

The Great Timeout

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Back in my earlier life in the Church, I was very involved in the teen and adult sports program in our local congregation. Although I played adult sports and coached teen sports, my favorite activity was refereeing basketball. I enjoyed the fast pace of the game and the exercise. I enjoyed serving in the capacity of referee, something that most people would not want to do.

Refereeing though took a little getting used to. What I found out very quickly when I first started refereeing was that the hardest thing to do as a referee was to blow the whistle. If the other referee would blow the whistle, I could make the call every time. But blowing the whistle is hard to do at the beginning, because all action stops, and everyone is looking at you to hear what your call is going to be. And you know that half the crowd will be happy with you and the other half will not be happy with you.

In basketball, there is a universal signal that everyone knows that is used quite often by coaches and players toward the referee. You see it at every game. You see it in high school basketball, college basketball, and in the NBA. How many times can we recall at the end of a very close game with only a few seconds left, a player running up to the referee with his left-hand palm down with his right hand perpendicularly touching his left hand, forming a T shape.

This is the universal signal for "Timeout". The signal is usually accompanied with everyone shouting "Time!" or "Timeout!" When the referee blows his whistle, time stops, and a Timeout is awarded to the appropriate team. All action ceases for a period of time, until the referee gives the ball back to the player at the location of the Timeout call, and then the Timeout ends, and the action begins again.

Timeouts do not only occur in sports. As parents, how many times have we disciplined our children with a timeout when they are getting out of control emotionally? Whatever activity that the children were doing ends, and they are set down to calm down, and to regain their composure and a better attitude.

Believe it or not, our Heavenly Father uses "Timeouts" in much the same way, and the Bible includes many examples of them. My sermon this afternoon is entitled:

The Great Timeout

I would like to explore the subject of this great "Timeout" experienced by humanity and Biblical examples of other "Timeouts" that God the Father has implemented in His dealings with people.

So, first of all let's explore a few of the Biblical examples of "Timeouts" implemented by our Heavenly Father.

The first example of a "Timeout" in the Bible in today's sermon is:

1. Ancient Israel and the 40 Years of Wandering

Ancient Israel is a prime example of God the Father placing a group of people in a Timeout. We all know the story of Yehovah's miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt. After the Passover and the killing of the firstborn in Egypt, the Egyptians thrust them out of Egypt giving the Israelites their wealth and their possessions. The Israelites left Egypt with a high hand.

Yehovah had great plans for the Israelites. He was leading them to the Promised Land, which He had promised to give to them. The journey was not to be a long journey. However, Yehovah did not lead them in a direct path to the Promised Land through the land of the Philistines, because Yehovah did not want the Israelites to see war and become discouraged and return to Egypt, as we are told in Exodus 13.

So Yehovah led the Israelites along a very indirect path along the perimeter of the Sinai Peninsula to where around 45 days later they arrived at Mount Sinai.

Numbers 10:11-12 *And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.*

12) And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. (KJV)

So, the Israelites left Mount Sinai a little over 13 months after they had left Egypt. The Israelites spent approximately 11.5 months at Mount Sinai.

Kadesh Barnea is located in the wilderness of Paran.

Numbers 13:25-26 *And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. 26) And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. (KJV)*

Joshua tells us in Joshua 14 that he and the spies were sent by Moses from Kadesh Barnea.

Joshua 14:7 *Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. (KJV)*

In Deuteronomy 1:2, we will read the journey time between Mount Sinai (Mount Horeb) and Kadesh Barnea (near the entry point into the Promised Land).

Deuteronomy 1:2 *(There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh Barnea.) (KJV)*

So, the journey between Mount Sinai and the entry point into the Promised Land was in reality only 11 days.

Therefore, the Israelites could have arrived at Kadesh Barnea as soon as 15 months after they had left Egypt. They were ready to enter the Promised Land. But they didn't. What happened? Please turn with me to Numbers 14.

In Numbers 13, we read about the evil report that the 10 evil spies brought back to the Israelites concerning the Promised Land. Only Joshua and Caleb gave a true and righteous report. The evil report stirred up the Israelites and they became frightened and angry.

Numbers 14:1-10 *And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.*

2) And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

3) And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

4) And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

5) Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

6) And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

7) And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.

8) If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9) Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

10) But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel. (KJV)

The Israelites all rebelled against Yehovah and His leadership and called for Joshua and Caleb to be stoned and to reject Moses and to select a new leader who would lead them back to Egypt.

Yehovah punished that generation of Israelites for their rebellion. Let's continue in verse 28.

Numbers 14:28-3 *Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:*

29) Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

30) Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

31) But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

32) But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.

33) And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. (KJV)

So, with this edict and judgment, Yehovah institutes a 40-year Timeout on the Israelites. Why is this the beginning of a Timeout? Because time froze for 40 years. All of the agreements between Yehovah and Israel were put on hold. These agreements included:

a) Circumcision

Starting with Abraham, Yehovah had instituted physical circumcision as a sign between the descendants of Abraham and Yehovah that they were the people of Yehovah.

Joshua 5:5-7 *Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.*

6) For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

7) And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. (KJV)

So, as important as circumcision was for being a part of Israel and being part of that covenant with Yehovah, none of the male children born in the wilderness were circumcised. Why? Because time was frozen, and the Israelites were in a Timeout.

b) Holy Days

The Holy Days were all introduced to the Israelites in Leviticus 23. However, let's notice that the Holy Days were predicated on a premise. We find that premise here in Leviticus 23.

Leviticus 23:9-10 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
10) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, when ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: (KJV)*

So, here we have the timing element that after the Israelites came into the Promised Land, then they would harvest and celebrate the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost.

Leviticus 23:39 *Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. (KJV)*

Again, the premise of verse 39 is that the Israelites would celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles with the fruit of the land after they had entered into the Promised Land.

Leviticus 23:42-43 *Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:*

43) That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (KJV)

Dwelling in booths was to be a reminder that Yehovah had made the Israelites live in booths during their 15-month journey from Egypt to Kadesh Barnea when they entered the Promised Land.

With the rebellion of the Israelites against Yehovah at Kadesh Barnea, the Israelites did not enter the Promised Land. So, during this 40-year period of Timeout, the Israelites apparently did not keep the Holy Days, and no mention is given during this time of any Holy Day being observed, except for the Sabbath. Here are some reasons why:

- Passover – Without being circumcised, fewer and fewer Israelites would be eligible to partake of the Passover.
- Feast of Unleavened Bread – During the 40 years of timeout, Yehovah fed the Israelites with manna. The Israelites did not grow crops and grains to make bread – leavened or unleavened. So, the Israelites could not eat unleavened bread to observe the Feast.
- Wave Sheaf Offering & Pentecost – During the 40 years of Timeout, the Israelites grew no barley, so there could not have been a wave sheaf offering. So, there was no counting 50 days to arrive at the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. And as we read earlier, Pentecost was predicated on being celebrated after the Israelites had entered into the Promised Land.
- Feast of Tabernacles – The Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated with the fall harvest of their crops. There was no harvest during this 40-year period – only manna.

Because of the Timeout, the celebration of the Holy Days apparently was suspended by Yehovah until He would work with the next generation.

The regulations in the book of Leviticus were given to the Israelites before they rebelled against Yehovah at Kadesh Barnea, most probably during the 11 months that they were at Mount Sinai.

At the end of the 40-year Timeout, after the generation of Israelites 20 years and older who had rebelled against Yehovah had died off, Yehovah reinstated the giving of the laws and regulations to the new generation at Kadesh Barnea. This was the purpose and reason for the Book of Deuteronomy. *Deuteronomy* in Greek actually means “the second law” or the “second giving of the law.” The second giving of the law had to be done because most of the Israelites at the end of the 40-year timeout had not been alive when the laws in Leviticus were first given. This is why the Holy Days are repeated in Number 28. That repetition was for the new generation.

Please turn with me to Numbers 33.

Numbers 33:36-38 *And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh.*

37) And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

38) And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month. (KJV)

So, we can read in Numbers 33 the wanderings of the Israelites where they pitched in Kadesh Barnea at the end of the 40-year period just before Aaron died.

After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness because of their unbelief and rebellion against Yehovah, the Israelites were back at the same point that they were 40 years before – ready to enter into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 1:21 *Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. (KJV)*

So, at the end of the 40-year Timeout, Yehovah brought the Israelites back to where they had been 40 years earlier, but this time, the Israelites would obey and would enter the Promised Land. But, before the Israelites could enter the Promised Land, something else had to be done.

Joshua 5:2-3 *At that time the LORD told Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise this second generation of Israelites.*

3) So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the entire male population of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. (NLT)

So, all of the male Israelites were circumcised so that they could enter the Promised Land.

Joshua 5:10-11 *And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.*

11) And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the self-same day. (KJV)

So, after the Timeout was over, the Israelites were circumcised, the covenant sign was reinstated, the Passover was observed, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was observed.

So, after the Timeout was over, the Israelites entered into the Promised Land just like they were going to do 40 years earlier. But this time, the Israelites did not rebel against Yehovah.

And before the Timeout was ended, Yehovah brought the Israelites back to the same place that they were before. For the Israelites, it was “time out – time in”.

The second example of a “Timeout” in the Bible in today’s sermon is:

2. Jonah and the Great Fish

The prophet Jonah was commanded by Yehovah to travel to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Now this trip would be by foot or by camel or by mule, and the distance of this trip from Israel to Nineveh was approximately 600 miles. That’s almost the same distance as walking from Houston, Texas to Nashville, Tennessee, or from Seattle, Washington to Sacramento, California, or from New York City to Indianapolis, Indiana. It is not a short distance to walk. Let’s read what Jonah did.

Jonah 1:1-3 *Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,*

2) Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

3) But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so, he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. (KJV)

We all know the story. Yehovah sent a great storm which almost sank the ship. The sailors cast lots, and they threw Jonah overboard. Yehovah made a giant fish which swallowed Jonah whole.

Jonah 1:17 *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (KJV)*

So here is Jonah as a prophet of Yehovah totally disobeying Yehovah by not traveling to Nineveh, but instead, sailing on a ship in the opposite direction toward Tarshish. Our Heavenly Father was patient but firm with Jonah. Remember, the will of our Father will

always be done. So Yehovah prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah whole. That would have been a big fish. And during that time in the great fish's belly, Jonah had a total change of heart.

Jonah 2:9-10 *But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.*

10) And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. (KJV)

For decades and decades, I think many of us (including me) have envisioned the great fish spitting Jonah out on dry land, and Jonah gets up, cleans all the debris and gunk off of him, looks up, and there is Nineveh. Nineveh is right there! Well, with our Heavenly Father, anything is possible, but without the Suez Canal, for a great fish to travel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Tigris River at Nineveh would mean that the fish journeyed across the Mediterranean Sea westward past the Rock of Gibraltar, into the Atlantic Ocean, then southward around the west coast of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope, then northward around the east coast of Africa, past the Arabian Peninsula, then northwestward through the Persian Gulf, and then up the Tigris River to Nineveh. From Google Earth, that is a journey of approximate 15,500 miles. To travel that distance in 72 hours would mean that the fish was swimming under water at 215 miles per hour. Again, anything is possible with our Heavenly Father, but our Heavenly Father does not reward our disobedience.

In Jonah 1:2, Yehovah told Jonah to go to Nineveh. Jonah was in the land of Israel. Again, to go to Nineveh from there meant that Jonah had to either walk or ride a camel or other animal to cover that approximate 600-mile journey. Let's notice what happens after the fish vomited Jonah on dry land.

Jonah 3:1 *And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2) Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.*

3) So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. (KJV)

Brethren, Yehovah's command in verse 2 of Chapter 3 contains the exact same words in Hebrew as in verse 2 of Chapter 1. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach concerning it." Nothing changed with Yehovah's will. Jonah was still to go. And I believe that the great fish vomited Jonah out in Israel on the east shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

The three days and three nights in the fish's belly was a Timeout. Nothing changed. The command was still the same. Yehovah's will was still the same. And I believe that Jonah still had to make that same journey to Nineveh. God the Father does not reward sin and rebellion. What most people have believed in the past is that if Jonah had obeyed Yehovah the first time, he would have had to walk 600 miles, but instead, he rebelled and was vomited out at Nineveh where he didn't have to expend the effort to make the long journey. I just do not believe that is what happened.

Again, as in the story of Jonah, God the Father works with His people, and when they disobey, He puts them in Timeout and then brings them back to the same place where they were before, but now with obedience, they can and do continue their journey.

The third example of a “Time out” in the Bible is:

3. The Apostle Peter

The Apostle Peter as a disciple during Jesus’ ministry was rambunctious, impetuous, and confident to the point of being almost arrogant. This characteristic led to his failure in quite a few events including walking on water. Peter actually walked on water, but then his lack of faith allowed him to become fearful of the wind and waves and he began to sink. Another example of Peter’s impetuosity but good intentions is found in Luke 22.

In Luke 22, Peter boldly announces to Jesus in front of the other disciples that he was ready to go to prison and to die for Jesus.

Luke 22:33 *And he [Peter] said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.*

34) *And he [Jesus] said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. (KJV)*

When that time came just a little later that night, Peter’s actions were quite different than what he had boldly claimed.

Matthew 26:57-59 *And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.*

58) *But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest’s palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.*

59) *Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; (KJV)*

It’s important to remember who was at Jesus’ trial who were condemning Jesus and sentencing Him to death. They were Caiaphas the high priest, the scribes and the elders.

Let’s see what happens with Peter as we continue in verse 69.

Matthew 26:69-75 *Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.*

70) *But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.*

71) *And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.*

72) *And again, he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.*

73) *And after a while came unto him, they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely, thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee.*

74) *Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. 75) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly. (KJV)*

Instead of living up to his bold claim, Peter denied Jesus three times, and in the last denial, he even cursed and swore. Peter was devastated when he heard the cock crow.

However, God the Father was definitely not through with Peter. The Timeout into which God the Father put Peter was a personal internal timeout, in which Peter was emotionally devastated by his own actions. He was cut to the heart.

However, after Pentecost, a little over 50 days later and being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter preached boldly about Jesus in Acts 4.

Acts 4:13 *And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,*

2) *Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

3) *And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.*

4) *Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.*

5) *And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,*

6) *And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.*

7) *And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, by what power, or by what name, have ye done this?*

8) *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,*

9) *If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;*

10) *Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.*

11) *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.*

12) *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

13) *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. (KJV)*

Notice to whom Peter was preaching. God the Father brought Peter full circle to where he boldly preached to the very same people that condemned Jesus to death just weeks

before for preaching the same thing! This time Peter did not deny Jesus. He boldly preached that Jesus was the Christ, the Anointed One. He preached without fear.

Again, God the Father brought Peter back to the same place in front of the same people in order to continue have the Father's will be done.

Brethren, has that ever happened to us? Have we ever been scared of a new opportunity or requirement needed in order to worship our Heavenly Father? Have we ever disobeyed and run from our Father, only to realize our error and to repent, and then finding that we are placed right back where we had been?

The last example today of a "Timeout" in the Bible is:

4. The Great Timeout

What I call the Great Timeout is the history of God the Father's dealings with humanity and is part of His great Plan of Salvation.

Please turn with me to Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:7-8 *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

8) And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. (KJV)

So, the story of God the Father's dealings with mankind begins here in verses 7 and 8. Yehovah created man as a physical being from the dust of the ground and placed him in a garden paradise in Eden. This Garden in Eden was truly a paradise, full of beauty, full of harmony, full of life. It truly was a paradise on earth.

In Genesis 1, we will read a very familiar verse. God the Father put Adam in dominion over many things. What were those things?

Genesis 1:26 *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (KJV)*

What is one thing not listed here for man to have dominion over? Man was not intended to have dominion over man, over one another. God the Father was to have dominion over man.

But Adam and Eve sinned and rebelled against God the Father and disobeyed His command not to eat of the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. So, then what happened? Let's read on in Genesis 3:

Genesis 3:22-24 *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:*

23) Therefore, the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24) So, he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (KJV)

Because of Adam and Eve's rebellion and disobedience to Yehovah, He drove them out from the Garden of Eden and placed angels to prevent anyone from entering back into the Garden. This began The Great Timeout.

Although the earth is wonderfully beautiful in so many aspects, in so many ways, and in so many places, the earth today is nothing like the Garden of Eden.

The Great Timeout started the time of dominion of man over man. Man rejected God the Father's rule, so man instituted his own rule, man ruling and subjugating man. That has been the cruel history of mankind for nearly 6,000 years.

In Revelation 21 however, all that changes at the return of God the Father, Jesus Christ, the holy angels, and the saints to this earth. The reign of Jesus Christ is established on the earth for the purpose of ending the rebellion against God the Father. Mankind will be taught about the truth and way of happiness and the way of salvation, and worshipping God the Father and having a personal relationship with Him, as was originally intended.

Revelation 21:3-4 *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [ho theos – God the Father] is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God [ho theos – God the Father] himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

4) And God [ho theos – God the Father] shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (KJV)

God the Father and Jesus Christ along with the saints will teach mankind to live happy, successful, and fulfilling lives without all of the anguish, pain, and suffering endured in this present world.

The world will be healed and the whole earth will become again like the Garden of Eden.

Ezekiel 36:33-35 *Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded.*

34) And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.

35) *And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. (KJV)*

In Isaiah 35, we read a very well-known prophecy of life in the Millennium.

Isaiah 35:1-2, 5-6, 10 *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*

2) *It shall blossom abundantly,*

5) *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

6) *Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*

10) *And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (KJV)*

In Isaiah 51 we read another account of this transformation of the earth back to like the Garden of Eden.

Isaiah 51:3 *For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. (KJV)*

Brethren, once the Great Timeout has ended, and God the Father returns and starts the clock again, the world will be transformed back to the way it was before the fall of Adam and Eve. What an incredible story and what an incredible future for all mankind!

Brethren, we have discussed three examples of Timeouts in the Bible leading up to exploring the 6,000-year Great Timeout that mankind has been living in. But this will all change soon.

So, brethren, what have we learned?

1. God the Father returns His people back to the same point where they were when the Timeout began so that His people can continue their journey with Him from that same point. This was true with the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea; it was true with the prophet Jonah, and it was true with the history of mankind in man's dealing with God the Father. Maybe we rejected God the Father's calling earlier in our lives. He let us go do our thing and make our mistakes, and then He brought us back to the same place, and then said, "This time, walk with Me and follow My Way."

Have we ever felt that we suddenly are living in “déjà vu” where it’s like we have been here before? It may be that you have just ended a Timeout for not doing something that our Heavenly Father wants you to do.

2. God the Father does not reward sin and rebellion against Him. He does not make the path easier because we sinned and rebelled against Him. Jonah had to make the same journey that he would have had to make if he had obeyed God the Father in the first place.

Do we ever mess up and sin against our Heavenly Father and then ask that the road would not be so rough? Have we ever realized that the road may have been just as rough had we obeyed God the Father in the first place? Why would it be any easier, because we did sin against God the Father?

3. God the Father makes us face our fears by returning us to situations that we fear and feel woefully inadequate. God the Father returned the Apostle Peter to preach Jesus mightily in front of the very same people and leaders that had condemned Jesus to death less than two months earlier. But this time, Peter had the Father’s Spirit in him giving him courage and power to overcome his earlier fears.

Have we ever felt that we are having to face a fear that we have been dealing with in the past? Maybe a fear of losing your job in order to obey our Heavenly Father. Maybe a fear of losing friends in order to obey our Heavenly Father and to go His way and not the world’s way. Our Heavenly Father may put us back in the same place as before to face our worst fears, but this time, with us using His Spirit and trusting Him that He will protect us and save us.

Brethren, our Heavenly Father has used this 6,000-year Great Timeout to be the incubator world from which He would call out His firstfruits. Although He is not working with all of humanity at this time, except for the saints whom He has called to Christ in this lifetime, the time is coming when “Time In” will be called by God the Father. When He will directly intervene in the affairs of mankind, where He and His Son will rule over their lives. They will bring salvation to all of mankind who will choose to obey Him and live under His rule, governance, and leadership.

What a glorious plan of salvation we have the honor of knowing about and understanding. A plan in which we have the honor and privilege and blessing to be actual direct participants and helpers and servers! And a big important part of that plan of salvation is The Great Timeout!