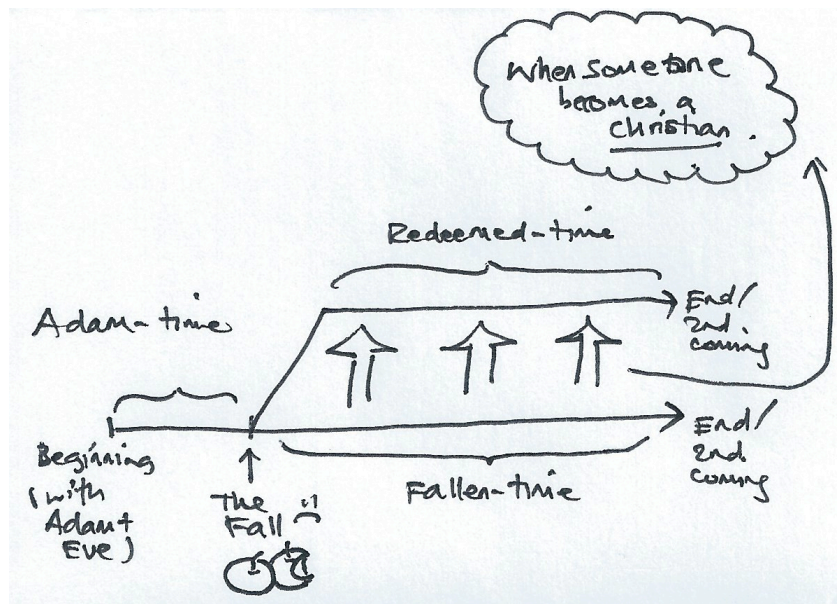


Fig 3 - Adam, Fallen and Redeemed-time

Yet, there is something distinct about Redeemed-time which is different from Adam-time. Whilst, to Barth, Adam-time involved a natural covenant which Adam broke which caused the rest of mankind to spiral into spiritual and physical chaos and lostness, Redeemed-time restores us to harmony in its *fulfillment*. Scripturally then, the *relational* nature of time meant that it would reach a “pinnacle” in its expression of such relationship between God and man. This “pinnacle”, this “fulfillment”, is expressed by Paul in Galatians 4:4-7 and Ephesians 1:7-10:

*“Galatians 4:4-7: 4 But when the **fullness of time** had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”*

*“Ephesians 1:7-10: 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10: as a plan for the **fullness of time**, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (emphases included)*

Barth provides the following commentary on this “fullness of time”:

*“But this different time is the new, the third time [Barth referring to Redeemed-time and comparing it to Adam-time], which arises and has its place because God reveals Himself, because He is free for us, because He is with us and amongst us, because in short, without ceasing to be what He is, He also becomes what we are. **God’s revelation is the event of Jesus Christ.** We do not understand it as God’s revelation, if we do not state unreservedly that it took place in “our” time [i.e. Fallen-time]. But, conversely, if we understand it as God’s revelation, we have to say that this event had its own time; in this event it happened that whereas we had our own time for ourselves as always, God had time for us, His own time for us – time, in the most positive sense, i.e. present with past and future, **fulfilled time with expectation and recollection of its fulfillment**, revelation time and the time of the Old Testament and New Testament witness to revelation – but withal, His own time, God’s time; and therefore real time.*

...because God’s Son assumed it [time] and took it over into unity with his God-existence, just as by the eternal Word becoming flesh the flesh could not repeat Adam’s sin, so time, by becoming the

time of Jesus Christ, although it belonged to our time, the lost time [i.e. Fallen-time], became a different, a new time”.

Therefore, to Barth, Redeemed-time in its fulfillment is *real time* - i.e. the only time that God could only perceive, all other time being lost, in chaos, and empty (c.f. Genesis 1:2). Fulfilled time, as Barth comments, is connected exclusively to the work of Christ as the *incarnate* Messiah - and all time before this event, as anticipated by the Old Testament saints, is an experience of Redeemed-time awaiting such fulfillment. This substantiates why Old Testament Scripture, in anticipation of the Messiah's incarnate work, should be read Christo-centrally and Christologically⁷, as all of God's time *for us* in His revelation to us is inextricably tied to the fullness of Redeemed time.

So whilst the Teacher in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 saw that there was a time for everything season, he also undoubtedly looked forward to the time of all times, when time would be relationally fulfilled in the work of the Messiah (Ecclesiastes 3:11-15):

11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. 12 I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; 13 also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

14 I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. 15 That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away.

Adam Clarke remarks that the proper translation of v.11 should be “*also that eternity hath he placed in their heart, without which man could not find out the work which God hath made from the commencement to the end*”. If God has so rooted eternity in the heart of humanity, and that (as v. 14 indicates) it is only in eternity that we see God's work - then this eternity finds its fullness and victory in the work of the incarnate Christ.

This also explains why, in the Jewish view of time and dates via the Hebrew calendar (such as the *Shalosh Regalim*⁸) and the festivities as laid out in the Torah (specifically Exodus and Leviticus), these bear such strong Messianic significances as they testify, also, to the fullness of time in Christ Jesus. For example, Leviticus 25:8, which refers to the jubilee every seven times seven years beginning with the Day of Atonement, is described in Isaiah 61:2 as a type of the “*acceptance year of the LORD*”. This directly coincides with the time of Christ's first coming and redemption and noted by Luke in Luke 4:19.

⁷ Christology is a field of Christian theology concerned with the nature and person of Jesus Christ. Christo-centricity is a doctrinal term describing theological positions that focus more heavily on Jesus Christ, as opposed to the Godhead / God the Father or God the Holy Spirit (respectively “theocentric” or “pneumocentric”). A Christological / Christocentric reading of Scriptures is supported by Christ Himself in Luke 24:44-47 and John 5:39; further supported by John 1:1.

⁸ Shalosh Regalim are the three major Jewish festivals - Passover (Pesach), Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) and Feast of Booths (Sukkot). See my commentary on Leviticus 23-24 regarding how the feasts point to Christ: <http://thesentone.wordpress.com/2008/08/11/leviticus-23-249-the-progression-of-not-towards-christ-in-the-jewish-feasts/>

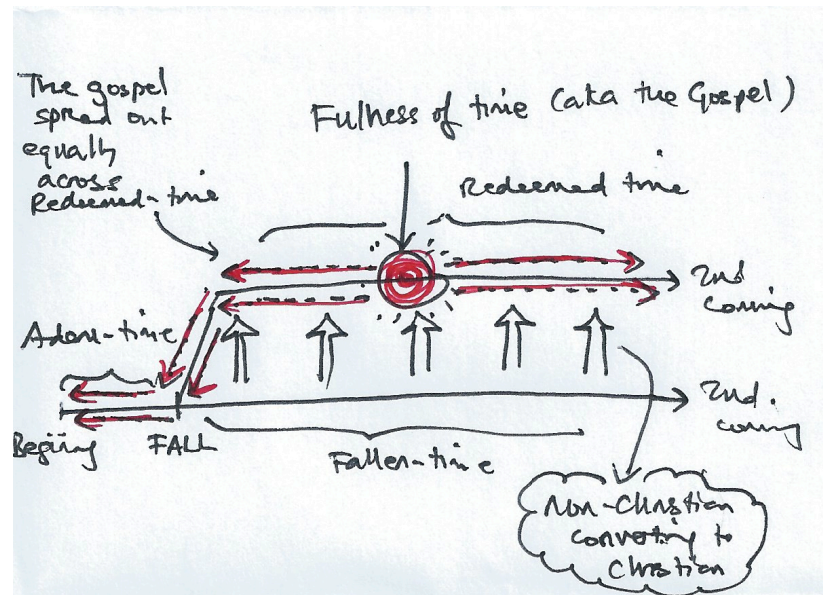


Fig 4 - Fullness of Time

Conclusion: God's time for us

To conclude - "God's time" and "our time" are indeed portrayed differently in Barth's language. If we partake in Redeemed-time, then we recollect the fullness of time which has occurred in Israel 2000 years ago, just as the Old Testament saints looked forward to the real meaning of eternity through their various festivals and events. God does not dwell on a separate plane which is timeless, but rather, we are taken up into a time-full relationship with Him through His Son.

However, outside of this time which God has for us (through His revelation), there is only chaos, lostness, and timelessness. No true history takes place, for all our imprints on life are but the imprints of the living dead and a handful of dust - without purpose, without meaning, without future, determined only by eventual death.

This brings us to the next question - the implication of us and God participating in the same Redeemed-time.

2. HOW DOES GOD KNOW THE FUTURE IF HE IS "IN" TIME?

Building on the answer to question 1, if God is not "timeless" or "above time" - then how can He know the future? How can prophecies "work" if God is not above time to see into the past and into the future?

To re-iterate, the implication of an *everlasting* rather than a *timeless* God is that He is not rushed or taken by surprise by events. He is sovereign over events to happen, and has prepared for such events when they come to pass; unlike man, the succession of moments has no down-side for God. Contrarily, time is a *limitation* for us, because we are fallen and dying. If Redeemed-time is the answer to His sovereignty *in time for us*, then this question specifically asks how future events can be determined, especially when we look at the prophecies in the Old Testament (or prophecies in the New and afterwards, for the matter).

Mike Reeves⁹ PhD thesis on The Glory of God - The Christological Anthropology of Irenaeus of Lyons and Karl Barth¹⁰ provides a fitting platform for answering this question as he compares the

⁹ Head of Theology of UCCF (Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, previously known as Inter-Varsity Fellowship).

¹⁰ A pdf soft copy could be downloaded from <http://ethos.bl.uk/>

writings of Irenaeus and Barth (the writing of the latter having assisted in my answer to the first question).

Mike Reeves on St. Irenaeus

Firstly, Mike Reeves reviews Irenaeus' understanding of time:

"Irenaeus' ontology¹¹ never disappears down into ... the constant danger of entirely linear chronologies, in which the present constitutes the only reality. After all, the bishop is a far cry from the modern replacement of order and cosmos with a history that is no more than 'one damn thing after another'.

Peter Forster¹² ... says, 'we might describe Irenaeus' understanding of time as comprising two aspects: fallen, linear time, which is redeemed, and the redeemed time of the incarnate Christ, by which it is being redeemed.'¹³ Certainly this evaluation is more sensitive to Irenaeus' concern that the οικονόμια (oikonomia) [economic Trinity] entail an anthropological and cosmic augmentation that is the product of the incarnation. However, there is need for caution concerning such an interpretation. Gustaf Wingren notes that recapitulation¹⁴ means:

'the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation, and this accomplishment is within history, in a time sequence, and is not an episode at one particular point of time. It is a continuous process in which the οικονόμια [oikonomia, economic Trinity], dispositio [disposition], of God is manifested by degrees'¹⁵

Irenaeus' view concords with that of Barth's - both see the dual Fallen-time and Redeemed-time at play after the Fall. Irenaeus in particular notes that such Redeemed-time is a tool of for his theology of "re-capitulation", where God's plan of salvation "re-capitulates" us from baby-like faith to new creation glory and spiritual maturity. Reeves further notes that Irenaeus is careful not to create the notion of a "double-decker chronology" (as proposed in Figure 2 in the preface), which is more gnostic than Christian¹⁶, cosmologically speaking. Rather, "*the cosmos does not consist of two discrete systems but one creation, a universe*"¹⁷, confirming Goodwin's position that God is not relationally schizophrenic. What Irenaeus sought to do was to tread the line between a complete

¹¹ Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, existence or reality as such, as well as the basic categories of being and their relations.

¹² British Anglican bishop, currently the Bishop of Chester in the Church of England.

¹³ Forster P. R., God and the World in Saint Irenaeus: Theological Perspectives

¹⁴ Irenaeus' theology of re-capitulation is captured in Glen Scrivener's paper on "Creation and Redemption - the One work of the One Word" (<http://christthetruth.org.uk/IrenaeusandAthanasius.htm>):

"Recapitulation (anakephalaiosis) has been variously understood: to sum up, to go over the same ground again, to unite under a single head, to restore to the original, to bring to a climax, a spiral climb. All of these capture something of Irenaeus' meaning. Fundamentally, redemption is described as God "recapitulating in himself his own handiwork." Thus "what we had lost in Adam – namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God – that we might recover in Christ Jesus." Christ achieves this by taking the very flesh of Adam – the head of the old humanity – and, going over the ground of Adam's history, Christ achieves victory where Adam failed. Thus Christ can become the Head of the true spiritual humanity to which we must belong. God's creative work has moved in this direction from the beginning, making Christ's incarnate work completely 'of-a-piece' with His creation. The goal of all God's ways with the creation has ever been to sum up everything under the Heavenly Man, Christ."

¹⁵ Wingren G., Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus

¹⁶ St. Irenaeus' Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies, "AH") was written for the purpose of investing and debunking Gnostic thinking. Gnosticism is a religious belief with several variants, though a common characteristic was the teaching that the realisation of "Gnosis" (intuitive knowledge) is the way to salvation of the soul from the material world (the material world often seen as imperfect / evil / tainted).

¹⁷ Williams D. C. The Myth of Passage in *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 48 Issue 15

divorce of God from the world (deism) and pantheism¹⁸ that annihilates all that is other from God. To Irenaeus, the marriage of the two could be found in *Christ* - that God and the created being are united:

*“...Irenaeus saw χρόνος [chronos - time as a sequence] offered as καιρός [kairos - a special moment] - the opportunity for πλήρωσις [plerosis - fullness] (AH 1.5.6). Maturation alone, however, could never constitute the spiral dynamic of time. It is the dual use of καιρός [kairos] that helps to provide this, for, whilst χρόνος [chronos] as a whole is offered as καιρός, yet there can be said to be a more specific καιρός [kairos]. This καιρός [kairos], which Eve had first refused to wait for in presumptuously seeking ἀποθέωσις [apotheosis - glorification] independently, Mary is told to wait for at Cana (AH 3.16.7). This will be the temporal coordinates of God’s definitive engagement with humanity. This should not be understood to constitute a second spiral, a “Christ-time” as against an “Adam-time”, for this is τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου to pleroma tou chronou (fullness of time - Gal 4:4). Where Marcion¹⁹ held to an unheralded and unexpected incarnation that broke history into quite discrete fragments, Irenaeus saw **prophecy and expectation**. Thus, in addition to the actual appearances of the truly present Son of God to the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets, events could be typological of that when present person’s still future work (quoting Moses’ staff swallowed up serpents as type of incarnation, swallowing up death and sin); Moses’ marriage to a Cushite was prophetic of the marriage of the Word to the Church of the Gentiles; the law given was full of types of Christ’s incarnate work; Gideon’s fleece typified the original blessings of the flock of Israel with the dew of the Spirit before the hardening of Israel and the blessing of the Gentiles (AH 3.17.3); the first Ἰησοῦς [Iesous, Joshua - whose name is Jesus (Υἱὸς) in Hebrew], leading the people of God into the promised land, was a type of the second Ἰησοῦς [Jesus, the son of God], leading the people into a renewed creation. Yet, as his dual use of καιρός shows, Irenaeus saw something stronger within the οἰκονόμια [economy of God]: **not just prophecy and expectation, but a bias within the very fabric (if we may use so ontologically loaded a word) of time toward incarnation.**” (emphases included)*

Much of what is observed in Irenaeus’ writing is already addressed in my answer to question 1 - that Irenaeus saw *chronos* (i.e. Fallen-time) as effectively swallowed up in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4). This follows with Irenaeus explicitly explaining why there *can* be prophecy and expectation, for all the shadows, types and Christophanies²⁰ in the Old Testament were all pointing to this specific *kairos* (special moment), this *pleroma tou chronou* (fullness of time) - the incarnation of Christ. It is the completed work of the incarnate Messiah which fulfills time, the hope which Old Testament saints like Abraham and Moses clung onto (John 8:56; Hebrews 11:26), the main subject/object of all the prophesies in the Old Testament.

Reeves continues:

*“What we have seen, then, is that whilst Irenaeus deems it of capital importance to see a distinction between the λογος ασαρκοσ [logos asarkos (Christ before incarnation)] and the λογος ενσαρκοσ [logos ensarkos (Christ after incarnation)], he cannot accept that there be any radical disjuncture between the two. Robert Jenson, whilst then proceeding in a direction alien to that of Irenaeus, is here quite right in stating that ‘[w]hat in eternity precedes the Son’s birth to Mary is not an unincarnate state of the Son, but **a pattern of movement within the event of the Incarnation, the movement to Incarnation, as itself a pattern of God’s triune life**” (AH 4.14.1; c.f. 4.13.4). By very nature the logos asarkos is ‘Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel’. The fulfilment of that pleasure is [the fullness of time], the αρχη [arche - beginning] at the τελος [telos - the end].”*

¹⁸ A view that God and the universe / nature is identical. Pantheists do not believe in a personal, anthropomorphic or creator God. The central idea in most variants of pantheism are that the cosmos is an all-encompassing unity and nature is sacred.

¹⁹ Marcionism is a theological thought that Jesus’ teachings were incompatible with the Old Testament God, and taught that Christianity was distinct from and in opposition to Judaism.

²⁰ A Christophany is an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ in the Old Testament. For writings on this, see <http://christthetruth.wordpress.com/christ-in-ot/> and Margaret Barker’s *The Great Angel*

Thus, while Irenaeus insisted that a distinction need be made between the periods *before* and *after* Christ's incarnation (i.e. before fullness of time, and after time has been made full), he refuses to allow such distinction to become a "radical disjuncture" altogether. Rather, the movement towards the incarnation is the *kairos* (special moment) which is the subject of Redeemed-time. All moments leading up to the incarnation were already - as Jenson states - "a pattern of movement within the event of the Incarnation, the movement to Incarnation".

Therefore, Irenaeus, like Barth, saw that time, as the form of *οικονομίαν θεοῦ* [oikonomia theou - God's economy], is by its very nature Christologically determined and shaped²¹. The first event of all is the eternal loving of the Son by the Father in the Spirit, by which the Son has his being and by which God becomes creative (c.f. John 1; John 17). God's purpose of creation is not to abandon it to its natural devices, but to create it with the fullness of time in mind, when He and His creation could be united to exist in that harmony which is the characteristic of the love of the Father for the Son. Reeves concludes that "Time in creation, then, is the locus required by childish humanity to grow as a dependent other. **To paraphrase the apostle Paul, time, for Irenaeus, is παιδαγωγος [paidagosos - tutor] to lead man, little by little, to that glorious maturity.**" (emphasis included)

Irenaeus' take on "time" being a tutor to lead man to maturity, as a pattern of movement to the incarnation, implies also a parallel eschatology for the non-Christian, for they face the inevitable entropy which one is already cursed with as a result of Adam's sin (Genesis 3:19; Ezekiel 37; John 3:16-18; Matthew 24:7-8; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11; Romans 8:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:3; Revelation 12:2). While redeemed man standing in Redeemed-time is gloriously maturing in Christ towards His second coming, the unredeemed creation (including the non-Christian) standing in Fallen-time is, in parallel, heading towards its inevitable destruction in creation's increasingly tumultuous birth-pains. The dark pit of chaos is thus a fitting end for the timeless non-Christian of lost, Fallen-time (Psalm 30:3), their eventual burning in the lake of lifeless fire (Revelation 21:8) directly contrasted with the completed re-capitulation of the Christian in Redeemed-time who enjoys life-giving waters of the rivers and fruit of the tree of life (Revelation 22:2).

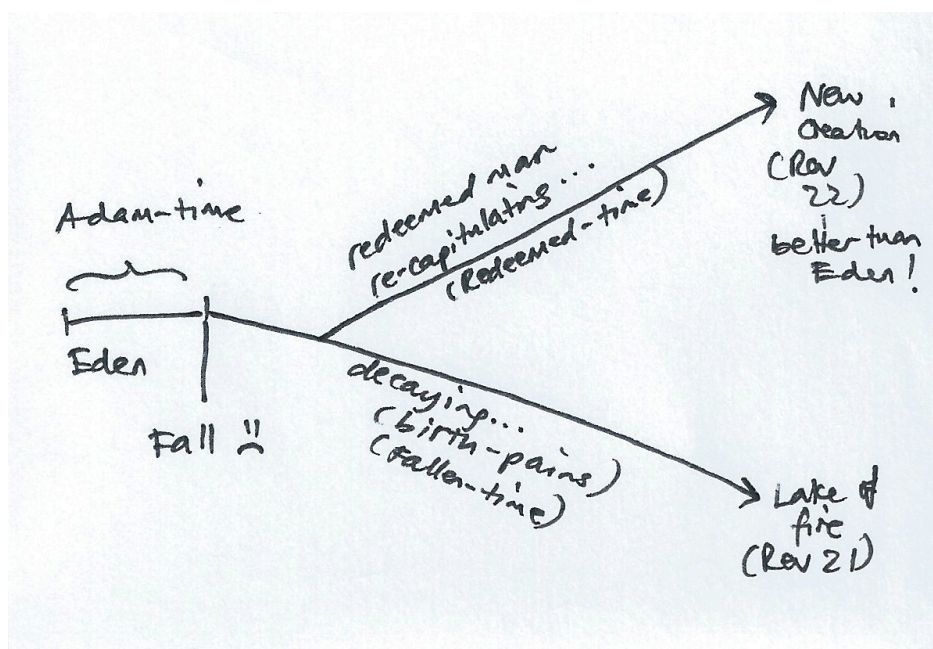


Fig. 5 - Eschatology of the Redeemed and the Fallen

²¹ Ricoeur, P., *Time and Narrative*, trans. Blamey, K., & Pellaeur, D., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Vol. 3, p12f

Mike Reeves on Barth

As proposed by Barth in my answer to the first question, time is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Yet, in our corrupted and unredeemed nature, we have a being which is one long loss of time - Fallen-time. The extension of such Fallen-time would be the opposite of healing, and would rather be a prolonging of man's sentence and curse (c.f. Genesis 3:22).

Reeves states, "*In his [Jesus'] death, the time of fallen man is concluded, and in his resurrection dawns God's time as the time of reconciled man. So it can be seen that, not only has Jesus Christ taken our past, not only is he our contemporary, he is our future. He is not only the [arche (the beginning / head)], but also the [telos (the end)]. In him we have our true being in time and a hope that is not abstractly temporal, but personal.*

... The time of Jesus Christ overarches and accompanies ours such that recollection of that time must also be expectation of it. Whilst for us the resurrection and the parousia [i.e. Christ's Second Coming] are two separate events, for him they are one single event, the parousia being when the arch of his time over ours will be completed and our allotted time will be at an end. The only new thing the parousia could bring is the unveiling of Christ's present lordship over what is already a new creation in him. Then it will be announced χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται [chronos ouketi estai - time no longer it will be; no more delay] (Revelation 10:6), and the disintegrated time that is the fallout of our own greed and alienation will be judged and swallowed up in God's congruous triune time as he presents us with our future in Jesus Christ. The resurrection is the anticipation, the parousia the fulfillment of the same event of the eschaton, 'ending time'."

We can see here that whilst Irenaeus saw time as a tutor leading man to maturity and re-capitulation, and that the shadows of the Old Testament pointed towards the incarnation of Christ, Barth sees time contrastingly as a portrayal of what has been deemed in the beginning, in *arche* - an eternal counsel of a truth that has *already* occurred even in pre-creation. This gives meaning to otherwise mysterious verses such as Revelation 13:8 (NIV):

⁸ *All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.* (emphasis included)

To Barth, the end, the *parousia*, is but the period when all Christ-centered truth (already established at the creation of the world) is laid bare. To Irenaeus, the *parousia* is the key culmination of our maturity and re-capitulation to new creation glory. Simply put, Barth saw time as fulfilled by looking into the beginning; Irenaeus saw time as fulfilled by looking into the end. Reeves explains Barth's position further:

"The atonement in Jesus Christ takes place as a wrestling with and an overcoming of human sin. But at the same time and primarily it is the great act of God's faithfulness to Himself and therefore to us - His faithfulness in the execution of the plan and purpose which He had from the very first as the Creator of all things and the Lord of all events, and which He wills to accomplish in all circumstances... As very God and very man He is the concrete reality and actuality of the divine command and the divine promise, the content of the will of God which exists prior to its fulfilment, the basis of the whole project and actualisation of creation and the whole process of divine providence from which all created being and becoming derives. Certainly the sin of man contradicts this first and eternal Word of God. But in the first and eternal Word of God the sin of man is already met, refuted and removed from all eternity. And in delivering and fulfilling this first and eternal Word in spite of human sin, as He would in fact have delivered and fulfilled it quite apart from human sin, sin is also met, refuted and removed in time.

The event of the cross is not a mere moment of pathos. In Jesus Christ we do not have a subsequent decision, but the primary will of God. The covenant is God's original purpose in creation, and the reason for reconciliation. As we have seen, God's acts ad extra are not strange to his being but are the temporal externalisation of that which he eternally is in himself. As triune,

God is a being-for-creation. That being the case, sin can only be a transient middle act, or even an interim, in the drama."

Barth adds flesh to this understanding of this temporal execution of an eternal counsel:

"...there is but one single covenant between God and man, the covenant of grace, and the mediator of the covenant is the man Christ Jesus. The right way to regard the Gospel story – the proclamation of the birth, death and resurrection of Christ – will accordingly be to recognize in it the **temporal execution of an eternal counsel so that its facts are eternal facts, the truth and effect of which forwards and backwards are extended over all periods.** Here on earth God was robbed of His glory by man, and sin and death entered the world; therefore here also upon earth all things had to be restored by a man. That this did happen is the Gospel **already attested in Paradise to our first parents, and this Gospel has been confirmed and clarified, has been proclaimed beforehand with growing plainness and definition down to its smallest details; that these promises are fulfilled, that what is to happen did happen, is the message of the evangelists and apostles...**"²²

...in fulfilled time the earth is one with the heavens which are arched over the whole earth. This is the point at which to recall the famous saying of the Psalm [quoting Psalm 90:4]. The God thus addressed is, of course, the eternal God, **but not the timeless God of the Greeks; He is the covenant God of Israel, revealing Himself in time.** Not in the sight of God the Timeless, but in the sight of Him, the very temporally Revealed, are a thousand years a day; or as Luther once put it, "... **what we regard and measure as a very long drawn-out measuring line, He seeth it all as wound together upon one clew. And so the two of them, the last man and the first, death and life, are to Him no more than a moment is**". This is also the proper place for the Evangelists' interpretation of the name of God [quoting Luke 20:37]." [Barth quoting Luther] (my emphases included)

Redeemed-time is therefore a drawn-out measuring line of a temporal execution of the eternal decree of the Father's election of Christ (Isaiah 42:1) and His image being the predestination (Ephesians 1:5-11; Romans 8:29-30) which all mankind should conform to, Adam being the first to be made in Christ's image (Genesis 1:26-27)²³ if the Gospel were an eternal counsel as stated by Barth. The Psalmists seemed to have understood the contrast of Fallen-time and Redeemed-time as well, such as in Psalms 31:14, "My time is in thy hands", 84:10 – "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand", 102:3 "My days are consumed like smoke", and 139:16: "all my days were written in thy book... when as yet there was none of them". Passages such as Isaiah 46:10, Hebrews 1:2-3 and Revelation 13:8 also imply the fulfillment of the promise throughout the Old Testament regarding Christ's crucifixion as an eternal counsel which seemed to have been *accomplished* at the outset *before* the foundation of the world. Barth suggests this in CD 1.1 p.383 where the "Father, Son and Spirit... is, so to speak, ours in advance", that God is the one who "posits Himself and is His own origin in the hiddenness of his Godhead". By being "ours in advance", Barth implies that this refers to the being of the God who "is not swallowed up in the relation and attitude of Himself into the world and us as actualised in His revelation". (p.260). What this means is that God is none other than the one who He is in His revelation - there is not another hidden veil (such as the Greek concept of "timelessness") behind which He hides. In this regard, God is none other than the one who he is in his revelation. This is why Eberhard Jungel names his book on this subject "God's being is *in becoming*" - for God's *being* as determined in pre-creation is temporally executed.

Furthermore, the "times" as described in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 are, to Barth, merely meaningless human actions if they stand outside of God's eternal decree of the Gospel. Barth could not possibly conceive of the Old Testament as merely making random references to the coming of Christ, as this would violate the eternal decree and the fullness of time which all Old Testament

²² Barth quoting J. Wichelhaus in *Die Lehre der heiligen Schrift*, 1892 p. 242-43

²³ Adam thus being the shadow of Christ even before the Fall, as Christ was the true first "man" in whose image Adam was made.

saints looked forward to. Rather, the crucifixion of Christ is the “*universal and uniform presupposition*” of the Old Testament Scriptures (referring to Romans 1:2, 3:21, 10:4, 15:8; Galatians 3:24; 2 Corinthians 3:14).²⁴

Yet, Barth does not take a supralapsarianism position²⁵, but is rather a refinement of it as Reeves observes:

“...supralapsarianism's all-consuming concern for the glory of God was always in danger of relativising evil and giving him the appearance of a demon, not loving man, but only using him as a means to his own ends, only preoccupied with himself in his own private glory-seeking.

*... Yet if Jesus Christ takes the place of the historic decretum absolutum [i.e. eternal decree], and if he, **in our time and history, is postulated as the fulfilment of the covenant instead of the two groups, the damned and the saved**, then Barth's reconceived (or drastically corrected) Supralapsarianism can be seen (CD II/2, 75). That is, God's will is neither the existence of the two groups, reflecting his mercy and his wrath; nor sin, the fall and evil; it is elected man in concreto. Further, it is his will that elected man should reject what God rejects, so revealing, corroborating and proclaiming the Yes of God in his creaturely No to what is repudiated. In order that he might truly stand in covenant with God, he must say Yes with him and therefore also say No with him. Yet for this to happen, and man to be an effective and faithful witness to the divine glory, man had to be confronted with what God had rejected and uttered his No to. Knowing, however, man's incapacity to do this on his own, God willed to become this man and in him to secure creation from all that threatens it. Instead of willing evil and the fall, God chose Jesus Christ, a sinful man who did not sin. **In time, a history would corroborate God's divine No and Yes in a triumph over death, in a***

²⁴ Barth was by no means alone in his take on Redeemed-time in contrast to Adam and Fallen-time. He lists out a number of theologians supporting his position, as stated below.

Luther's commentary on 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 is that the reality of baptism and provision of spiritual meat and drink in the Old Testament is no mere “*allegory or spiritual interpretation... for t'was not a figure but a plain seriousness, God's Word, that maketh alive and the right faith was there, thus it befell them in no appearance, but 'tis the fact itself was there.*” To Luther, the Old Testament has taught nothing else aside from Christ as preached by the Gospel. Regarding Genesis 3:15, “*...it is a strong claim that smites all to the ground that is preached otherwise. It is already resolved we must despair and renounce, and depend alone upon the Seed which alone doeth it... Therefore behold how boldly the Old Testament speaketh of matters. **There it standeth that Adam was already a Christian so long before Christ was born, for he had precisely the faith in Christ which we have, for time maketh none difference to faith. Faith is the same from the beginning of the world to the end.** Therefore he did receive by faith that which I have received. Christ he saw not with his eyes any more than we did, but he had Him in the Word, so we have Him also in the Word. The sole difference is that then it should happen, now it has happened. The faith is all the same, so all the fathers just like ourselves were justified by the Word and faith and also died therein*” (Preb. ueb. I. Buch Mose 1527 W.A. 24, 99, 26).

Luther no doubt was inspired by Augustine, who was explicit that grace existed before Christ, and yet such grace could not exist outside belief in Christ in the Old Testament. To Augustine, the Church included Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, the prophets and so forth, continuing naturally to the apostles and Christians after Christ is crucified. John Calvin thus saw John the Baptist as the connecting bridge between Old and New Testament Scripture as he stood as the last Old Testament prophet who also witnessed the One expected since Adam's day. The key difference of the Old and New Testaments, Calvin commented, were merely that of administration and not of substance.

It was simply the case that the most traditional position of the post-apostolic church saw Jesus as manifest in the Old Testament. Barth would clarify that these saints did not merely cling onto an “*idea of Christ*” but to “*have Christ and to have Him fully*” (pg. 93). Therefore there should not be a mechanical “Where's Waldo” hunt in the Old Testament for prophecies and types of the person and work of Christ.

For further post-apostolic church father quotes on Christ as the object of faith in the Old Testament, Appendix 2 of Bible Overview by Steve Levy is a gold-mine.

²⁵ Lapsarianism is the set of Calvinist doctrines describing the theoretical order of God's decree (in His mind, before Creation), in particular regarding the order of his decree for the fall of man and reprobation. Supralapsarianism / antelapsarianism is the view that God's decrees of election and reprobation logically preceded the decree of the fall.

death and resurrection. And in all this, the chosen man is no puppet for God's glory and triumph, but God himself."²⁶ (emphases included)

In revising Supralapsarianism to centre on Jesus Christ, the Elected One (Isaiah 42:1) before all of creation (Revelation 13:8), Barth does away with the problems of Calvinistic double predestination²⁷. Instead, Redeemed-time is experienced by all those who are saved through Christ, the subject of God's eternal decree and the One already elected before creation. In a sense, Barth therefore sees a natural progression from Adam-time to Redeemed-time, even if Fallen-time were to never occur; yet, Fallen-time and "sin can only be a transient middle act, or even an interim" (or, in which case, there would only be Christ-time, which merges Adam-time and Redeemed-time into one, for there is no Fall).

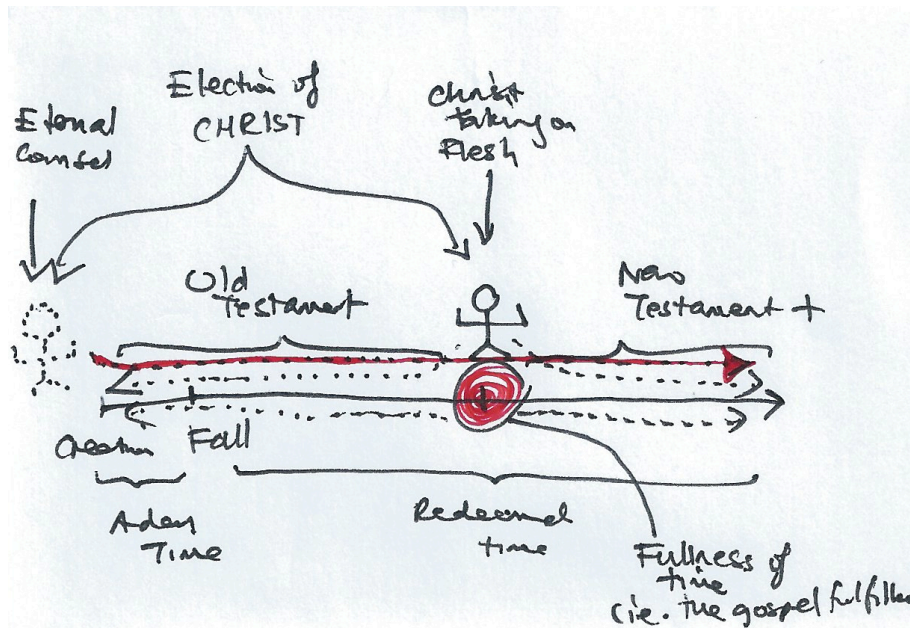


Fig. 6 - Christ elected before creation

Conclusion: the comparison between Irenaeus and Barth

A summary of the thoughts above is best provided by Reeves himself:

"There can be seen a marked difference between Irenaeus' and Barth's estimations of the temporal alignment of reality. For Barth, there is an effective orientation in all his thought to the past, and, for man, God's elective choice of Jesus Christ.

... It is, if anything, the other way round for Irenaeus, whose thought was pervaded by a gathering of all things to the future, to the End. What was, as created, imperfect in the beginning was meant to grow into perfection. Resolution, for Irenaeus, lay in the end, not in the beginning. 'Shadows', then, work in the opposite direction. Where for Barth victory over evil is something in the past recollected by the following shadows it still throws onto the present (creation's Schattenseite), for Irenaeus, following the use of σκία [skia - shadow] in Col 2:17; Heb 8:5, 10:1, the shadows are preceding, thrown onto us from the end. Where for Barth evil is a deviation from the Beginning which is God's election, for Irenaeus, evil is a deviation from the End, which is gathered perfection.

²⁶ CD 2.2 127-145

²⁷ Supralapsarianism is sometimes tied to another Calvinistic thought referred to as "double predestination", which is the view that God (before creation) chose both those who would go to heaven and those who would go to hell, his decision coming to pass infallibly. All men are equally unworthy, but it is down to God's sovereignty and discretion to extend mercy and thus salvation to some and not others.

... One saw history and time flowing towards the incarnation; the other saw them flowing, as it were, from the incarnation." (emphasis included)

Whether we take Irenaeus or Barth's approach, both sufficiently answer the question regarding the future of man and prophecies communicated to man. God's sovereignty stipulates, in Irenaeus' approach, that all prophecies eventually culminate in the maturity and re-capitulation of man into a new creation state. Even specific Old Testament prophecies regarding the salvation or destruction of a particular kingdom or an individual (or the restoration of Israel after 70 years of Babylonian captivity) point (i) (in Irenaeus' approach) generally to either the subject's choice of maturation and re-capitulation in Christ, or decay and entropy outside of Christ; or (ii) (in Barth's approach) generally to whether the prophesied subject is partaking in the Elected One, Jesus Christ, or standing outside the Elected One.

It is fitting to end therefore on 1 Peter 1:10-12, as properly translated by Paul Blackham:

*"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying find out **the time and circumstances** to which the **Spirit of Christ** in them was pointing when he predicted **the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow**. It was **revealed** to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven."*²⁸

The prophets were not trying to understand what they were prophesying about - they were simply trying to find out *when* God's time for us would be fulfilled. And it is the Spirit in them Who pointed them to the Lord of the Redeemed-time they were already experiencing before Christ took on flesh.²⁹

²⁸ Appendix 1 Question 2 (written by Paul Blackham) of Steve Levy's [Bible Overview](#)

²⁹ Naturally, the implication of the "eternal counsel" or the eventual *telos* [end] to which all Christian men re-capitulate and mature towards extends to questions beyond prophecy. Peter Leithart contends that such processes of moments for the redeemed extends also to other spiritual gifts:

"In the modern view, miracles, if believed at all, are the paradigmatic "supernatural" events. Verhey suggests that we should think of miracles "not as violations of nature but as the eschatological fulfillment, completion, and perfection of nature. In these works of power the creation itself is being made new, not violated. In these works of power the Word that was present at the creation summons nature to its own perfection." When Jesus exorcises a demon, he does not violate nature but liberates it and brings it to fulfillment. When he calms the storm, He is bringing the sea to eschatological peace. And by healing He brings damaged human beings to their restoration: "The healing miracles of Jesus demonstrate that God's cause is life, not death, that God's cause is human flourishing, including the human flourishing we call health, not disease. . . . And the nature miracles make it plain that God's cause is the blessing upon nature that calms the waters of chaos and restores nature itself to what God intends.

God is not identified with natural processes, nor with supernatural miraculous processes. In miracles, we have warrant for altering nature, but altering it in the direction of God's kingdom, to serve His purposes. Altering nature to heal, Verhey says, is consistent with Jesus' purposes, as is altering nature to bring freedom and blessing to the poor. These works are "supernatural" not in the modern sense, but in the sense that by God's work in His people, He is bringing creation to its telos [end]." (<http://www.leithart.com/2011/08/01/naturesupernature/>)

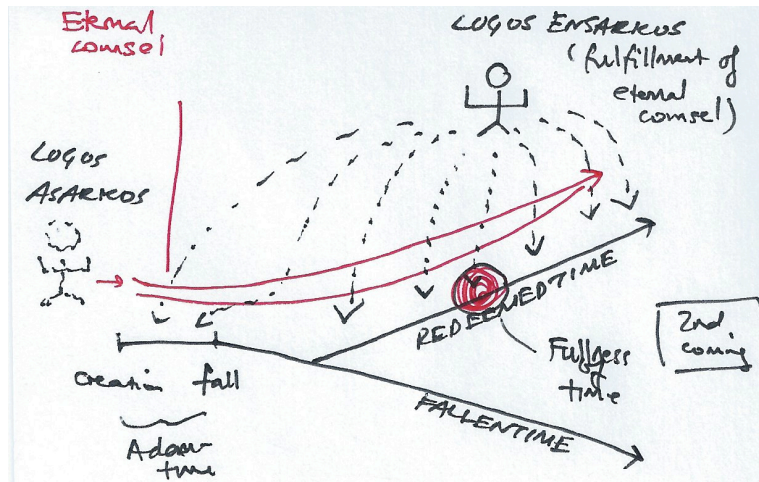


Fig 7 - Irenaeus and Barth's views combined

At this point, we are ready to turn to our final question.

3. WHAT "HAPPENED" WHEN CHRIST TOOK ON FLESH AND COMPLETED HIS INCARNATE WORK?

Building on the answers to the first and second question, we now come to ask: if all time in relation to God is Redeemed-time looking forward to the fullness of time, which is the incarnate work of Christ, as decreed before creation, then is creation merely a temporal "theatre"? Or, as Irenaeus stated above, does Christ's incarnation entail "an anthropological and cosmic augmentation" to God's being (i.e. a "change" to God's being)? Is God essentially the same *before* and *after* Christ took on flesh? Does our relationship with God change *before* and *after* Christ's incarnate work in spite of this eternal decree? Should the Old and New Testaments therefore be handled differently?³⁰ These are the implications of the third question.

The verses often touted as emphasising the difference between those who expected the fullness of time (i.e. Old Testament saints), and the times of those who recollect it (i.e. New Testament and afterwards) are as below:

- Isaiah 32:14-17, 44:3**
Jeremiah 31:33
Ezekiel 36:27
Joel 2:28-32
John 7:37-39
John 14:16, 17; 14:26; 15:26; 16:13
Hebrews 10:13

It would appear from these verses that Christ's incarnate work referred exclusively to the "newness" of the age post-fullness of time - the age where the Spirit has been given (c.f. Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost).

Turning quickly back to the earlier parts of this essay: so while I have established that (i) in the first answer, God experiences time *with us* in Redeemed-time if we stand in Christ; and (ii) in the second answer, such Redeemed-time is experienced equally by those in the Old or in the New Testament era, the difference being one of expectation and one of recollection; how then can this be reconciled with what appears to be a clear division of experiences of the Holy Spirit in the verses above? Practically speaking, let us use Abraham as an example (given our faith is modeled against his; Romans 4:16). If Abraham were truly a Christian who experiences the fullness of

³⁰ See <http://www.theologian.org.uk/bible/blackham.html> for an "in-house" debate regarding faith in Christ in the Old Testament between Paul Blackham and Graeme Goldsworthy.

time (Redeemed-time) the same way we do, as implied in the second answer (the only difference being one of expectation, while we recollect), then why do the verses seem to indicate that his faith is “lesser” than ours, as his belief in Christ was *before* the Spirit was given? Is there *any* difference at all between Abraham’s faith and our faith (c.f. Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:6-9), or do we have a “better” faith now that the Holy Spirit is poured on all flesh? Yet - a greater question is, how can anyone belong to Christ (i.e. be part of Redeemed-time, looking forward to the fullness of time) if they do not have the Spirit of Christ - if they do not have the Spirit dwelling in them (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2)?

Following the footsteps of Scripture as guided by Irenaeus, Goodwin, Barth and Jungel (and Blackham and Reeves) thus far, the answer to this fullness of time (and the apparent contradiction by the verses above regarding the Pentecost) can only be found in a deeper investigation of the giving of the Holy Spirit and Christ incarnate.

Paul Blackham’s thesis on The Pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin provides great depth in this investigation. To begin with, Blackham looks at the distinction conveyed in John 7:38, 39:

*“...the Father, although the source of the Spirit, does not send the Spirit himself, but does so through Christ. It is not as if the Son is passive as the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, but that by His meritorious intercession on behalf of the Church, the Son “purchased not only all the graces of the Spirit for us, but the Spirit himself (whom we had forfeited) to dwell in us” (Vol. 6, p. 52). **Jesus could not breathe the Spirit out upon His disciples until He had shed His blood.** “But Christ having died, and having, as the Lamb slain, purchased the Spirit, and being ascended up to the throne of God, he, as the Lamb, now sheds forth the Spirit: John 7.38, 39” (Vol. 6, p.52). This theology is taken from Galatians 3:13, 14... Goodwin concludes: “And, forasmuch as the gift of the Spirit comes under a promise, as well as other blessings, **it must needs come under the purchase of Christ’s blood, which confirmed all the promises**” (Vol 6. P.52).” (emphases included)*

Indeed, the distinction is (as previously confirmed) that the Spirit could not be given until Christ’s blood was shed. Blackham continues:

*“His visible coming at Pentecost was the visible consecration and dedication of the great temple, the mystical body of Christ, to be reared under the gospel (the several members of which body are called ‘temples of the Holy Ghost’ 1 Cor. 3:16), as that appearance at Christ’s baptism was the consecration of the head” (Vol.6 p.9). The coming of the Spirit is referred to as the beginning of the Gospel in Acts 11:15, because **until the Spirit had come there could be no ministry of reconciliation.** The Gentiles had always been regarded as unclean, but they were purified by the work of the Spirit in conversion, removing all difference between Jew and Gentiles.*

*... [However] at the foundation of all this there seems to be in Goodwin **a view of time and history that does not militate against the nature of God...** in Goodwin **history becomes the scene of the divine action, and eternity is more like the planning room where the persons of the Trinity make decisions regarding their respective tasks in redemption.** Inevitably this makes human history extremely significant and the action of God in this history is extremely important for the history of God.”*

If Goodwin does not view time and history as against the nature of God, then surely there is a direct change made on man when the *logos asarkos* (pre-incarnate Christ) becomes the *logos ensarkos* (incarnate Christ), for we are speaking of a God *for us*, God in time *with us*, God’s revelation *to us*, God taking on flesh *for us*. If this “God” has changed - as the Second Person of the Trinity takes on flesh - then surely the “us” would be affected accordingly.

To answer this question further, we will need to look at:

(a) The relationship of the Holy Spirit and the Work of Christ incarnate;

(b) The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (using Kuyper and Blackham’s writings as assistance); and

(c) The ascension of the incarnate Christ

(a) The relationship of the Holy Spirit and the Work of *Logos Ensarkos* (Christ incarnate)³¹

First and foremost is a visible reliance of the incarnate Son on the Holy Spirit, as Goodwin observes, at the very first moment of His incarnate life, at His very conception (c.f. Isaiah 11, Daniel 9, Acts 10:38).

Blackham states, “...in classical Christology the miracles and good works in the life of Christ are taken to be signs of His divinity. However, **Goodwin sees them as evidences that He was fully indwelt by the Spirit.** The problems caused by seeing the miracles as evidences of Christ’s divine nature are many and deep. It is at this point that a classical two-nature Christology becomes so unrealistic. When certain actions are attributed to the divine nature and other actions are

³¹ By contrast, Goodwin also looked at the implication of the Holy Spirit and Adam (which is useful for your further reference). Goodwin saw the following (as stated in Blackham’s thesis):

“No, Adam did not need to see the spiritual realm, so he did not ever have the supernatural faith of the Christian.. Adam’s relationship with God was carried out in and through the Creation, in all its original created glory. Adam did not sit in the heavenlies with Christ, or spiritually approach the Holiest of Holies of God’s presence in the spiritual temple that was shadowed by an earthly arrangement in the Pentateuch. Adam met with God in the setting of the created “earthly” universe.”

“God appointed Adam, as to be a public person to convey to his posterity what he should do or be, so further also, to be type of another Adam who was to come after him, namely, Jesus Christ. (Vol 7 p 71)

Christ was first, and more principally intended of the two; for Adam being but as the type, and so the more imperfect every way, Christ, the Second Adam, must needs be not only at the same time with him intended, but primarily and in the first place; for so it is in all types else, their antitype is that for which they are ordained, and they are but ‘figures for the present’ (Heb 9:9), and so are but subordinate to their anti-type, as first and chiefly intended. (Vol 7 p 85)

It seems then that it was the Holy Spirit by his indwelling who had provided the epistemological bridge between subject and object for Adam in the garden of Eden. Adam had the holy principles within by creation, but they were operative because of the holiness that kept him in fellowship with his Maker. The Holy Spirit indwelling him gave him the holiness that was his naturally intended lifestyle, that is to say, God had created him to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit who made him holy in the image of God.

Connecting the Holy Spirit with the image of God and the integrity of human nature in this way seems to be a most fruitful line of theological thought. This would seem to suggest that even the ‘natural’ righteousness of Adam could not simply as an autonomous, independent righteousness, but was entirely dependent upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit...

We look ahead to the time when the Holy Spirit will indwell His people, the community of Christ’s body, in an unrestricted way at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when God will dwell with His people and be their God. When the creation is so indwelt by God then there can be no room for the autonomous challenge of sin in the created order. Instead, all creation, but especially humanity, will marvellously voice the praise of God.”

“If Adam was a public figure, a type of Christ, in the image of God because he was indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then the Spiritual Man, the realization of the type, is the express image of God who had the Holy Spirit without measure. Under this understanding, the creation is redeemed in so far as it is indwelt by the Spirit through the mediation of Christ... So, because Adam legally represented all of humanity in his actions, we are all guilty of his sin, not simply recipients of his corrupt nature. (Vol 6 p41-43)”

... “As Jesus had said that a good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit, so a human person will produce the fruit that are of the kind of that person’s heart, either flesh or spirit (see Gal 5). The master-piece or the master copy from which the Holy Spirit re-creates human nature is Jesus Christ. He is the Vine, and the branches that share His same nature produce the same life and fruit that He has. The Father predestined human beings to be conformed to the image of Christ, and this comes about in the absolute change that the Spirit works in the human heart at conversion.

“He, having a Son that was the image of himself, resolved that he should take our nature upon him, that he might be therein made like to us, that so, filling his nature with all grace and with all glory, he might conform us again unto the image of that his Son, that we might all be brethren, all alike conformed unto him.” (Vol 6 p219)” (emphases included)

attributed to the human nature, a concept of a single, coherent Person is very difficult to maintain. "Person" becomes a kind of neutral arena where these two natures carry out their respective tasks as each is required. The unity of the Person, of the consciousness, is difficult to maintain so long as Christology is reduced to the explanation of the two natures without reference to a thoroughly Trinitarian setting.

Goodwin's emphasis does much to overcome these problems. Jesus Christ has the status of a man as well as the status of God, yet lives his incarnate life as a man. **The miracles and good works are done because of the Holy Spirit indwelling Him, as could be done by any human person so indwelt...**

This is not to say that His divinity was in terms of the full indwelling of the Spirit, because Goodwin maintains a very strict allegiance to a two-nature Christology. However, the divinity of Jesus Christ is not necessarily revealed in the miraculous or the authoritative. Christ's dependence on the Spirit is focused at the very points that normally furnish proofs of divinity. The wisdom, understanding, knowledge, might, fear of the Lord, preaching, teaching, miracles, compassion of Jesus **are ascribed to the work of the Spirit, not the divine nature of Christ.**" (emphases included)

The implication of this is vast. If Abraham were to cling onto the promise of the gospel, which involves the work of *logos ensarkos* (as opposed to a mere Christophany, the *logos asarkos*)³²; however, , and looked forward to the fullness of time as a believer of Jesus, then he too is given the Spirit *before* the Pentecost. For the work of Christ is not due to his divinity; rather, His work is achieved by reliance on the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit He purchased with His blood for us but *only when He took on flesh*. By taking on flesh and being indwelt with the Spirit *in man's flesh*³³, we are granted the same indwelling of the Spirit whether before or after the fullness of time (as indicated by my answer to question 2 - the blessings of Christ's work were already experienced by those in the Old Testament due to the Gospel being an eternal decree before creation, but only fulfilled 2000 years ago). By man partaking in Redeemed-time, the fullness of time and the inheritance of the Spirit is spread out equally to the saints before and after Christ's incarnate work.

The forward looking expectation of the saints whilst they partook of the Redeemed-time of the God who took on Spirit-indwelt flesh warrants the giving of the Spirit even *before* the Pentecost. This is the reason why the Old Testament Christians could even experience the Spirit *at all* in the Old Testament³⁴. As the Spirit dwelt in the *logos ensarkos*, so also the Spirit dwelt in Abraham who experiences a redeemed life in Christ, even long before that day of the Pentecost.

³² It has been said that the Old Testament appearances of *The Angel of the LORD* were merely appearances of an Archangel of sorts but not the pre-incarnate appearance of the Son to the saints, for the reason that His appearance would compromise the incarnation itself. It must be noted that His pre-incarnate appearance is very different from His incarnate appearance. In the former, He never became one of the Israelites, was never a mortal, was never subject to the weaknesses and limits of our human life, never born under the law, never born of a woman, and most importantly - never became flesh. He was the all-glorious Lord of hosts and when he appeared to someone His glory should shake the building and all but kill a man (see Isaiah 6 for one example) - [Bible Overview](#) Appendix 1 Question 7

³³ Hebrews 2:16; See Gregory of Nazianzus' First epistle against Apollinarius, to Cledonius: "*For that which He [Christ] has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved*".

³⁴ Or for God to even speak to us, Christ must already be victorious otherwise He is a failed mediator!

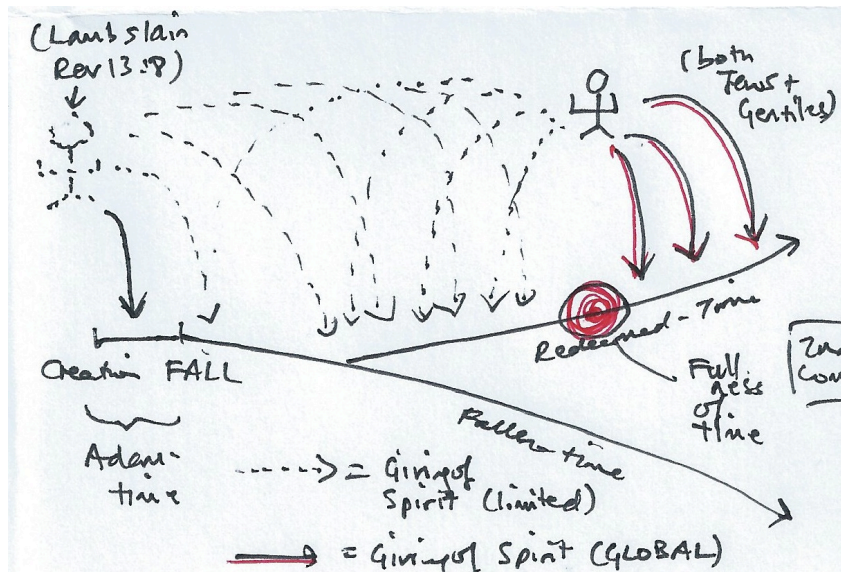


Fig. 8 - Impact of the Logos Ensarkos on us

In other words, the fact that there is *any* dynamic between God and the Old Testament Christians *before* the incarnation meant that the fullness was already experienced in the Old Testament - and that the victory of Christ was already proclaimed long before Christ took on flesh (which accords with the proclamation of the Offspring's victory in Genesis 3:15).

A mark of the Spirit's indwelling in us is His grieving. Blackham explains this:

*"He [the Holy Spirit] proceeds from them [the Father and the Son] by way of love, and love in them mutually each to other is the original of his person. **And as he is the love that is between them both, so it is he who sheds abroad the love of both into our hearts: and it is he who is grieved, as a friend or person that loves us (as Eph. iv. 30), when we sin, or neglect that duty which is his care and charge to work in us.** (vol 6 p40)*

... There is a gift of his person, first and chiefly, or primarily; but secondarily of his graces, to be wrought in us by him. And in this gift of his person doth consist the greatness, the richness of the gift... And thus you are to look at the gift of the person of the Spirit more than all his charismata, or gifts. (vol 6 p58)

... although Christ had to mix with a whole world full of sinful people, suffering "daily such contradictions of sinners", yet this "contradiction" was only external to him. However, the Spirit's indwelling is in sinful human hearts. Christ dwells in our hearts only by faith, but the Spirit actually dwells in us.

... Now the contradiction which he by reason of this near inhabitation endures must needs be greater and quicker to his sense, from those he dwells thus within, and hath entered into... than that of outward converse, which Christ only endured. (Vol. 6, p42)

***... Only the Spirit is said to be grieved, an emotion that is deep, and implies a great nearness to the one who has caused such upset.** "A father (as God the Father) is offended, but a familiar friend is grieved". Right from the beginning of the world the Spirit has had to suffer the grief of striving with the hearts of sinful humanity (Gen 6). In the days of Noah He relieved Himself of His striving by using the flood to destroy all but eight of the human race, but when he indwells the Christian He can have no such relief, "for he hath eternally undertaken for them" (vol.6, pg.42). His work is continually spoiled in the Christian's heart. Any good work that He accomplishes in settling the heart in a Godly disposition will be ruined by the Christian's continuing in sin."*

This explains why the Spirit could even be grieved by the saints in the Old Testament, if the Spirit was not *already* given. In fact, the Spirit was already dwelling in the hearts of the Old Testament saints, and (as aforementioned) this also explains why there is *any* work of the Spirit in the Old Testament to begin with³⁵.

(b) - 1 - The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament - Abraham Kuyper

By looking at what the Holy Spirit has done in the Old Testament, this re-informs our readings of John 7:38-39 and Joel's prophecy as commonly (mis-)understood.

Abraham Kuyper's Work of the Holy Spirit provides a useful compendium of references as he comments on the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament:

"Therefore the Holy Spirit introduces His work at the very beginning of the development of the race. The first germ of the mystery of Godliness was already implanted in Adam, and the first mother-word of which the Holy Spirit was to be born was whispered into his ear.

This word was followed by the deed. God's word does not return void; it is not a sound, but a power. It is a plowshare subsoiling the soul. Behind the word stands the propelling power of the Holy Spirit, and thus it becomes effectual, and changes the whole condition of things. We see it in Adam and Eve; especially in Enoch; and "By faith Abel obtained witness that he was righteous." After these operations in individuals the Spirit's work in the family begins, partly in Noah, especially in Abraham.

... Our Ritual of Baptism points emphatically to Noah and his eight, which has often been a stumbling-block to a thoughtless unspirituality. And yet needlessly, for by pointing to Noah our fathers meant to indicate, in that sacramental prayer, that it is not the baptism of individuals, but of the people of God, i.e., of the Church and its seed. And since the salvation of families emerges first in the history of Noah and his family after the flood, it was perfectly correct to point to the salvation of Noah and his family as God's first revelation of salvation for us and our seed.

... But the work of the Holy Spirit in Noah's family is only preliminary. Noah and his sons still belong to the old world. They formed a transition. After Noah the holy line disappears, and from Shem to Terah the Holy Spirit's work remains invisible. But with Terah it appears in clearest light; for now Abraham goes out, not with sons, but alone. The promised son was still resting in the hand of God. And he could not beget him but by faith; so that God could truly say, "I am the Almighty God," i.e., a God "who quickeneth the dead and calleth the things that are not as tho they were." Hence Abraham's family is almost in the literal sense the product of the Holy Spirit's work in that there is nothing in his life without faith. The product of art in Abraham's history is not the image of a pious shepherd-king or virtuous patriarch, but the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit operating in an old man - who again and again "kicks against the pricks," who brings forth out of his own heart nothing but unbelief - working in him a steadfast and immovable faith, bringing that faith into direct connection with his family life. Abraham is called "the Father of the Faithful," not in the superficial sense of a spiritual connection between our faith and Abraham's history, but because the faith of Abraham was interwoven with the fact of Isaac's birth, whom he obtained by faith, and of whom there was given him a seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand of the seashore."

³⁵ i.e. Genesis 6:3; Isaiah 63:10, the Spirit strove and grieved as He dwelled in the hearts of men in the Old Testament. James Hamilton's God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments provides what appears to be a compendium of the Holy Spirit's work in the Old and New Testament. However, it appears that Hamilton's work is built on a misconception of God's time for us and therefore an improper presupposition driving the interpretation of John 7:39 and John 14:17, amongst other passages such as John 16 and Luke 24:49, regarding the statement that the Spirit is "with you" vs. the Spirit being "in you". In my view, Jesus is not making the sort of point Hamilton imposes on Jesus (especially given an altogether different premise if the passages in John are understood in the context of Redeemed-time as opposed to linear time). Jesus was trying to comfort the disciples, telling them that the Spirit who they *already* knew, who has been with them while Jesus was with them, will not abandon them but will continue to be among them *and* in them even after Jesus has left. See Don Carson's commentary on John 3:5 and in particular John 14:17, 18-20 The Gospel According to John (The Pillar New Testament Commentary).

... And with the appearance of Jesus, all that is now expected will be quite different, the true Israel, the land of promise, the temple on the mount of God, the Kingdom without end, the judgment of the world. **Thus, the Old Testament present participates in a future which is really God's future.** The Synagogue today waits for the fulfillment of prophecy, but the fathers' waiting was no mere abstract, infinite waiting, but a waiting which already participated in fulfilled time. Rather, an abstracted Old Testament faith is that of eternal unrest.

... God's becoming man is the goal of the Old Testament... The Old Testament, too, has, of course, one covenant in mind. But it only prophesies it by witnessing to many covenants. The New Testament knows only one covenant. **The Old Testament knows many real Nows, but not a Now which does not wait for an indisputable Now. The New Testament knows only one Now, which is not in any sense or in any way disputable.** The bloody wars of Yahweh against Baal have now ceased, not because the radical nature of the rejection of the "form of this world" (Romans 2:2) has been mitigated, but because now it has become so utterly inward and basic. The secularization of nature, history and civilization now ceases to present a problem as we look back upon the cross of Christ. The programme of the Old Testament has been carried through to a finish – the armour becoming that of a spiritual kind in Ephesians 6, the Church being more superior than Israel's of old. **Thus, in Israel's crucifixion of its Messiah it becomes clear that the sinful and punished people of God does not coincide with the people Israel, that Israel as a people was acting only in a representative capacity for the future Church of sinners.** "God hath concluded all under disobedience" (Romans 11:32). "The man who has to fight and despise the world is the one to whom it still means something, whom it can still tempt and attack. Nevertheless he is not summoned to battle with, or contempt for, the world, but to belief and awareness that this world is a past world in the death of Christ, and that its gods and idols have ceased to wield any power. If Christ really fought the fight with the old world and if man already lives with Him in faith in the new, his only business, his only fight is to acknowledge and confirm that the fight in question has already been fought. Even oppression at the inevitable suffering of the world, even world agony, can, properly speaking, only be found where man still poses as the master of himself, capable of fighting against the suffering or succumbing to it like a hero. Good care will be taken that we always discover ourselves to be this man. But even from this discovery the New Testament witness will rescue us." (emphases included)

Following this, Kuyper moves on to compare the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament against the New in the seventh chapter of his work, the "Outpouring of the Holy Spirit" (looking at Isaiah 32:14-17, Joel 2, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:25; Zechariah 12:10; Numbers 11:29). Yet, these prophecies are evidence of an Old Testament prophetic conviction that the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in those days was *imperfect*; that the real dispensation of the Holy Spirit was still tarrying; and that only in the days of the Messiah was it to come in all its fulness and glory. Yet, Kuyper maintains that these verses seem to be contradicted by Haggai 2:4-5; Isaiah 63:13; Psalm 61:13; Psalm 104:30; Ezekiel 11:5; Micah 3:8; Luke 1:15; John 20:22). These verses need to be reconciled, as explored then by Kuyper in chapter 8 of his work: "The Holy Spirit in the New Testament Rather than the Old".

Kuyper sees the Holy Spirit as acting upon a human being in a twofold manner - from without and from within. Outward would include the empowering given to certain men like Samson, Aholiah and Bezaleel, Joshua with his military genius, perhaps an inkling of inward work in Saul and in Balaam, yet they are but external:

"But in the Old Testament there was also an inward operation in believers. Believing Israelites were saved. Hence they must have received saving grace. And since saving grace is out of the question without an inward working of the Holy Spirit, it follows that He was the Worker of faith in Abraham as well as in ourselves.

The difference between the two operations is apparent. A person outwardly wrought upon may become enriched with outward gifts, while spiritually he remains as poor as ever. Or, having received the inward gift of regeneration, he may be devoid of every talent that adorns man outwardly."

Therefore, Kuyper sees the Holy Spirit work in the individual persons - but at the Pentecost, His operation "on and after that day consists in the extending of His operation to a company of men organically united... This spiritual union of the elect did not exist among Israel, nor could it exist during their time. There was a union of love, but not a spiritual and vital fellowship that sprang from the root of life. This spiritual union of the elect was made possible only by the incarnation of the Son of God. The elect are men consisting of body and soul; therefore it is partly at least a visible body. **And only when in Christ the perfect man was given, who could be the temple of the Holy Spirit body and soul, did the inflowing and outpouring of the Holy Spirit become established in and through the body thus created.**" (emphasis included)

Kuyper goes on to explain that this only happened upon Christ's ascension, since His human nature did not unfold its fullest perfection until after He had ascended, when, as the glorified Son of God, He sat down at the right hand of the Father. Only then was the perfect Man given - as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and unite the spirits of the elect into one body. "...when, by His ascension and sitting down at the right hand of God, this had become a fact, when thus the elect had become one body, **it was perfectly natural that from the Head the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was imparted to the whole body. And thus the Holy Spirit was poured out into the body of the Lord, His elect, the Church.**" (emphasis included)

In chapter 26, Kuyper goes on to use the analogy of rain to describe this inner working of the Spirit between the Old and the New Testament period. "The rain descends from heaven and man gathers it to quench his thirst. When householders collect it each in his own cistern, it comes down for every family separately; but when, as in modern city life, every house is supplied from the city reservoir, by means of mains and water-pipes, there is no more need of pumps and private cisterns. Suppose that a city whose citizens for ages have been drinking each from his own cistern proposes to construct a reservoir that will supply every home. When the work is completed the water is allowed to run through the system of mains and pipes into every house. It might then be said that on that day the water was poured out into the city. Hitherto it fell upon every man's roof; now it streams through the organized system into every man's house."

Kuyper ends his work with the following:

"God's elect do not exist without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We derive all that we are not from ourselves, but from that rich Dweller in our hearts... it is the Holy Spirit who from moment to moment holds the lamp that radiates Love's brightness in the heart in His own hand... They are what they are by His indwelling, and Love can celebrate its triumph only lby pervading their whole personality with His influences. **And what is this, but that "God is all in all"; or by the Holy Spirit even the Father and the Son come to dwell in them. " The distinction should not be ignored between the Old and the New - yet, the Spirit's work had been increasing from the Old to the New and even moreso upon a fuller fulfillment of Joel's prophecy".**³⁶

³⁶ See footnote 31 for Goodwin's view on Adam's relationship with the Holy Spirit. Abraham Kuyper similarly stated that since in God heart and thought have no separate existence, but His undivided Essence thinks, feels, and wills, we learn from this significant passage that the Being of God works in Himself from all eternity." That such Being of God is imprinted in history in a Trinitarian and distinguished manner (and thus the "history" of the gospel is but a revelation of what God did before He created the universe), is telling of the fore-ordination of the gospel played out through His outgoing works. To Kuyper, this "being" of God is defined in his "indwelling works" expressed in his external imprint on creation. His distinction of the work of the Three Persons (Father as Creator; Son as Redeemer; Spirit as Sanctifier), in both the Old and the New Testament, is filtered through his view of how the "indwelling of the Holy Spirit" as a theme is handled especially in the Old Testament. To Kuyper, Adam (bearing sinless flesh), had no tension against the Holy Spirit. Kuyper describes that the Holy Spirit could "pervade him, not merely dwell in him". Yet, the nature of sinful man repels the Holy Spirit - a very different relationship from that of our first ancestor. Adam in his pre-fallen state therefore saw spiritual things as natural - contrary to our view of spiritual things as supernatural [I disagree with the author where Adam is described as under the covenant of works and that eternal life must be earned by fulfilling the law]. This is argued from Genesis 2:7, regarding the in-breathing of the breath of life and thus Adam becoming a living soul. Kuyper compares this passage with John 20:22, where the Holy Spirit is described by His Hebrew word - "ruach" (wind), the special work of the Spirit breathed upon men and giving life (Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4)."

(b) - 2 - The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament - Paul Blackham

Paul Blackham's Module 5 of his Frameworks on the Biblical Spirit is separated into five weeks - (i) The Biography of the Spirit, (ii) You Must be Born Again, (iii) Life in the Spirit, (iv) The Fruit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and finally (v) the Work of the Holy Spirit - the Sacraments. Only (i) and (iv) are relevant for this essay.

Blackham's purpose under "The Biography of the Spirit" is to clarify that Holy Spirit is indeed in the people of God (Genesis 41:37-38; Numbers 27:18; 1 Samuel 19:22; Nehemiah 9:19-20)), that He is our closest friend (Psalm 139), that He is a Person (2 Samuel 23:2; Ezekiel 11:5-6; Ephesians 4:30; Philippians 2:1; 2 Corinthians 13:14), that He is Another Advocate (John 14:15-18); that He was already actively at work in the Old Testament before the day of Pentecost, listing out the following verses:

Genesis 1:2, 3:8, 6:3, 41:38	Nehemiah 9:19-21, 30
Exodus 31:1-3	Psalm 51:13, 106:32-33; 139:7, 143:10
Numbers 11:16ff, 14:24, 24:2, 27:18	Isaiah 63:10-14
Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 13:24-25, 14:5, 14:19, 15:14	Ezekiel 11:1-6, 36
1 Samuel 10:6, 10, 11:6, 16:13, 19:20-24	Micah 3:8
2 Samuel 23:2	Haggai 2:4, 5
1 Chronicles 12:18, 28:12	Luke 1:15
2 Chronicles 15:1	Acts 7:51
	Galatians 3:14

In particular, in week 4 of the module - "The Fruit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit", it is shown that the Old Testament saints had the same gifts as in 1 Corinthians 12:

- Wisdom - 1 Kings 4:29
- Knowledge - Exodus 9:29-30, 2 Kings 8:9-13
- Faith - Hebrews 11
- Kinds of healings - Isaiah 38:21 (by medicine), Genesis 20:17-18 (by prayer)
- Miracles - 1 Kings 17:17-24
- Prophecy - Numbers 11:25, 1 Samuel 10:9-11
- Distinguishing between spirits - 1 Kings 22:15-23
- Speaking in tongues - Daniel 1:4, Isaiah 28:11
- Interpretation of tongues - Daniel 5:25-28

Furthermore, the language used in the Old Testament regarding the Spirit's work is the same as in the New Testament, comparing:

NT	OT
Acts 4:8, 31	Micah 3:8

Acts 6:5	Numbers 27:18
Acts 8:39	1 Kings 18:12, 2 Kings 2:16
Acts 10:4-45, 19:1-7	1 Samuel 19:19-24
1 Corinthians 14:20-21	Isaiah 28:11-12
1 Corinthians 14:39	Numbers 11:26-30
Ephesians 4:30	Isaiah 63:10

Furthermore, in Appendix 1 Question 10 of the [Bible Overview](#) by Steve Levy, Paul Blackham goes on to explain the verses Jeremiah 31:31 and Ezekiel 36:24-27 (regarding the “new covenant”) which appear to contradict the similarity of spiritual experiences between the Old and the New Testaments. Rather, if we return to the beginning of the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 4:4), we see that the people were urged to get just such a heart at that time! The idea of the circumcision of the heart was not *new*, but spawned from Deuteronomy 10:14-16 (even Jesus challenged Nicodemus to do the same in John 3:5, *before* the Spirit was “given”).

Similarly, in Ezekiel 18:31, the Lord also challenged His ancient church to be *born again* - “*Rid yourselves of all the offences you have committed and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel?*”

It is explained, then, that the difference is that of the “old covenant” and the “new covenant” - which needs to be defined. The “old covenant” is, as shown in Jeremiah 31:31-32, the covenant made at Sinai - the system of the law given through Moses. Yet, the “new covenant” is strictly speaking even *older* (as Barth contends, the new covenant *is* the eternal counsel made before creation!). The Sinai covenant is just a temporary shadow and sign pointing towards the person and work of Christ - its “oldness” was due to its fading and time-limited glory. When the fullness of time was reached, the new covenant replaced it (c.f. Galatians 3:24 - the law being our “guardian”).

Yet, if there is so much similarity in the Old and New Testament, surely this accords completely with my answer to question 2? Was there no apparent difference made to our relationship with God in *Logos Ensarkos* as opposed to *Logos Asarkos*? There is a difference - and it is shown in Acts 10:44-45, 15:1-11, 22:21-22. It would appear from these passages that the major difference is *not* so much the pouring out of the Spirit on Pentecost, but that it is the *inclusion of the Gentiles*. The new thing is not a new way of salvation, neither the fact that people were receiving gifts and performing miracles and prophesying; rather, it is the inclusion of the Gentiles.

To Blackham, this is the mystery spoken of in Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 1:9-10, 3:2-6, and Colossians 1:25-27. Going back to Joel 2:28-32 - it is stated that the Spirit is poured out on *all* flesh - Israel now including *all* nations. Acts 2 quotes from Joel, and that what was prophesied was being fulfilled - in particular, Acts 2:33, highlighting that it is required for Jesus to sit at the right hand of the Father, upon His ascension, to pour the Spirit on all flesh.

St. Augustine also had similar things to say in Book IV Chapters 20 of “On the Holy Trinity”:

“29. As, therefore, the Father begat, the Son is begotten; so the Father sent, the Son was sent. But in like manner as He who begat and He who was begotten, so both He who sent and He who was sent, are one, since the Father and the Son are one. (John 10:30) So also the Holy Spirit is one with them, since these three are one. For as to be born, in respect to the Son, means to be from the Father; so to be sent, in respect to the Son, means to be known to be from the Father. And as to be the gift of God in respect to the Holy Spirit, means to proceed from the Father; so to be sent, is to be known to proceed from the Father. Neither can we say that the Holy Spirit does not also proceed from the Son, for the same Spirit is not without reason said to be the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son. [Augustine affirming the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son] Nor do I see what

else He intended to signify, when He breathed on the face of the disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:22) For that bodily breathing, proceeding from the body with the feeling of bodily touching, was not the substance of the Holy Spirit, but a declaration by a fitting sign, that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son. For the veriest of madmen would not say, that it was one Spirit which He gave when He breathed on them, and another which He sent after His ascension. (Acts 2:1-4) For the Spirit of God is one, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, the Holy Spirit, who worketh all in all. (1 Corinthians 12:6) But that He was given twice was certainly a significant economy, which we will discuss in its place, as far as the Lord may grant. That then which the Lord says,—“Whom I will send unto you from the Father,” (John 15:26) —shows the Spirit to be both of the Father and of the Son; because, also, when He had said, “Whom the Father will send,” He added also, “in my name.” (John 14:26) Yet He did not say, Whom the Father will send from me, as He said, “Whom I will send unto you from the Father,”—showing, namely, that the Father is the beginning (principium) of the whole divinity, or if it is better so expressed, deity. He, therefore, who proceeds from the Father and from the Son, is referred back to Him from whom the Son was born (natus). **And that which the evangelist says, “For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;” (John 7:39) how is this to be understood, unless because the special giving or sending of the Holy Spirit after the glorification of Christ was to be such as it had never been before? For it was not previously none at all, but it had not been such as this. For if the Holy Spirit was not given before, wherewith were the prophets who spoke filled? Whereas the Scripture plainly says, and shows in many places, that they spake by the Holy Spirit. Whereas, also, it is said of John the Baptist, “And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” And his father Zacharias is found to have been filled with the Holy Ghost, so as to say such things of him. And Mary, too, was filled with the Holy Ghost, so as to foretell such things of the Lord, whom she was bearing in her womb. (Luke 1:15, 41-79) And Simeon and Anna were filled with the Holy Spirit, so as to acknowledge the greatness of the little child Christ. (Luke 2:25-38) How, then, was “the Spirit not yet given, since Jesus was not yet glorified,” unless because that giving, or granting, or mission of the Holy Spirit was to have a certain speciality of its own in its very advent, such as never was before? For we read nowhere that men spoke in tongues which they did not know, through the Holy Spirit coming upon them; as happened then, when it was needful that His coming should be made plain by visible signs, in order to show that the whole world, and all nations constituted with different tongues, should believe in Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit, to fulfill that which is sung in the Psalm, “There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard; their sound is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” (Psalm 19:3-4)**

30. Therefore man was united, and in some sense commingled, with the Word of God, so as to be One Person, when the **fullness of time** was come, and the Son of God, made of a woman, was sent into this world, that He might be also the Son of man for the sake of the sons of men. **And this person angelic nature could prefigure beforehand, so as to pre-announce, but could not appropriate, so as to be that person itself.”** (emphases included)

Although there were examples of Gentiles being saved by Christ in the Old Testament, they had to partake in the Israelite community (Exodus 12:38; Joshua 6:25; Ruth 1:16). The international nature of the Church as God has always intended, is stated with much clarity in Ephesians 1:10, 22; 2:11-22; 3:7-10; and 4:1-16. Yet, the key verse is Ephesians 4:10 - the significance of Christ’s ascension. In Christ’s ascension, He filled the whole universe and His Headship over all things become official.

(c) Ascension of the Logos Ensarkos

In Christ’s ascension, He received his due *glory* and the *lordship*. Glen Scrivener’s³⁷ essay on What is the significance of the ascension in the theology of Hebrews?³⁸ sheds much light on this:

³⁷ Pastor of All Souls Eastbourne, currently an Evangelist.

³⁸ <http://christthetruth.org.uk/hebrews.htm>

“Although no priest of Aaron’s line ever sat down in the presence of God in the earthly sanctuary, Christ has done so in the heavenly sanctuary.”³⁹ Christ sits as One who belongs to the very centre of divine life. The right hand is “the place of highest honour and authority”⁴⁰.

Christ’s ascension is the installation of the Psalm 2 Son, the crowning of the Psalm 8 Man, the enthronement of the Psalm 45 King and the session of the Psalm 110 Priest. To know that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God is to know everything we need to know about His Person. But it also speaks volumes about His work. “A seated priest is the guarantee of a finished work and an accepted sacrifice.”⁴¹ Nothing could better indicate the finality and sufficiency of Christ’s atonement than His sitting down. In temple terms He was meant to sprinkle the seat and leave quickly, trusting that the incense would hide Him from the LORD ‘that he would not die.’ (Leviticus 16:13) Christ does not sprinkle the seat but sits on it as His throne.

The atoning work is done (Hebrews 1:3, 10:12) and the race of faith is run (Hebrews 12:2). Yet, Christ’s session does not only entail a finished work but also... a continuing priestly function...

While in one sense Christ’s ascension marks a finishing – the completion of His propitiatory sacrifice, in another it marks a kind of inauguration into eternal service. We see on several occasions how the sitting of Christ signals an ongoing significance. In 1:13 it ushers in a time of waiting while the Father subdues Christ’s enemies. In 8:1 it begins a new aspect of Christ’s ministry, which we will discuss below. In 10:12 it again means waiting (v13), the sanctifying of the people (v14) and our ‘drawing near’ (v22ff).

Christ’s session is not meant to imply His inactivity but rather His “ceaseless activity... constantly sustaining the universe by his dynamic word. (Hebrews 1:3) He is active as, enthroned on high, he rules over history until every enemy has been subdued. (Hebrews 1:13; c.f. 1 Corinthians 15:25) He is active on behalf of his chosen people as he dispenses mercy, grace and help to them in the hour of their testing (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-16; c.f. Acts 7:55f) and as in heaven, whither he ‘has gone as a forerunner on our behalf’, (Hebrews 6:20) ‘he always lives to make intercession for them.’⁴²

Hughes summarizes Christ’s on-going ministry (Hebrews 8:2) under three headings: representation, benediction and intercession.⁴³

[Calvin on 13:11] “Christ took his own blood into the heavenly sanctuary” (quoted on p330 of Hughes). [Calvin on 13:20] “God raised up his Son, but in such a way that the blood which he shed once in death, continues powerful after the resurrection for the ratification of the eternal covenant and brings forth its fruit just as if it were ever flowing.” (quoted on p330 of Hughes)

Jesus does not re-present Himself before the Father continually in atoning sacrifice. On the other hand, Jesus does not do less than the Aaronic sprinkling of the mercy seat. He does more... His once-for-all propitiatory sacrifice declared forever before the Father – thus He makes it a throne of grace. (Hebrews 4:16)... We should not shrink from declaring an eternal presentation (not re-presentation) of the blood in heaven.

More briefly we will consider His work of benediction and intercession. The former is not given great emphasis in Hebrews yet the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:22-27) finds some expression in Christ’s shining (1:3), in the ‘peace’ of God (13:20) and of His Priest (7:2) and in the grace to be found flowing from Him (4:14-16). His intercession (7:25) is a direct outcome of His Aaronic fulfilment

³⁹ Lane, William. *Word Biblical Commentary, 47b: Hebrews 9-13*, Word Books, Publisher, 1991

⁴⁰ Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co. 1977, p.48. See also Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation 5:13

⁴¹ Bruce, F.F. *The Epistle to the Hebrews, revised*, p.245

⁴² Heb 7:25; Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p47

⁴³ *ibid*, p.349-354

and perfection. Christ is before the Father like Aaron, carrying the names of the people on his heart before the LORD. (Exodus 28:29) Keeping this type in mind saves us from any crude thoughts about desperate pleas before an unwilling Father."

Indeed, the writer of Hebrews therefore strongly indicates that Christ's adoption of flesh and current intercession as our High Priest (having completed and brought the work of the cross to the throne room) is the reason for Christ's *incarnate* glory. Such *incarnate* glory is what broke the "dam" on the day of Pentecost, enabling the global pouring of the Spirit, thus allowing both Jews and Gentiles to finally worship in the same Spirit which was previously limited in giving to the Israelites.

Similarly Dev Menon in his sermon on Christ's ascension⁴⁴ spoke concerning the giving of the Spirit after Christ fills the heavens:

"In His ascension, the church becomes His new eternal body, forever bound up to Him, a Heavenly City made up of us all, with our Head residing in the heavens itself. The true tower - that Babel could never achieve. The old body is dying in dust and is passing away, the new body is now experiencing its firstfruits, and will be consummated on that great day of the Lord, when all is finally come to its full harvest, when we share completely in everything He shares.

*It is then no wonder that **the Spirit of God, which always resides in the body of Christ, is now free to roam within the world. As though it were seemingly restricted before, as the other angels and spirits roamed allied with the rebellious nations besieging Israel. But now the true Israel fills all things, the Spirit of God is pleased then to bless all who enter His body through faith with every spiritual blessing, as both Ephesians 1 and 4 state, such that He gives gifts liberally to all His church.***

'Psalm 68:18-25 18 You ascended on high, leading a host of captives in your train and gave gifts among men, even among the rebellious, that the LORD God may dwell there. 19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation.'

...Indeed as the Songs of the Ascent declare:

'Psalm 133:1-3 Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, the high priest, running down on the collar of his robes! 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.'

The pure oil of the Spirit of peace is poured out upon the head of the high priest and flows down for us, like Dew coming from the heavenly city itself, to enrich and nurture the olive tree of life. Indeed thus after the ascension of Christ it was a matter of days before the first dew-drops coming from His coronation oil-pouring were felt, at Pentecost and at the home of Cornelius, to both Jew and Gentile as had faith in Christ, as they saw mighty signs of the surety that Our Lord and Savior sits on the throne, and is at the heavenly table, being anointed with oil. The Spirit came with a mighty force, as He still blows today, causing many signs and wonders within the body of Christ, death is pushed back, diseases are healed, the confusion and tyranny of sin is restored with the understanding of many tongues.

... And so by understanding the ascension, we understand our Teacher when He tells us [referring to John 14:16-17, John 16:7-8, John 20:21-22 and Matthew 28:18-20]."

Conclusion: the Impact of the *Logos Ensarkos* on Old and New Testament believers

Goodwin is clear on the relationship between the Spirit and the Incarnate Christ - the latter relying fully on the former, and the giving of the former by the latter to *all* flesh being achievable

⁴⁴ Ministry Staff (Evangelism and Teaching) at Zion Bishan Presbyterian Church; download document: http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dfbc4d6b_25hbndv94r or download mp3: <http://www.mediafire.com/?guzcj45z2xh>

only when He ascends to glory (c.f. Scrivener and Menon). Yet, the Spirit's intimate relationship and involvement in the Old Testament (c.f. Blackham and Kuyper) are examples of the victory proclaimed pre-creation in God's eternal election of Christ, and decree of the Gospel (c.f. Revelation 13:8). Though apparently anachronistic on a linear non-Christian timeline, this is possible under Redeemed-time, as the saints of the Old looked forward with clarity towards the fullness of time, seeking only to find out when these things would happen but already inheriting the full blessings of Christ's victory and His giving of the Spirit - albeit, in Israel. Upon His ascension - what glory and what joy that *all* flesh - both Jews *and Gentiles* could now enjoy the Holy Spirit, testifying to the impact of the actual change made on us when God took on *our* flesh and entered the throne room with it.

As Jungel observes in his God's Being is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth, "[the] Son of God cannot be thought of in this history without the man Jesus, and the eternal *Logos* cannot be thought of as *Logos asarkos* [Word without flesh]. If... God is *already* with humanity, then for its part humanity must *already* be with God."⁴⁵ Thus, although the eternal decree was for Christ to be the *Logos ensarkos*, the God-man, the actual filling of the Spirit on a global scale was not achievable until Christ actually took on flesh - this being the new thing in the New Testament era.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

After answering all three questions, there is quite a lot to wrap up - thankfully, chapter 8 of the Westminster Confession does the job for me:

"6. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; being yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever."

Hopefully, now we can see the reasons why *all* Scriptures (i.e. including the Old Testament) are - as Timothy stated - useful for teaching, reproof, correction and training for righteousness. If all Scriptures testify to the moment of the fullness of time, yet the blessing (i.e. the giving of the Spirit) of the act of the eternal counsel of the Gospel was spread out to all ages before and after this fullness in Redeemed-time, then Christ has always been the specific object of faith. He is the God who revealed Himself to us *in time* - His time is time *for us*. His giving of the Spirit is an act of overflowing love, the font bursting forth from the Father through the Son, and from the Son to all mankind. This blessing of the incarnate Christ's ascension provides all men of *all ages* with such warm merciful love, for Abraham the patriarch to cherish and Paul the apostle to embrace as they stand in Redeemed-time - God's time *for us*.

Going back to the preface - time is not an emotionless scientific thought. Even your spouse can tell you that. Yet - God's time *for us*, His revelation *to us*, His taking on flesh *for us*, His giving of His Spirit *to us*, His overflowing love as oil is poured on the Head of the Church, dripping down to the Body - this is what it means to experience Redeemed-time. There is no need (nor is it

⁴⁵ As touched on in various parts of the essay, if my answers to the first to third questions are to be biblical and Christocentric, then a number of biblical themes in the Old Testament necessarily continue under Redeemed-time to the New Testament (c.f. Barth's CD 1.2 for a coverage of these themes). The people of God (i.e. Israel) become the international spiritual Israel (Romans 9-11; c.f. Acts 7:38 - the Greek word for the Hebrew "assembly" / congregation in the Old Testament is *ekklesia* - the equivalent to "church" in the New Testament, confirming the continuity of the Hebrew assembly in the international church); the house of the LORD, the temple, being Christ - and our bodies in Christ (John 2:20; 2 Corinthians 6:16); the Lordship of God, represented in the Israelite kings and finally fulfilled in the Priest-King Jesus; the judgments of God, as shadows of the future judgment upon Christ's second coming. If not for Redeemed-time, and the eternal counsel of the Gospel before creation, then there would be no reason for Christocentric typologies, shadows (or even Christophanies) - for the message of the Bible would be disjuncted, and the time experienced by the Old Testament saints are part of an entirely different age, dispensed with and replaced by the New Testament era.

possible) to travel on this Redeemed-time - for it only proceeds forward to the maturity and recapitulation of man to new creation. Yet, there is no glorious future for those standing outside of time redeemed - only chaos, lostness, timelessness, hopelessness, as man would otherwise fall victim to the entropy embodied by the pit, and eschatologically fulfilled by the lake of fire, as caused by Adam's sin. Why anyone would wish to travel this lost-time, this Fallen-time, escapes me. Time, the only real time in God's eyes, is love - His divine love poured out into the hearts of men of all ages, from alpha to omega, from Adam to the last man standing to witness the parousia. Real time, therefore, is *not* what keeps everything from happening as once - as touted by Ray Cummings. God's time *for us* allows the gospel to happen - at once - in all ages.

To conclude (and until the next revision of this essay), I leave you with Mike Reeves' parting thoughts⁴⁶:

"As for God, Barth can still say 'Time can have nothing to do with God.' (CD II/1, 608). Yet the 'time' that can have nothing to do with God is now simply this fallen, disjointed time. Eternity is no longer a simple Augustinian negation of all temporality. George Hunsinger put it superbly:

"God is light," Irenaeus once remarked, "and yet God is unlike any light that we know" (Adversus haereses 2.13.4). Barth knew this dictum and cited it (II/1, p. 190). It offers a possible paradigm for his use of the word "time". It is as though he were saying: "God is temporal, and yet God's temporality is unlike any time that we know." The time peculiar to God is at once the presupposition of creaturely time, and yet so utterly different as to be ineffable".

Being the living God, God does not transcend or flee from time. He is the true possessor of it. As such, eternity cannot simply be known as the negative image of time, but must be freed from the Church's long Babylonian captivity of this abstract opposition. (CD II/1, 611) Introducing the divine perfection of eternity (with its twin, glory), Barth set out his understanding of God's eternity in well-known words:

"The being is eternal in whose duration beginning, succession and end are not three but one, not separate as a first, a second and a third occasion, but one simultaneous occasion as beginning, middle and end. Eternity is the simultaneity of beginning, middle and end, and to the extent it is pure duration (reine Dauer). Eternity is God in the sense in which in Himself and in all things God is simultaneous, i.e., beginning, and middle as well as end, without separation, distance or contradiction." (CD II/1, 608)

*Where the creature's time is characterised by the fact that in it past, present and future are severed and put in opposition to each other, the 'purity' of God's duration is characterised by wholeness and integration: in eternity, beginning, succession and end neither fall apart nor into conflict with each other. Past, present and future exist in immediate unity. **Man's time is contrastingly disjunctive and needs to be healed of its succession and division by being brought into the time of the triune life of durational simultaneity.** This is neither timelessness nor sempiternity, but the duration of the simultaneity of past, present and future in contrast to their division within our time... **In eternity, the past is not lost, and the future holds no threat of extinction, but the three (past, present, future) are harmoniously one just as Father, Son and Spirit are one. Yet God's time is not destabilised but established by its unity in trinity. The proper perichoresis⁴⁷ of past, present and future involves a before and an after just as there is an order and succession within God.** The Father begets, the Son is begotten, the Spirit proceeds from both. This does not mean that we can imagine that the three modes of time correspond to the three modes of God's being respectively. That would imply the very disjunction that God's being is free of. The Father, as origin and begetter, is not only beginning but also succession and end; the Son, as the begotten, is not only succession but also beginning and end, being of the same substance as the Father; the Spirit, as the one who proceeds from both, is not only end but also beginning and succession.*

⁴⁶ Mike Reeves' PhD thesis: [The Glory of God - The Christological Anthropology of Irenaeus of Lyons and Karl Barth](#)

⁴⁷ Mutual inter-penetration and indwelling within the Three Persons of the Trinity.

Given that history for Barth is a matter of encounter, the triune God who is communion therefore is history, supreme and absolute time. He is a God who becomes. His being is event, the event of the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Spirit. It would only then be possible to talk of a purely timeless divine eternity **if God were not the God of encounter that he is.**

"In the last resort when we think of eternity we do not have to think in terms of either the point or the line, the surface or space. We have simply to think of God Himself, recognising and adoring and loving the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is only in this way that we know eternity. For eternity is His essence." (CD II/1, 639)

The triune God is eternity, the font of all time (CD II/1, 611). Margaret Barker believes that a very similar conception of eternity can be found within the liturgical symbolism of Old Testament Israel's worship: 'It can be shown, for example, that the temple concept of time was neither linear nor cyclic, but based upon the concept of a hidden eternity in the midst of time as we perceive it. The hidden centre was also the unity from which all creation came forth.'⁴⁸ This, in chronological terms, is what must be meant by God's being for his creation.

Like Irenaeus... [God] precedes the beginning of time, accompanies its duration and exists after its end. The God who has and is real time thus encloses all time within himself, and can take time for and give time to the creature as he has history, or encounter and communion, with him in Jesus Christ.

... Just as the speaking of the Word has an ontological function in establishing the being of the creature, so too it has a further ontological function in establishing the being of the co-creation, time. Just as there is no man, **so there is no time preceding Jesus Christ.**

... Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Word of God, lived a time of his own from his birth to his death. Yet, in contrast to us, he did not live the life of the *homoe incurvatus in se* [humanity curved in on itself], but a life lived for others. In his obedience, the Son neither made the idolatrous attempt to control time that so characterises the life of sinful humanity, nor an attempt to escape it, **but instead trusted the covenant God by living within the temporal form of his creation. Here, if anywhere, is the place to find genuine history, even Urgeschichte, for here God comes to man and man comes to God.** The Creator became a creature who then lived for God and so for all men. As the Christ, the one who lives for his people, his history was never exclusively private, but inclusive and public. Just as he shared his humanity with us, establishing our human being, **so he shared his time with us, establishing our temporal form. So he shared his time, being the contemporary of all men, and his time was never his alone** (CD III/2, 439-40). **In Jesus, then, the light of God's time shines into the darkness of man's fallen time. It is one point of light within that darkness, but a point whose light permeates the entire shadow.**

It is because he is this Lord of time, the first and the last, that Barth feels he can understand Jesus to be the contemporary of the patriarchs (in such a way that Luther could be affirmed in his description of Adam as a Christian), the one who in the Old Testament already called himself the one who is and who will be (CD 1/2, 72ff)⁴⁹.

God's time is when the Father relates to the Son through the Spirit, a time that the Son shares with all that are his. Jesus Christ being the Lord of time, his story is the meta-narrative into which all the sub-plots of human interaction fit. All other events are the acting out of the meeting of God and man, eternity and time, that occurred in the event of the incarnation."

⁴⁸ The Great High Priests: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy p.146

⁴⁹ Explaining why Jesus said to Moses that His name is "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14) - not because God is timeless, but because God has shared Redeemed-time with men of *all ages*. He is the I AM to Moses as He is the I AM to you today.