

Solomon's Seasons

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

- A. We live in a world where change is inevitable.
 - 1. Weather, economy, fashion, technology, international conflicts and agreements, moral values, etc.
 - 2. Changes will occur, often in spite of us instead of because of us.
 - 3. Human conditions differ from 20 years ago and will be vastly different in 20 years from now.
 - 4. It is a world of ups and downs, who is in and who is out, what is accepted and what is not.
 - 5. Yet it is the same storyline, just with different actors and scenery.
 - 6. Ecc. 1:9-11 - The more things change, the more they remain the same.
- B. The history of humankind is like the tide of the ocean.
 - 1. Ebbing and flowing from one extreme to another, as a pendulum swings to and fro in its circuit.
 - 2. That's the reason why the Bible is the perfect book for all times, including our own; it fits all extremes of human behavior and reasoning, in all cultures, times, and locations.
- C. How do we face these changing seasons?
 - 1. Ecc. 2:24 - When in prosperity, enjoy it without forgetting God.
 - a. Phil. 4:11-12
 - 2. When in adversity, be patient, because everything changes.
 - 3. In all things, live in trust and reverence for God, neither lifted too high with hope or joy, nor cast down too low with fear or sorrow.

I. TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON

- A. The events, actions, and emotions that are common to the human experience are certain to come to all of us; God has given them time, place, and purpose.
 - 1. God knows what is best for humankind to grow and excel.
 - 2. The test of our faith in this troubling season is: do we trust Him?
 - 3. Matt. 6:25-33; Rom. 8:28-31
- B. The inevitability of the changing of seasons is absolute.
 - 1. In the list of opposites, though some seem evil, in their proper place both are needed and good, bringing growth and complement each other
 - 2. The point is not which one is evil or good, but that they will all happen in their time and bring about good.
- C. Things that seem contrary to one another take turns in this life
 - 1. Day to night, and night to day again.
 - 2. Summer to fall, fall to winter, winter to spring, and spring to summer once again.
- D. Earthly pursuits are lawful in their proper time and order, but are unprofitable when out of their time and place, or when pursued as the only chief good.
 - 1. God makes everything beautiful in its season, which humankind only dimly comprehends.
 - 2. God allows us to enjoy His earthly blessings beneficially in moderation.
- E. We have appointed cycles of seasons and limits, as the sun, wind, and water.

1. As God has fixed a time, place, and purpose for everything, so there is a lawful time, place, purpose for us to carry out His will and plans.
2. God does not condemn, but approves of, the use of earthly blessings; it is the abuse of blessings that He condemns, the making them the chief purpose of our lives under the sun.
3. The earth, without human desires, loves, tastes, joys, and sorrows, would be a dreary, monochromatic place, like a land without water
4. But on the other hand, the misplacing and excessive pursuit of these things, like a flood of water, needs control.
5. Reason and revelation are given to us to control our use of them.

II. THE PROBLEM, PURPOSE, AND PLAN

- A. Read: Ecc. 3:1-8
- B. Ecc. 3:9 - If all of these things are certain to come to pass, then what is the point in working for the best seasons?
- C. Ecc. 3:10 - God allows the good and bad to come that we might be exercised, tested, and grow to our full potential.
 1. It is through hardship that our strength is developed.
 2. In Acts, every time the early church was in tribulation, it grew.
- D. Ecc. 3:11 - The spiritual fact that we must accept and trust is that everything is beautiful in its place, and that only God is wise enough to judge its best place.

III. HELP IN HANDLING THE CHANGING SEASONS

- A. Know that God is in control and the He knows what is going on.
 1. Sin is the greatest source of suffering in this world, and we choose whether to commit sin or abstain from it.
- B. Find Christian joy and contentment in whatever season we find ourselves in.
 1. Luke 21:12-19; Phil. 4:11-13
- C. Look for the good in every situation.
 1. What can we learn from this?
 2. How can we do better in the future?
 3. How can we help others with our experiences?
 4. How has this experience made us stronger?
- D. Know that God allows good and evil to fall on the good and evil alike.
 1. God has not promised a trouble-free life, but He has assured the faithful that He will preserve them through the bad seasons.
 2. Matt. 5:45; Rom. 8:38-39
- E. Know that though this life changes, God and His promises do not.
 1. Mal. 3:6 - "For I Jehovah, change not." - Heb. 6:17-19, 13:8

Conclusion:

- A. What happens to us when the seasons of life come and go?
 1. Drift aimlessly: ecstatic in good times; in despair in hard times?
 2. Or, are we fastened to the foundation rock of God, facing both good times and bad with determination to remain faithful?
- B. We cannot control all of the events in our lives, but we can control the impact those events have upon us, if we trust in God's help and follow His word.