

When you become a Christian you come face to face with the Father's Providential care over your life and learn that whatever you walk through, you are in....

## "APPOINTED TIMES"

### LEARNING TO DISCERN THE SEASONS OF OUR SOUL

**Jeremiah 8:7 (NKJV)** <sup>7</sup>*Even the stork in the heavens Knows her **appointed times**; And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow Observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.*

(NIV) <sup>7</sup>*Even the stork in the sky knows her **appointed seasons**, and the dove, the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration. But my people do not know the requirements of the LORD.*

#### INTRODUCTION:

- A. **Even the Animals know the times of "Appointed seasons" in their lives.**
- Job 12:7-8
  - God has put within them the need to migrate.
  - Their life and survival depends on yielding to these inner intuitions.
  - God has given them a "built in" warning system to prepare for seasons ahead.
- B. **There are God-Appointed seasons in our lives...**

- *Eg.* Tests/trials; favour/blessing; discipline/correction; labour/service; rest/refreshing.
- We need to discern these seasons and co-operate with God's work in our soul.

- C. **Everything passes through the hands of God before reaching us.**
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- D. **We know how to discern the face of natural seasons. Do we know the spiritual seasons as well?**
- Luke 12:54-56

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*God Providently appoints seasons in our spiritual life where we are being guided into discovering new aspects of Christ...*

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## 1. THERE ARE APPOINTED SEASONS FOR THINGS NEEDED IN YOUR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.

*"Even the stork in the heavens Knows her appointed times..."*

- A. Eccl 3:1-8. **"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven..."**

- One of the constancies of life is change. Everything changes.
- Life requires changes for things to continue to grow, develop, expand, bear fruit.
- **"Time"** = now, this moment of time
- **"Season"** = an appointed occasion
- **"Activity"** = purpose, (Heb) pressure of desire, to bend, the pleasure and desire of a valuable thing
- **GOD DIVINELY PUTS THE PRESSURE OF CHANGE ON US BECAUSE OF HIS DESIRE FOR SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO BE DEVELOPED IN US!**

**B. Jesus went to "The Olive Press" (Gethsemane) to be bent to the divine pressure and pleasure of God to release life.**

- Mark 14:32 - ***"Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."***
- The purpose of the pressure is to get at the valuable oil locked within.
- **PRAYER IN THE OLIVE PRESS IS LIKE SUPERMAN'S PHONE BOOTH WHERE WE TRANSFORM FROM ORDINARY INTO EXTRA-ORDINARY!**

**C. Places where you have been "long enough"**

- Deut 1:6-8 ***"The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. <sup>7</sup>Break camp and advance into....'"***
- Maintaining a place God has called you beyond is spiritually stagnating.

- God's life in our spirit wants to press into the soul and transform our personhood. The "PRESSURE" of this causes outer seasons to change in our life.

**D. Your spirit calls forth outward circumstances to match our spirit's desire to press into your soul and transform it.**

- God's life in our spirit wants to press into the soul and transform our personhood. The "PRESSURE" of this causes outer seasons to change in our life.
- Proverbs 16:9 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup> ***A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.***

**E. God Put an Inner Compass inside you to direct your "spiritual migrations".**

- Migratory birds fly to new "feeding grounds" to prepare for feeding, nesting, raising their young, to escape the cold winters, etc.
- Luke 4:1
- **John 16:12 - 15 (NKJV) <sup>12</sup>*"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>14</sup>He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup>All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He <sup>£</sup>will take of Mine and declare it to you.***

**F. We need to feed in the various spiritual pastures of Christ so our spiritual formation is well rounded and balanced.**

- Psalms 23:1-3 <sup>1</sup>***The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. <sup>3</sup>He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.***
- "pastures", "waters", "paths"... There are many places and seasons of learning, testing, receiving, seeking, fighting, resting, praying, serving, being served, etc.

**G. God appointed "seasons" or "feasts" in the Life of Israel to keep their worship and faith fresh.**

- Ex 23:10-12 – Sabbath year/day
- 23:14-19 – Three annual feasts a year
- Lev. 23:4 – Feasts: Passover, firstfruits, Pentecost, trumpets, day of atonement, tabernacles
- Lev 25:8 - year of Jubilee (*49<sup>th</sup> year*)
- All of these were appointed times for Israel's blessing, favour from God – kept their hearts "right with God.
- The offerings got their hearts right; the feasts kept their hearts right.
- How seriously did God take the appointed seasons? (***Jer. 25:11*** – *70 years captivity after 490 years of not keeping sabbatical year*)

**H. God has Appointed seasons for your development. (*Remember you are in training for a kingdom!*)**

- Earthly life is an apprenticeship for the 1000 year millennium. Your time here will be set in seasons of spiritual training.
- There are "set times" for things:

- **Psalms 102:13 (NKJV)** <sup>13</sup>***You will arise and have mercy on Zion; For the time to favor her, Yes, the set time, has come.***
- Note: everyone within the area of appointment (i.e. Zion) is affected

**I. Our Main concern in an Appointed time: Giving God His "requirement".**

- **Psalms 40:6 (NKJV)** <sup>6</sup> Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You **did not require.**
- **Ezekiel 20:40 (NKJV)** <sup>40</sup>For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there **I will require** your offerings and the firstfruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things.
- **Micah 6:8 (NKJV)** <sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And **what does the LORD require of you** But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?
- Examples: Joseph in prison; Daniel in Babylon; Jesus submitted to his parents.

**J. Stay CLOSE to Christ, SENSITIVE to the Spirit, and OBEDIENT to the Father in your Appointed seasons.**

## 2. OBSERVE YOUR "TIMES OF COMING" TO THE LORD.

*"And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow Observe the time of their coming."*

- A. **The migratory birds are led to feast and rest in New Grounds.**
  - These new grounds are places of feeding.
- B. **Israel was led into the Good Land (*type of Christ*) to enjoy its riches.**
  - This was a "migration" throughout the good land to see its vast riches.
  - New testament ministry: Eph 3:8
- C. **We are led by the Spirit into all that Christ is to us (*John 16:12-15*).**
- D. **Prayer is about "*seasons of coming*" to the Lord with current situations and their affects in our life.**
  - Phil 4:6 – "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God....*"
- E. **Build your altar to God and get your spiritual "land marks" in place in seasons of change.**
  - Gen 12:8 – Jacob builds an altar in a time of change in his life as a marker to get his bearings: God first!

## 3. UNDER THE NEW COVENANT, CHRIST IS YOUR FINAL APPOINTED PLACE.

*1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV) <sup>9</sup>For God did not **appoint** us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

- A. **Under the New Covenant all outward appointments are within the inner appointment to be in Christ and obtain His salvation.**
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV) *<sup>9</sup>For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"*
  - Our ordained place in God's mind, will and heart is IN CHRIST ALONE.
  - All outward appointments – trials, discipline, warfare, seeking, etc. – are to turn us into the inner appointment with Christ.
  - 1 Thessalonians 3:3 (NKJV) *<sup>3</sup>that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are **appointed** to this."* (yet this too is in Christ)
  - **EVERYTHING GOD APPOINTS FOR US IS TO OBTAIN SALVATION IN CHRIST!**
- B. **We are in the Appointed season of the Gospel (*The Good News of Christ!*)**
  - **Titus 1:3 (NKJV)** *<sup>3</sup>but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;*
  - This is the time of appointed favour: Luke 4:18-19.

- Prophecies of judgment may be directed to the world, but not the church. The church is in the favour of Christ.

**C. Your Appointed place is always your position in Christ.** *All seasons of the spirit are to take you there for receiving more of Him.*

- 1 Cor 1:9 – called into a fellowship – a participation in Christ and all He is!
- **Acts 3:19 - 20 (NKJV)** <sup>19</sup>**Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,** <sup>20</sup>**and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things...**

**D. Christ is Appointed to you as everything you need.**

- Our savior, Head, High Priest, Advocate, etc.

**E. God's Love has appointed you to live THROUGH Him.**

- 1 John 4:9 – *"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him."*
- Appointed to worship Him (*Heb 1:6*)
- To serve Him (*Jn 12:26*)
- Obey Him (*Jn 14:23*)
- Live in Him (*Jn 15:5*)
- Be Devoted to Him (*1 Cor 7:35*)

**F. Take up the yoke of the Lord in your appointed times.**

- *"Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me..."*
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## 4. DISCERN YOUR "APPOINTED SEASONS" AND OBEY THE DIRECTION OF THE SPIRIT.

Rev 3:10 *"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, **that you may be tested, and for ten days** you will have tribulation. **Be faithful** unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."*

**A. All appointed seasons are measured by God and there is great reward for being Faithful to God's purposes.**

- 1 cor 10:13 – *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."*
- Eg. Joseph in Egypt
- Phil 1:13 – Paul in prison

**B. Everything touching you must first pass through the permissive hands of God.**

- See quote below from "Christians secret of a Happy life"

**C. God will give you the grace for each appointed season of your life.**

- James 4:6 – God gives grace to the humble.

**D. There is Wisdom available to you upon request – avail yourself of it.**

- James 1:5-8
- Matt 7:7-11

**E. At times you will be shown "things to come" so you can prepare.**

- John 16:13 – "will show you things to come..."

**CONCLUSION**

PSALMS 75:2 (NIV) <sup>2</sup>*YOU SAY, "I CHOOSE THE APPOINTED TIME; IT IS I WHO JUDGE UPRIGHTLY.*

**Christ in my eyes**

*DO I see everything that comes into my life as first passing through the loving hands of the Lord for my good?*

**Christ in my heart**

*What season of my life have I blamed the Lord for rather than seeing it as a gift for a higher purpose?*

**Christ in my hands**

*What appointed season is in my life right now that I need to have a better response to?*

**Christ in my feet**

*What "spiritual migration" is the Lord drawing me to that I am resisting or ignoring?*

Christians Secret of a happy life, Hanna Whittal smith

She thought she was in a perfectly dark place, and that there advanced towards her from a distance a body of light, which gradually surrounded and enveloped her and everything around her. As it approached, a voice seemed to say, "This is the presence of God; this is the presence of God." While surrounded with this presence, all the great and awful things in life seemed to pass before her, -- fighting armies, wicked men, raging beasts, storms and pestilences, sin and suffering of every kind.

She shrank back at first in terror, but she soon saw that the presence of God so surrounded and enveloped each one of these, that not a lion could reach out its paw, nor a bullet fly through the air, except as His presence moved out of the way to permit it. And she saw that, let there be ever so thin a sheet, as it were, of this glorious presence between herself and the most terrible violence, not a hair of her head could be ruffled, nor anything touch her, unless the presence divided to let the evil through. Then all the small and annoying things of life passed before her, and equally she saw that these all were so enveloped in this presence of God that not a cross look, not a harsh word, nor petty trial of any kind, could reach her unless His presence moved out of the way to let them through.

Her difficulty vanished. Her question was answered forever. God was in everything; and to her henceforth there were no second causes. She saw that her life came to her day by day and hour by hour directly from His hand, let the agencies which should seem to control it be what they might. And never again had she found any difficulty in an abiding consent to His will and an unwavering trust in His care.