

"In The Day of Adversity Consider"

by Daniel S. Dow

In Ecclesiastes 3, the Preacher writes about the appointments of life. These are the things God has set in this world for the well being of mankind -- His creation. *"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck 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 cast away stones, and a time to gather stones; 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"* (vv. 1-8). Within this lists of appointed seasons given by God, there appears to be bad and evil things: death, weeping, mourning, rending, war, killing, hatred, etc. -- certainly these things cannot be from God, can they?

The things listed are the substance of life. Verse 11 states, *"He hath made everything beautiful in its time."* Someone raises the question, "Death and mourning are not beautiful, don't these things contradict the character and nature of a good and loving God?" No they do not. Death entered into the world because of sin (Gen. 3:19, Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 56). Although these things have an appearance of being terrible, and to a certain degree they are, verse 11 rings dear with the Divine and Holy truth! With the proper perspective, everything is beautiful and is profitable to mankind, even death. *"In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider, yea, God hath made the one side by side with the other, to the end that man should not find out anything that shall be after him"* (Eccl. 7:14).

We learn from adversity and hardships. Let's continue considering death, *"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth"* (Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 ASV). To many people, even some Christians, this makes no sense. Why? Because of their perspective. They continue to look under the sun for understanding instead of looking to God. Read Ecclesiastes 3:14, *"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever... and God hath done it, that men should fear before him."* Our purpose in life is to fear God. It means we must glorify, respect and honor his name through our lives. Ecclesiastes 12:13 *"This is the end of the matter, all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."* Adversities and tragedies in this life under the sun make us realize that the here and now is vanity. This present temporary life is fleeting away. Thus there are lessons to be learned in such occurrences of our lives.

Dear reader, if you are undergoing tragedy in your life do not allow it to turn you against God. Instead *"consider"* it, and learn from it. You see we cannot change that which God has appointed (Eccl. 3:1-8), thus we learn from them. Ecclesiastes 7:13, *"Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?"* What might you learn? You might learn the fact that joys and pleasures are not assured in this life "under the sun," but the faithful child of God will have innumerable pleasures and bliss when he goes home to the Father. Adversity makes our heart ache and yearn for that day. Our heart focuses on our heavenly Father and draws the two of us closer together.

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