

For Everything There Is A Season

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#5 in Series "Now Is The Time"

Eccl. 3:1-10

Ec 3:1 To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

We can speak of God's sovereignty, and we would not be too far astray to mention it here on these verses. But the sovereignty of God and the providence of God work hand in hand, and here we see the providence of God in action. The sovereignty of God is his high position as controller of the universe and all things pertaining to his purpose in his mind and planning. The providence of God is the actual execution of the things that bring about his purpose in time. That is what Solomon is dealing with here in Eccl. 3:1-10.

Let us not stretch this doctrine so far that it stretches beyond its meaning in scripture. God does not choose which hat you will wear today or whether you will or will not wear a hat today. He may decide to hinder your wearing a hat today to accomplish a divine purpose, but you have the choice as to what hat you will wear.

God has a divine purpose, and it is indelible at his throne, and it is unfrustrable in earth and in time. Again we may read Da 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth [are] reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and [among] the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

To each of these providential events, God has a season for it. The Hebrew word for season is ZE-MAN and means "an appointed time." Yes, God has appointed a time for every individual event that will come to pass to carry out his eternal plan. Notice that the time for Jesus' birth is expressed in Ga 4:4 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

He also has a time for it. This word for time is ETH in the Hebrew and points specifically to the time when God's plan is executed, that specific hour on the clock or day on the calendar when the event is executed.

God's plan has been planned and conceived in Heaven, but it is executed in earth. God has given his attention primarily to the earth for the execution of his purpose as it relates to humans. It is an amazing thing to note that God even looks our way after what we as his creatures have done toward him: we have sinned and denied his righteousness and rejected his Gospel. But God has had mercy and grace toward us and given us eternal life through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Ec 3:2 A time to be born, and a time to die;

God knows all things, and he knew when you would be conceived in your mother's womb and when you would enter this world to see it with your own eyes. He knew who your mother and father would be, and he knew all your relatives. In fact, he planned all of that. You did not decide in which family you would be born. It was decided, not by chance but by appointment. I do not doubt that your conception and birth were planned from timeless eternity past.

But along with that great blessing of the mother and father of a new baby, the excitement of seeing that blessed one for the first time, the thrill of holding that little one and talking baby talk to him comes the stark reality that one day that beautiful little boy or girl will meet that feared and hated visitor called death, that ending of physical life that is appointed unto every man, woman, boy and girl on this planet. See Heb.9:27.

No one is really ready with mind, spirit, heart and body to die. Sometimes we will hiss at the darkness of death in hatred or despair or helplessness. Remember what Job said during his great trial: Job 3:3 *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night [in which] it was said, There is a man child conceived.*

Here is the way some people view death ...

I load the gun with a single bullet
Lay it down next to me
Write down my good byes, sweet and short
Put on my favorite cloths
Play my favorite CD
Get all my favorite things out look at them one last time
Write out all my secrets
Confess everything
Squeeze my stuffed animals as I grab the gun with my right hand
I whisper out Good bye
Place the gun in my mouth
Pull the trigger
No more problems
I die alone
No one finding me for days
Realizing who I really am
They'd stop and think
For the rest of their life they'd have to think about what they did
Never being able to say sorry
They'd finally know how I felt
They always think twice before saying anything to anyone

They'd finally know¹

That is a pathetic way to die! What an attitude, so arrogant and self-centered: to die so other people may know how you feel. There is not one mention of where this person was going after he dies. What about those two places the Bible speaks of, the Heaven and Hell of the scriptures? Don't people realize how important it is to know about these things? A secular mind gives people the option of the author of this poem. It gives them no other options. But God gives Heaven to as many as will come to Jesus Christ, repent or turn from their sins and rest in faith upon Jesus' death, burial and resurrection for eternal life.

Remember, you come into this world at a time you cannot determine, and you will leave this world the same way. You came into the world with nothing to your own credit, and you will leave this world the same way. The only equity that can be added to you is the salvation of your soul by the grace of God, and that, my friends, you will take with you to Heaven.

To the believer Paul says in 1Co 15:55 *O death, where [is] thy sting? O grave, where [is] thy victory?* There is victory over death, and that is in Jesus Christ.

2 ...a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

If you are a farmer, just get your hands on a Farmer's Almanac for the year, and it will tell you when to plant potatoes, tomatoes, corn, flowers, and all kinds of things. The sun, the moon and the stars are given for seasons. Ge 1:14 *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

If you plant at the right time, you must water and cultivate the garden; then you can harvest it. But you must not harvest it too soon. If you do, you will have green apples, green tomatoes (which aren't really too bad), small, watery corn, hard squash, etc. But if you pick them at the "peek of perfection," as they say, you will have a good harvest.

Now, God has given a specific time of growth to every kind of plant, and we must know something about that. We can plant, and we can water, but God must bring the increase. This is true, not only with gardens, but with placing kings in power, tumbling empires, etc. It also has to do with the ministry, as Paul tells us in 1Co 3:6 *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.* Some used to say on the TV, "We will sell no wine before it's time."

¹<http://www.4degreez.com/poetry/11668/1021180186.html> (lil pink elephant)

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal;

When is it time to kill? We know the Bible says, “Thou shalt not kill,” but the word in that Commandment is a completely different Hebrew word used than is used in our text verse. In the Commandment, it means premeditated murder. In this verse it just simply means to kill or destroy.

When someone is trying to kill you or your family, that is the time to kill. We call that self-defense.

When someone commits a crime worthy of death, that is the time to kill. This is not premeditated murder; it is killing or destroying the criminal who may eventually be put back on the street and kill or hurt someone else.

When a nation comes against our own nation to bring it harm or to destroy it, that is the time to kill. This is not premeditated murder. This is war! Every nation has war. It is part of survival. America has seen the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, WWI, WWII, The Korean War, Vietnam War, and now the war in Iraq. This is a time to kill. We cannot walk away from this. It is God’s design for our physical lives in the realm of time.

But, by the same token, there is a time to heal. This is the opposite of killing. When we take war prisoners, that is a time to heal. We must take care of them and see that their wounds are cared for. We must treat them as human beings; howbeit sometimes soldiers will interrogate the prisoner to find out vital information. When the information is given, they do not kill the prisoner but feed him and keep him warm, bringing him back to good health.

When people have had tragedy whether through the weather, war, accident, or some other calamity, we must help them to heal. We as human beings must care one for the other.

When someone is hurt in the heart and soul by a fight they have had with a spouse or a friend, that is the time to heal. Sometimes just listening will do the job. There is a time to heal.

3 ...a time to break down, and a time to build up;

There are some things that need to be broken down into pieces. We sometimes must destroy buildings when they are either of no more use or when they are so old they are unsafe. Then there is a time to build (or as this word can denote, rebuild).

When a man gets on his high horse and thinks he is greater than anyone in the world, perhaps that is a time to break down his arrogance. It takes a very special kind of person to do this, or God can do it if he wants. But when he has been brought low,

we must build him up. Heb 3:13 *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

We can also break down false doctrine as we preach truth in our churches and witness of the truth of Jesus Christ. Now in this we can break down by building up. We do not have to burn church buildings or censor TV or radio programs or books, etc. in order to break down false doctrine. All we have to do is preach the truth and witness it to people.

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh

I do not like to weep. It makes me tired and feeling sick. But sometimes we must weep. When I was a young man, I wept for sinners to be saved. I wept when someone lost a loved-one. I wept when I was sorrowful for other reasons. I certainly wept when my dear wife died there in Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati and at her visitation and funeral. I have lost several of the best friends of my entire life, and I wept then. I wept when my father died in 1970 and when my mother died in 1997. These are times to weep. God brings these times to us, because we need to weep sometimes. Weeping is a gift from God. It is a part of our makeup.

The Old Testament Jews had a set time for mourning. Sometimes it would be three days, sometimes seven days, sometimes longer. They would weep and howl and fall to the ground from their mournful spirit. When deaths happen in our country, after the interment we usually have a meal together and refresh one another with no weeping but many times with laughing, rehearsing memories and thoughts of the deceased friend.

When your children are lost in sin, it is a time to weep; when they are saved it is a time to laugh or rejoice. When your church is having problems, that is a time to weep; when they are healed, that is a time to laugh. This is all of God in his providence.

4 ... a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

Mourning is a state of sadness of life when things are not going well for you. Perhaps you have money problems. Perhaps death is gazing at you or your family. Perhaps some catastrophe has come upon you. This is a time to mourn. Perhaps the Lord is dealing with you in your unfaithfulness to him. This is truly a time to mourn.

But if you will have faith in God and depend upon him, you can have joy in your life, illustrated here by dancing. This is not dancing to a waltz beat or a rock beat.

This is dancing for joy for the victory the Lord has given you through your heartaches.

Sometimes for God's people he turns mourning into dancing: Ps 30:11 *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;*

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together

Physically this speaks of throwing stones away, probably from areas where they are not wanted such as a garden or an area where something will be built. We may then take those same stones, gather them together, and build a building from them such as Mary Fryer's in-laws did there in Pendleton County, Kentucky, when the Fryer House was built in 1812.

Spiritually, the casting away of stones may have an allusion to God's casting away of those who have not and will not trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, such as we read in Re 20:10 *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.* The gathering of the stones together would be his gathering of his own people unto himself that he might bring us unto himself in Heaven one day and give us the glories of his inheritance and the beautiful earth that he will make new.

5. ... a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

There is a time to embrace your spouse. I could say that anyone who has not embraced his or her spouse today, do it now; but we do not want that kind of mush in our church right now. But I may say that many times husbands and wives do not embrace enough. I have thought many times of the times I should have embraced my wife and did not, of the times when I should have embraced my children instead of scolding them, but I did not. Embrace those little children while you can. We don't have enough of that in our society today. God embraces us with his grace, his mercy, his longsuffering, his promises and his blessed hope.

But there is a time to refrain from embracing. When there is strife or trouble in a family, embracing sometimes can mean something negative or pretended. When your children are unruly, this is not the time to embrace but to correct them. God sometimes refrains from embracing us with his greatness and blessings. Sometimes we are so sinful in our lives that he will simply allow us as his children to go a while without embracing us so that we can know the unpleasantness of being without his embrace.

6 A time to get, and a time to lose

Some might say this is a good mantra for the gambler; but I doubt if that is what the Lord has in mind for us in this verse.

The word “get” here is the word for seek. As we look for advancement of gain, sometimes we gain; sometimes we lose.

Sometimes people want to gain the wealth and prestige of the whole world, but the Lord said in Mr 8:36 *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

6 ... a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

Someone says this is a good motto for the housekeeper. Sometimes we go through our closets and try to decide what to keep and what to throw away. I have done this a number of times, and it amazes me; because I have a lot of garbage to throw away, but my closet is just as packed when I finish as it was when I started.

There is a time to keep your riches, to save for a rainy day or for a contingency, but sometimes we hold too close to our money and do not let it go. There may be someone who may need a little help in your own family. There may be a church which is struggling and needs a little of that money. There may be a missionary work that needs money to build a church building or a school building or to print Bibles. Don't stay too close to your money that you cannot hand a little of it out once in a while to help others.

It is not money that is the root of all evil; it is the LOVE of money that is the root of all evil. It will make your heart evil and black with sin. It will cause you to be proud and arrogant. Or it can make you happy by giving it to others.

I might also say that there is a time to keep our children at home and protect them and teach them, but there is also a time to let them go, allowing them to live their own lives. Then if they want our advice, they can ask.

There is a time to keep church members on an active roll, and there is a time when we must discipline them so they will know not to sin.

7 A time to rend, and a time to sew

The Jews rent their garments as in Isa 37:1 *And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard [it], that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.*

But Joel tells them in Joe 2:13 *And rend your heart, and not your garments, and*

turn unto the LORD your God: for he [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

When the Jew rent his clothing for repentance, then he might sew it back together to use after his repentance was fulfilled.

When we rend our hearts and turn unto the Lord, he is gracious and merciful, and he will turn away from any evil that we might receive at his hand.

7 ... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

When Job's friends came to visit him, they were so taken aback by his condition that they sat silent for seven days. This is a good time to be silent. Sometimes in the hospital when I am sitting beside a sick member, I just sit there, sometimes for an hour or two. This is not the time to talk unless the patient wants to talk.

After Job's three friends had spoken several speeches to him, the young Elihu came forth and confessed that he had waited until they all were finished speaking because of their age and his youth. Now, he says, it is time for me to speak. Then he speaks with great flair about his opinion about Job's condition. I am not sure that this was the proper time to speak, but at least Elihu thought it was.

When the churches of the Lord are starving to death for the truths of God's word, it is time to speak. When no one else will preach on the fundamental teachings of scripture, it is time to speak. Sometimes when the secular world are trying to shut our mouths and censor our words, that is a time to speak perhaps more than any other time. When laws are passed that we can no longer preach the word of God without imprisonment or death, I hesitate to say it; but it is the time to speak.

I hate to bring this up, because it seems to be such a sensitive issue today, but the Bible tells us that in the church the women are to keep silent. I did not write that; God did. We try to practice that here at this church, and not because we have anything against women. We just want to do what God says. 1Co 14:34 *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but [they are commanded] to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

But some of the women in the Bible spoke and taught the word of God. They did this with the women together and not with men present. This is allowed. They can also teach the younger children. Enough said on that.

8 A time to love, and a time to hate

When we were lost and dead in our sins and trespasses, that was the time to love

the world, to love sinner, to love the evil recreations, the alcohol, the adultery, the riotous living that youth almost demands in these fleshly bodies.

But when we were saved, we began to hate that which we once loved and to love that which we once hated. Our nature is completely changed, called by Peter “the divine nature” now that we are born again.

We can love one another as believers and our neighbor as ourselves, but we must hate their sin and their deeds of wickedness. A time to love, and a time to hate.

8 ... **a time of war, and a time of peace.**

There is a time for physical, national war. This has been the case ever since the earth was created practically. There was a war in heaven, and 1/3 of the angels were cast out. There was war in the Garden of Eden, and Satan cast man’s soul as it were into hell. There were wars in the Jewish nation written in the Old Testament. There was a war on the cross when Jesus defeated Satan and paid for our sins. There is a great war coming called the Battle of Armageddon, which God will fight for us, and we will win.

But there is a time of peace. Sometimes it comes for short periods of time on the earth in certain nations. Our time of peace in America may soon be over. We pray not. There is peace in the heart of every believer when he trusts Jesus Christ, so much so that it is called a peace that passes all understanding. There is a peace that is promised us as believers in that 1000-year of Jesus Christ on the earth and then throughout all eternity.

Now people are saying “Peace, peace,” but there is no peace. Men’s hearts are troubled politically and socially. We wonder what tomorrow will bring. We do not have a great war here on our land, but our men are dying in other parts of the world. That is not a time of peace. If we cannot have peace in the world, at least we can have peace in our hearts through faith in Jesus Christ.

9 **What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? 10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.**

Solomon said before in Ec 1:3 *What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*

We have so many ups and downs in our lives, once we get one thing accomplished, then another takes that accomplishment away. We spend our youth making money to

save for old age; then we spend our old age spending that money to get our youth back. It is a vicious circle.

How can a man profit like that? He is here for such a short time, and he cannot enjoy all the equity he has built up during his lifetime. He will leave it all to another generation to do with it what they want.

Solomon has tried it all, and he has seen the travail of this temporal life that God has given to man “to be exercised in it.” What a sad life when it is ended without any equity, without any benefit, without a saved soul.

Your soul is the only thing that can be saved in this life. Do not strive to gain much of this world’s goods, because it will vanish away. Jesus said in Lu 13:24 *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

In closing I would like to read again Mr 8:36 *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

What profit? What profit? There is no profit without Jesus Christ. The soul will be lost and doomed without Jesus Christ. The inheritance will be void without Jesus Christ. Heaven will be empty without Jesus Christ. But, thank God, he has saved some of us, and he will save anyone who will today repent and turn to Jesus Christ and believe in him, his death, burial and resurrection for payment of sins.