

The Appointed Times I Set Times

Michael Heiss—October 17, 2016

What I have in part comes from the books: *The Appointed Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Fred R. Coulter, and Alfred Edersheim's famous work *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. The emphasis is going to be on appointed times. God is a Master Planner, a strategic thinker, and He has His master plan. He has a time and a place for everything.

Just before I get into that, I want to answer a question that came in, and I did my best to explain it to others, but I might not have given the full import. This is a preliminary to the main message. It has to do with two verses concerning the Sabbath. The person who asked the question thought that this was a contradictory statement. If all you do is take the first phrase in English you might get that impression. But we have to learn how God thinks and how God expresses Himself.

Isaiah 58:13: “**If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath**, *from* doing your own desires on My Holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy of the LORD, honorable; and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own desires, nor speaking *your own* words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it” (vs 13-14).

Look at v 13: “If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath...” To this person it seemed to be contradictory, because it's like saying *to turn away from the Sabbath; don't keep the Sabbath, just turn away from it*. But obviously that's not what it means, because it says, “...*from* doing your own desires...”

So, why would it read to ‘take your foot off the Sabbath, or stop trampling on the Sabbath’? You could translate it that way, but God words things in such a way that He expects us to understand what He means. That's why one of the rules of Bible study is to read the context, the verses before it and the verses succeeding it.

Turning your foot away from the Sabbath means *don't do your own desires on My Holy Days*. You should call the Sabbath a delight. This is what I call an *if/then* clause, meaning God says that *if you will do this, then I will do that*. It is not a command to keep the Sabbath, He did that elsewhere. This is also not a warning, ‘Don't you break My Sabbath.’ He said that in another place.

This is simply an *if/then* clause. He's simply

saying to people that ‘if you turn away from the Sabbath, from doing your own desires on the Sabbath,’ whatever those desires can be. If you're a baseball fan then don't be so interested in how the Cubs are doing against the Dodgers. Or don't be going off to Disneyland. Don't do your own pleasure. It is not a contradictory statement.

Think about *your own pleasure*. Shouldn't our pleasures really reflect God's pleasure? David said, ‘O how I love Thy Law, it is my meditation all the day.’ Here's David doing His pleasure by reading and studying. If that's David's pleasure, should David stop doing that? *No!* Because we're supposed to know that ‘*our pleasure*’ means *apart from God's pleasure, our human, carnal pleasures!* Stop that and do God's pleasure.

That's in essence what this verse is saying. It's not contradictory except that if you're not careful in the English, you might get tripped up in that first phrase. Hopefully we can all understand that, and if anybody has any questions, please let me know, I'd be delighted to talk to you about it.

God has an appointed time for just about everything. So, let's see how He put it in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 3:1: “To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what *is* planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace” (vs 1-8).

Verse 9: “What profit does he have who works in that in which he labors? I have seen the task, which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised by it. He has made everything beautiful in its time; He has also set eternity in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end” (vs 9-11).

What we see is that there is a time and place for everything, there is a time to be given

understanding.

Matthew 13:10: “And His disciples came to Him and asked, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ And He answered *and* said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has *understanding*, to him more shall be given, and he shall have an abundance, but whoever does not have *understanding*, even what he has shall be taken away from him. For this *reason* I speak to them in parables, because seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, ‘In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them’” (vs 10-15).

Clearly, God did not want them converted at that time. But He goes on:

Verse 16: “But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard” (vs 16-17).

So, the disciples got to hear. The disciples got to understand, but the people around them did not. And he said “...many prophets and righteous *men*...” of old. Let’s see one of those righteous men of old, certainly a very righteous man, the prophet Daniel.

Daniel 12:1: “And at that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands for the children of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even until that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered—every one who shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever. But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (vs 1-4).

Daniel is told to close the book because it was not for this time. People are not going to understand.

Verse 8—Daniel speaking: “And I heard,

but I did not understand. Then I said, ‘O my lord, what shall be the end of these things?’ And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white and refined. But the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (vs 8-10).

So, here was righteous man, a very righteous man beloved of God, and he was not given to understand. Why? *It wasn’t his time to know!* We’re all on a *need to know* basis! God will provide the knowledge we need at that time.

God now wants all to be saved, but we’re not all saved at this time.

2-Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not delaying the promise *of His coming*, as some in their own minds reckon delay; rather, He is longsuffering toward us, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Notice that Peter did not say when that would be, when all would come to repentance. But clearly God wants all saved, but not all at the same time.

Let’s see that God does not respect persons, *He loves all!* If you will remember the episode when God revealed Himself to Peter, that the Gentiles would be accepted. He was in a trance on top of the roof, the sheet is let down with all kinds of animals. God leads Peter to go to Cornelius. *Then:*

Acts 10:34: “Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him’” (vs 34-35).

This is a major factor; this is very important. If you understand the Jewish culture at that time, they had nothing to do with Gentiles. For Peter to go to a house of non Jew and acknowledge this person as his equal, that was a major fete; this was kind of revolutionary.

That why earlier God said, ‘Peter, what I cleanse don’t you call common.’ God does not respect persons, no matter how short or tall you are, how smart we think we are, how strong and virile we think we are, God doesn’t care about that. He will call us all.

Romans 2:11: “Because there is no respect of persons with God.”

Everything is a matter of timing. Let’s see where it says that there’s a time for Jesus to appear. Jesus appeared when God said it was time for Him to appear.

Galatians 4:4: “But when the time for the fulfillment came, God sent forth His own Son, born of a woman, born under law, in order that He might redeem those who are under law, so that we might receive the *gift of sonship from God*” (vs 4-5).

The first thing to realize is the *time of fulfillment*. Why God decided then, I don’t know. But He has His plan; He’s the Master strategic thinker. So, He said specifically when the time came in His mind, He sent Jesus. Jesus was sent for two main reasons:

1. to save us

Verse 5: “**In order that He might redeem those who are under law...**” So, He came to save us!

Romans 5:5: “And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us. For even when we were without strength, **at the appointed time** Christ died for *the ungodly*” (vs 5-6). Paul is confirming it again; “...at the appointed time...”

2. to build His Church

There is also a time for **the Kingdom to come**. Acts 1 begins with Jesus being with the disciples for 40 days after He was resurrected. He was there teaching them and instructing them.

Acts 1:4: “And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to ‘await the promise of the Father, which,’ *He said*, ‘you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the Holy Spirit* after not many days.’ So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?’”

‘You know, Lord, this would be a good time, You’ve just been resurrected and we’re here. Wouldn’t this be a great time to start the kingdom?’ What did Jesus say?

Verse 7: “And He said to them, ‘**It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority**; but you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...’” (vs 7-8).

Verse 9: “And after saying these things, *as* they were looking at *Him*, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Now, while they were gazing intently up into heaven as He was going up, two men in white apparel suddenly stood by them” (vs 9-10).

Suppose you were one of the disciples, and Jesus is walking with you out of Jerusalem and still explaining some things, and He’s kind of bidding you goodbye, but you don’t realize He’s bidding your goodbye. As they’re talking He suddenly arises up into the clouds. Your mouth would be opened! You would be stupefied! You wouldn’t know what was happening?

That’s what they were doing. They were “...gazing intently...” and these two angels said, v 11: “...‘You men of Galilee, why do you stand *here* looking up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, Who was taken up from you into heaven, shall come in exactly the same manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.’”

Of course, the angel omitted one tiny detail: in about 2,000 or 2,100 years you’ll see Him. They didn’t know that. The angel kept it from them. Why? *It wasn’t time!* Over and over again, there’s an appointed time for everything!

Now Jesus said Himself, in His day, that it wasn’t time. We’re looking at John 18 to emphasize the point. Jesus is before Pilate and they are having a little discourse back and forth:

John 18: “Pilate answered Him, ‘Am I a Jew? The chief priests and your own nation have delivered You up to me. What have You done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world.... [or age] ...If My kingdom were of this world... [age or time] ...then would My servants fight, so that I might not be delivered up to the Jews. However, My kingdom is not of this world.’” (vs 35-36)—this age or this time. Clearly, then was not the *appointed time*.

Let’s look at the concept of time, and we’re going to go to Genesis and we’re going to see the Hebrew word that’s used for *time or times*, and how it’s used.

Genesis 17:21: “But I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at **this set time** in the next year.” The Hebrew word for *time* is ‘muod’ and it means just that, *a set time*. Whenever God wants to do something, He talks about time and He uses the word ‘muod.’ It can also be translated other things, but it always implies a *set time*. The same thing is true in:

Genesis 18:14: “Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the **time appointed** I will return again, according to the time of life, and Sarah *shall have* a son.” Again, the same word: ‘muod.’

Genesis 21:2: “For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.”

Gen. 1 used to confuse me somewhat, because I first read it in the English in the *King James Bible*. Remember, ‘if the *King James* was good enough for Jesus and the apostles, it ought to be good enough for us.’ Well, let’s see:

Genesis 1:14: “And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for **appointed seasons**, and for days and years.’” In the *King James* it just says ‘seasons.’ That’s not a bad translation, but the word is ‘muod’ again. In other words, *set times*.

It doesn’t necessarily mean a season like the fall, winter, or the season of love, the season of war. No! It means *set time!* We’re going to see where that same word is used four times in two verses in the chapter in which God innumerates His Holy Days

Leviticus 23:1: “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, “*Concerning the appointed Feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be Holy convocations, even these are My appointed Feasts*”’” (vs 1-2). Both times *appointed* is ‘muod’ or muodim’ if it’s in the plural.

Verse 3: “Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest...”

I used to think: How is that a season? What do you mean? The Sabbath isn’t one of the annual Holy Days. God doesn’t make a distinction. He said, ‘Set times.’ Well, the Sabbath is a set time. It’s a *weekly* set time. What we call the Holy Days are *annual set times*. There’s a difference.

Verse 4: “These *are* the **appointed** Feasts... [‘muod’] ...of the LORD, Holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their **appointed**... [‘muod’] ...seasons.”

These are simply appointed times. It can mean appointed or set time, and it can include the Feasts, but the Hebrew word for specific Feast is ‘chg.’

How many of you think of the Day of Atonement as a Feast? I never did, and I realized that God didn’t call it a Feast. We have it translated, often times, *Feast*, but really these Holy Days are described by the word ‘chg’—which means festival.

So, whether you’re talking about the Passover, Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Feast of Trumpets, or Feast of Tabernacles, you’re talking about a festival: a Festival of Tabernacles, a Festival of Passover.

A festival can mean one in which you really enjoy food, or it might be one in which you don’t enjoy food.

Verse 6: “And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the **Feast**... [‘chg’—festival] ...of Unleavened Bread to the LORD. You must eat unleavened bread seven days.”

This has been an introduction to the concept of set times, and in the next several days we’re going to go into other set times. One of them will be somewhat technical: How we use set times to determine the conception and birth of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, and it all fits when you understand appointed times and the chronology of it.

- God did everything by His plan!
- He did everything step-by-step!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Isaiah 58:13
- 2) Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
- 3) Matthew 13:10-17
- 4) Daniel 12:1-4, 8-10
- 5) 2 Peter 3:9
- 6) Acts 10:34-35
- 7) Romans 2:11
- 8) Galatians 4:1-5
- 9) Romans 5:5-6
- 10) Acts 1:4-11
- 11) John 18:35-36
- 12) Genesis 17:21
- 13) Genesis 18:14
- 14) Genesis 21:2
- 15) Genesis 1:14
- 16) Leviticus 23:1-4, 6

Also referenced: Books:

- *The Appointed Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Alfred Edersheim

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