

A view from the Rectory Window September 2026

I will begin my article for September by referring to the two words the ancient Greeks used for time:

1. Chronos = sequential, quantitative time
2. Kairos = fluctuating, qualitative time

So that I can reflect on them in a theological sense, and in the context of our recent historic weather conditions.

We live in a society and culture whose rhythm has been set very much in the sequence of the pattern of the four clearly defined seasons of winter, spring, summer, and autumn. However, as we endure a prolonged period of drought and minimal rain fall, with the anticipation (hope) of prolonged and substantial rain to come it feels very much like a shift to an African/Mediterranean climate pattern. A pattern of long dry and hot summers and wet winters that I experienced during my two years in Zimbabwe (1994-1996). The first year of which was a time of national drought when the normal season of heavy rainfall did not materialise.

How does our changing weather pattern relate to the Greek concept of time?

Perhaps, it is a matter of how we may need to measure the time of the season, and therefore the time of year, by not using the word Chronos in a sequential quantitative way (that is less rain in summer and more rain in winter). But measure the time of the year and season by using the word Kairos, in a qualitative, fluctuating way i.e., when it rains it pours and when it is hot it is dry and parched.

Where is the theological context of this distinction between Chronos and Kairos in the bible?

In the New Testament, time is understood both as chronological progression (chronos) and as decisive, God-filled moments (kairos), reflecting a linear historical framework infused with theological significance.

The Greek term **χρόνος (chronos)** refers to ordinary, sequential time or the span of time. This reflects the Jewish understanding of time as moving forward, where God's actions are discernible throughout history, from creation to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Chronos thereby provides a framework for understanding the historical and sequential aspects of God's plan.

The Greek term **καιρός (kairos)** carries a more theological meaning, often translated as "the proper time" or "a decisive moment." Kairos emphasizes moments that demand human response and reflect God's intervention in history. For instance, Jesus' ministry is described in terms of kairos, where each event fulfils God's plan and calls for decision and commitment (Ac 1:7, 1 Th 5:1).

Hence, as we wait in hope, anticipation, and a degree of anxiety for the rain to come. Let us find comfort in holding onto the Chronos sense of time, and discern the underlying sequence of nature from death to new life and resurrection. And the Kairos sense of time in the eternal now, as we recognise that without the God given 'water of life' we shall perish and wither in the heat of the mid-day sun.

Rev. Richard