

There is Always Now

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[0 : 00] Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verses 15 and 17. That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been, and God required that which is past.

And verse 17, I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

Now, first of all, if we take these two verses, perhaps not in isolation, but if we take them first one at a time. The context of this chapter is that Solomon is musing upon, on the one hand, the vanity and futility of life.

And yet, on the other, we see that when he takes and receives that which God gives and recognizes it as the gift of God, he is able to delight in it.

But when he simply takes the things for their own sake and looks at them just as an end in themselves, they are seen to be emptiness. They are seen to be vanity and there's nothing good in them.

[1 : 05] But there is much good in all that God has given, if it is received as being his. And the strength to do our labor and the ability, whether to earn money for food or to rejoice in the things that the Lord gives us and enables us to do, this is part of what he means is there's nothing better than a man should rejoice in his own works.

It doesn't mean in his own strength, but rather to give thanks and be joyful in what the Lord enables him to do. For this is his portion. In other words, his portion from God.

For who shall bring him to sea? Verse 22. What shall be after him? We do spend an awful lot of our time and of our lives being anxious perhaps about what has not yet happened.

In fact, if you think of it, almost all the things we are anxious about are things that have not yet happened. It might be, yes, perhaps in a youngster you're studying for exams and yes, it's right you should be prepared and right you should swat and advise and so on.

But the thing you're worried about is something that hasn't yet happened. And when you've had the exam and you're finished and you're putting the papers away and then the thing you're worried about is when the results come in and what are they going to be like?

[2 : 22] It hasn't happened yet. And we do inevitably worry and are anxious about the future. And the future by definition has not yet happened.

And yet in one sense, almost everything that is going to happen has, as it says here in verse 15, already happened in the past. That which have been is now.

It's just happening again. And that which is to be hath already been. And God required that which is past. Somebody once said, there's no new things that happen. It's just the same things that happen to different people in successive generations.

And that's what makes them seem like they're new. But if we're turning back to chapter 1, then we see, for example, the same theme at verse 9. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be.

And that which is done, is that which shall be done. And there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything with of it may be said? See, this is new. It hath been already a whole time.

[3 : 24] Which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things. Neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come. But those that shall come after. And we might think, well, alas, that's not true.

Of course people remember things when they're older. I mean, look at all these famous people that have been. You know, you could take a child, a school child to London now. And show them statues of some of the famous people that have been important in our country's history.

You could even show them a statue of someone like Churchill. And they might not know who it was. Because people's memories fade. And the things that are important to a former generation become

less important.

And are no longer important to those who come after. Because they live their lives. They don't live their grandparents' lives. And they won't live their grandchildren's lives. That the life the Lord has given us.

And the opportunity and the moment the Lord has given us. Is now. It seems like such an obvious thing to say. And yet how much do we spend of our lives being anxious about the future that hasn't happened yet.

[4 : 32] Or perhaps reminiscing or being unduly rosy spectacles about the past. It always looks best when we look back. Just as in some ways we tend to think more kindly of people after they are no longer with us.

Why is that? Well one reason I would suggest to you is that when they are gone from us. The mixture of good and bad and maybe the hurtful things they may have done or said to us get forgotten.

And the good things yes well we remember those things. Why? Because they are no longer in a position where they can do us any harm.

We can either look back at that person that was. And we can either remember the things we liked about them. And if we also remember things we didn't like about them. Well we don't have to worry about those things.

Because they can't hurt us anymore now. Likewise when we look at the past. We tend not to remember the harsh or difficult or painful aspects of the past.

[5 : 36] We tend to look at and remember the good and the better things. Because these things are pleasing to us. And the things which are hurtful or did cause us harm in the past.

Even the hurt and the pain feeds because it cannot now reach us where we are. So it seems less of a threat. So the past looks better.

And if it's the more distant past where we're only getting other people's memories as well. Of the things as they were and they seem better. Then of course it can make aspects of the past look better.

This is an old problem. Turn a couple of pages in Ecclesiastes. You find this famous verse. Verse 10 in chapter 7. Say not thou. What is the cause that the former days were better than these?

For thou didst not inquire wisely concerning this. Who is saying this? Solomon is saying this.

Solomon when Israel is at the absolute peak of its glory.

[6 : 37] And of its political power. And of its worldly strength. We read in scripture of how gold was made so common in Solomon's court and in his kingdom.

That silver wasn't thought anything of. And there was so much wealth. And so much riches. And so much splendor. And all his enemies were at peace with him. It was the best of days in Israel.

And yet Solomon is likewise aware of this tendency in himself and in others to look back and say. What is it because the former days were better than these?

Because with the metropolis that he had built now in Jerusalem. His palaces. His temple. That was one of the wonders of the world. That would be part of him that anchored back for the simplicity of his father's day.

When David ruled the kingdom in the simplicity of work. Is that the military leader going around the country. And living with his men in the field.

[7 : 38] And living in the tents. And yes there was Jerusalem. But it was simpler in those days. And it seemed better in those days. It only seemed better because Solomon wasn't in it.

David's life. If you actually look through the narrative of David's kingship. It is one crisis after another. It is one military campaign after another.

Almost none of which did he ever initiate. His enemies are constantly coming at him from the outside. And also enemies within. Within Israel itself.

See how fickle the Israelite kingdom is. Time and time again throughout David's reign. And his own family turn with him as well. He has endless problems throughout his reign.

And yet. As early as the days of Solomon. The very peak and pinnacle of Israelite achievement.

They are looking back to the reign of David. As a golden age.

[8 : 37] And no doubt in the age of monarchy. They look back to the time of the judges. As being Israel in its simplicity. When God was their king. And they didn't have a king that ruled over them.

And had armies. And fought battles. And so on. No. Look back at the book of Judges. You see it's anarchy. Look at the closing chapters. You see the depth of depravity.

The bloody perversion. To which Israel had sunk. The civil war. Which flowed on to that. The thousands that were slaughtered. And their solution.

To that slaughter. Which was basically. Kidnap. And rape. And the worst of men's behavior. That came out. Of all those days of the judges.

They were not good days. They were not happy days. Go back before that. Before Israel settled the land. Well it wasn't. They were wandering in the wilderness. Well there's a certain simplicity in that.

[9 : 35] Yes. God feeds them with manna from heaven. And water from the rock. Wasn't it good when we walked closely with the Lord in those days. Well did we? Did they? They spent their 40 years in the wilderness.

Murmuring and complaining. And being smitten by one plague after another. Go back then into Egypt. Which they thought was the good days. When they ate the flesh pots.

And the meat that they ate. And the cucumbers. And the herons. And the leeks. And the onions. And the garlic. That they speak about in the book of Numbers there. And they look back to when they thought they had abundance of food.

But they were groaning. Under the weight of slavery. They longed to be free. And they were steeped in idolatry of course as well. They were black days in Egypt.

No good days. So it doesn't matter how far you turn the clock back. And keep on looking for what you think are the good days. Or we tend to think are the good days.

[10 : 32] We will find human nature was no different. Fashions may have changed. Styles of clothing may have changed. Technology will have changed certainly. But human beings have not changed.

You know we may tend to think. Especially when we feel ourselves in decline. And the church looked back. Oh well if we turn back to 50 years ago. Things were different.

What was 50 years ago? The end of 1969. The beginning of 1970. 50 years. What was the church like? Oh a lot more people. Perhaps a lot more people. But the young people of those days would have thought still it was something for older people.

The 1960s coming into the 70s. The youth culture thought it was just so trendy a bit. Now we look back and we laugh at their flares and their long hair and their big bushy sideburns and the ridiculous loud shirts that people wore.

And all the hippiness and all the glam rock and so on. And we think how stupid. Look at people who were married in those days. Look at the embarrassing wedding photographs of the fashions that were in those days.

[11 : 37] And we think oh my goodness who'd want to be there. But we think those were good days 50 years ago. They weren't especially. The world was not a happier better place.

The church was not in a better place 50 years ago. It had the same problems that it dealt with. The same things that it struggled with. There were those who loved the greater traditionalism.

Those who wanted to kick against it. The world was in turmoil. With the Vietnam War and communism still being rampant across so much of the globe. Industrial action and difficulties at home and abroad.

It was just a mess then. Just as it is a mess now. And in 1970 or 69 or whatever. People still in the world thought they were too modern and sophisticated.

To need this mythological figure of an old fashioned god from the bible. But you know. If you'd gone back another century before that. To 1870.

[12 : 40] Those who in the unbelieving world would still have thought they were scientifically advanced. And that they were too modern to need this ridiculous religion and this ridiculous god. That these church going folk and these believers were so set up.

And my goodness. How can they be so stupid? They would have thought. The world has not changed. Some things are legal now that at one time were illegal.

But some depravities. They were still there before. Before they were quite so public. Before they were flaunted quite so much. And even when they were illegal they were still there.

So the world and human nature has not changed. It's just. And God of course has not changed. But we have a tendency to look forward with anxiety.

And to look back with this sort of nostalgia. But the point is. Verse 15. That which I have been. Is now. And that which is to be.

[13:40] Hath already been. And God requireth. That which is past. What does that mean? Well whatever we have done. In our lives. That which has been. God's going to require.

Oh no. That makes us tremble. That makes us anxious. That makes us worry. What about all my past? God is going to judge it. Well of course he's going to judge it. He's going to judge every single aspect of your life.

He's going to judge all the things you have thought. From the day that you were born onwards. He's going to judge every word that you have said. Jesus said every either word.

Not even every single word. But every idle word. Men shall utter. They will give an account for. So every part of every aspect of your life.

Is going to be judged. As is mine. How does that make you feel? Well probably if we're honest. It makes us feel a little bit anxious. Or worried. Or perhaps very much so. But this is.

[14:34] God requireth that which is past. Whether it is good or bad. The things that will trouble us. Are those things which are bad. Those things which are sinful.

Even that which is good. We will be shown in the light of God's glory. To be not that good after all. Well. Let's turn forward into the New Testament. And read what we see in Romans.

Chapter 3. Verse 25. God. Has stepped him forth. That is Jesus. To be a propitiation. Through faith. A propitiation is that which causes. To become favourable.

If something is propitious. If it's a propitious time. It is a favourable time. If something is a propitiation. It causes somebody to become favourable.

Toward you. So God has set him forth to be a propitiation. Through faith in his blood. To declare his righteousness. For the remission of sins.

[15:29] That are past. All your past. All the anxieties of the past. All the sins of the past. All the worries and troubles and fears. Of the past.

It's all past. Because any sins. You can't have sins in the future. You can't have sins that you haven't committed yet. How can you confess things you haven't done yet. You may be guilty of them right this minute.

But the minute you've done them. The minute you're guilty of them. There are sins that have passed. Because time is always moving on. Every sin in other words. That has ever been in your life. It is a propitiation.

And that which causes God to be favourable towards you. To declare his righteousness. Not yours. Not mine. But his righteousness. For the remission of sins that are past.

All of your past is dealt with. The seemingly good old days that weren't so good. Are dealt with if you're in Christ. The future about which you are so anxious.

[16:26] Which will very quickly become the past. You know. It seems for the blink of an eye. That we were here on the last Sabbath. Of an old year. A year ago. When did we have our New Year's Day service.

And that was the new year. That was ahead of us. Which is now behind us. That which is future. In a moment. In the blink of an eye. It becomes the past.

So for the remission of sins that are past. This is what we need. This is what we need. For the future. Because the future will very quickly become the past. Every year when we people wish each other a happy new year.

That happy new year very quickly becomes the old year. Very quickly becomes a distant memory of the year. That God is in charge of all these things. Let's take the context. A few verses around this verse 25.

In Romans 3. And we read here. For all have sinned. And come short of the glory of God. Whether in the 60s or the 70s.

[17:24] The 90s. The 80s. The 2000s. 2020. Whenever it should be. All have sinned. And come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely.

By his grace. By his grace. By his free gift. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation. Through faith in his blood. To declare his righteousness. For the remission of sins that are past. Through the forbearance of God. To declare I say at this time. His righteousness. That he might be just.

And the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. All of us have a past. And our past is our problem. Our present may be enough of a problem as it is.

But it says verse 26. To declare I say at this time. His righteousness. It's not just something that happened 2000 years ago. On the cross. The death of Christ is applicable.

[18:23] And as fresh. The shedding of his blood. Is as present a sacrifice. Before God. Now today. As it was at the time it happened. At Calvary.

It accomplishes. The same powerful deliverance. To declare I say at this time. His righteousness. To declare his righteousness.

For the remission of sins that are past. That which has been is now. It's here just now. Whatever the anxieties of the past. They are the anxieties of today. Whatever may have been the problems of the past.

Are the problems of today. Whatever may be the hopes for the future. They are already the hopes. The anxieties. The fears of today. When we get into the future.

Fast forward 20 years. 40 years. 50 years. If we're there to see it. We will find exactly the same kind of problems. In mankind. There will be the same obsession of men.

[19:20] With women. There will be the same kind of lurid things. That are set forth. To try and entice people. There will be the same materialism. There will be the same fact.

That there will be those who are the Lord. Who are seeking to turn people to Christ. That they'll live godly and God honouring lives. And we don't have to worry about. Oh but the church is just going to disappear.

It's just going to fade away to nothing. Because look how things are contracting. And so on. Look how things are going down. And to an extent they are. But people were saying that 50 years ago. People were saying. Oh the church is going to be extinct in 30 years. Well 30 years on from 1969-70. Was the turn of the century. Since then.

Not only have people been born. But people have been born. Who have been converted. And who have become 21st century Christians. Who have never known the 20th century.

[20:15] Who have never known previous life. And previous generations. They have been converted in this present day and age. And they will go on being converted.

Because God is still God. And he will always have his church. He will always have his people. May not be in a particular location. May not be in a particular place. But he will always have his witness. Always have his people. And if you scroll fast forward. 50 years. 100 years. You'll find exactly the same conditions. In human society. You will find the same materialism.

You will find the same greed. You will find the same addictions. To certain things. You will find the same debasement. Amongst some. In the community.

And in society. And you will also find the presence of Christians. You will find them there. You will find those who are faithful. And you will also find those. Who claim to be Christians.

[21:11] Who are pretty much worldly. And liberal. And sold out variety. And you have them in every generation. You will have those. Who want to appear. Like they are the lords.

But aren't really. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7. Not everyone who says to me. Lord, Lord. Will enter into the kingdom of heaven. But those who do the will of my father.

Which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day. Lord, Lord. Have we not done many wonderful works. In that name. Cast out devils. We've done this. We've done that. We were good Christians. And he will say. Depart from me. I never knew you. Because he knows that in those days. In the days of Jesus himself. There were fake Christians then. And there were genuine ones.

And in a hundred years time. If the world is still here. There will be fake ones. And there will be genuine ones. And here in this present day. There are fake ones. And there are genuine ones. And society is not that different.

[22:08] Yes, it is more technologically advanced. Yes, the fashions change. But they tend to be cyclical as well. The pendulum swings. Whether we're talking about society. Or politics.

And a wheel goes round again. And whatever political parties are in the ascendancy. The time will come when they are down in the dumps again. And so we've seen it happen.

Even in our own lifetimes. We see how the wheel turns. That which I've been is now. And that which is to be. I've already been. And God requires that which is past.

But remember Romans 3.25. God requires that which is past. But he has provided a remedy for that which is past. For the remission of sins.

Which are past. And all of your life. The moment you blink your eyes. It's the past. But for the future. God is in charge. Of our future.

[23 : 03] Just as much as he has been with us. In the past. Verse 17 then. I said in my heart. God shall judge the righteous and the wicked. And so he will.

You know. God has a judgment. He appointed. We shall all appear. Before the judgment seat of Christ. That's what we read. 2 Corinthians 5. We shall all appear. Before the judgment seat of Christ.

We don't have to worry. That God appears to be dragging his feet. Why does evil appear to be prospering? Why does. Why do the good men not seem to be in charge?

Well. You just read Psalm 37. And you see the situation that David was in. David. The golden years. Remember. That Solomon is looking back to and saying.

You know. We're not wise. And we say. What is the cause? The former years were better than this. The former years. His father's years. David's years. In David's day. Psalm 37.

[23 : 56] I have seen the wicked. In great part. Flourishing like a green bay tree. And yet he was not. God will bring into judgment.

Every action. Whether it be good. Whether it be evil. I said in my heart. God shall judge the righteous. And the wicked. For there is a time there. For every purpose.

And for every work. Now. You might think. Well. Wouldn't it be so much better. If God just judged wickedness. Right away. And if the minute somebody did something bad. They got zapped.

Or they. You know. The equivalent of lightning struck them. To give them a good old warning. So they'd be jolly well scared. To commit sin again. But. All you would have then. Is conformity.

Through fear. You would not necessarily have. A changed heart. You wouldn't have. A new spirit. You wouldn't have. A new heart. A new life. You wouldn't be. Born again.

[24 : 49] We're going to look at that. This evening. But. One reason. Why the Lord. Allows wickedness. To flourish. And allows. Good.

To struggle. Is in order. To test. To try. To bring. Out. Who would be wicked. If they actually. Thought.

They could get away with it. Which ones. In humanity. Are restrained. Only by. The thought. Of punishment. So let's just see. What happens. If they think.

They can get away with it. Now we see this. Of course. In society. If you have. A national emergency. Somewhere. You get. Floods. Or major natural disasters. And all the emergency services.

Are on call out. What do you have? You get looting. You get looting. In emergency situations. People will go into the high street shop. Start smashing windows.

[25 : 43] And carrying out. Whatever they want. To help themselves do. Why are they doing it that day? Because they think. Or they believe. That all the police. And all the emergency services. Are elsewhere.

Otherwise engaged. In other words. There's nobody to stop me. I can get away with it today. In a way that I wouldn't get away with it. Other times. What would you be like?

What would I be like? If we thought. We could get away with it. If nobody was actually. Going to call you to account. Say no. Do whatever you like.

Be as bad as your life. As good as your life. Do what you want. Nobody's going to stop you. And the human heart. Is unfettered. To be. All it could want to be.

What does it want to be? Does it want to exercise. Wickedness to the full. Or would it. Left to itself. Really want to seek. And to do. That which is God honoring.

[26 : 38] Even if there's no reward for it. Even if there's nobody. Going to blow a trumpet. And say how good they are. Even if nobody. Is going to surround them. With affirmation. And say.

Yeah. What a good Christian you are. Maybe. They're in a situation. Where the fact. That even being a Christian. Is going to get them locked up. Are they still going to be faithful. To God then? So God allows.

These situations. To arise. Whereby the good. Will be tested. The faithful. Will be tried. They will be pressurized. They will be put under difficulty.

To see whether or not. They really do still love the Lord. In the midst of all the struggles. And all the sufferings. That will come their way. And God allows that.

We might think. Oh that's a bit strange. Why doesn't God vindicate them? Why doesn't God come for them? God will come for them. He does see. He will remember. He does take note of it.

[27 : 35] But for now. They are being tried. They are being tested. To see. How are they? How are you? How am I?

When there appears to be. No. Immediate reward. For faithfulness. There appears to be. No immediate blessing. For following the Lord. There seems to be.

No incentive in this world. And yet for wickedness. There seems to be. Only success. And winning. And we take what we want. And God allows that too. God allows it.

Because he wants people. To be able to do. What would you do. If lightning isn't going to fall from heaven. And smite you down. What would you do.

If you actually thought. There wasn't any God. That you were going to have to. Have to give an account to. God shall judge. The righteous.

[28 : 28] And the wicked. For there is a time there. For every purpose. And for every work. It is because God. Delays. That we see wickedness.

Having its full expression. We also see. The scope for the perseverance. Of the saints. Being able to go on. With the Lord. Because we know that.

Wisdom. Is with the Lord. The feet of the Lord. Is the beginning of wisdom. Jeremiah says on the other hand. Of those who are wicked. He said. Young the wise men. Are ashamed.

They are dismayed. And taken. Lo. They have rejected. The word of the Lord. And what wisdom. Is in them. If we reject. The word of the Lord. What wisdom. Do we have. We're in a situation.

Where there are those. Some branches. Of the church. And some parts. Of the church. Where they have rejected. The word of the Lord. And said. Well we can't do that. Nowadays. Because now.

[29 : 24] We know better. You've got the new. Bishop. Archbishop of York. Saying. Well we can't apply. Biblical standards. To some of today's. Issues.

Because. It might. Incite people. To do other bad things. It might incite people. To be cruel to others. It might incite people. In this way. Or that way. So. We can't just follow.

What the Bible says. What wisdom. Is it now. If wisdom. Itself. Is being rejected. Where shall wisdom. Be found. And we know. The job sets.

Elsewhere. And of the fear. Of the Lord. That is wisdom. And knowledge of the holy. Is understanding. But we read also. For there is a time.

There. For every purpose. And for every work. A time. There. What's the. There. That he's talking about. The there.

[30 : 19] Is God's presence. God's throne room. God's. Place of judgment. When all things. Are brought to a conclusion. When all the strivings. Of this world.

Have ceased. When all the success. That men gained. Through ignoring God. And all the wealth. They may have accumulated. It's all set out. Before them there. And. Where is it now.

There. When that day comes. And all the sufferings. And all the difficulties. Of following Christ.

While it's all set. In his perspective. And where does it look like. Now. There. When we reach that place.

What is the there. Job says in chapter 3. Verse 17. There. The wicked. Seeks from troubling. And there. The weary. The aggress.

There. The prisoners. Rest together. They hear not the voice. Of the oppressor. The small and great. Are there. And the servant. Is free. From his master. There.

[31 : 15] At the last. Judge. Judgment. At the throne of God. All is set out. Before him. I said in my heart. God shall judge. The righteous. And the wicked.

For there is a time there. For every purpose. And every work. Including God. Including God's work. But also. I would suggest to you.

There is a time there. For every purpose. The purposes. That the Lord. Desires. To accomplish. In your life. Are the purposes.

That he has given you. For this. For this. Time. There is. A time. Given to you. And it is this. Time. Last year.

Next year. However long. We are spared for. The years. That you and I. Are upon this earth. Is the time. The Lord has given us. He didn't give us. The 19th century. He isn't going to give us.

[32 : 09] The 22nd century. If there's still. There's still a world. By then. But here we are. Here we are. And this world. And this time. This is where the Lord.

Has placed you. At this time. And there is a time. In which to live out. Your faith. And to put your love. Of the Lord. Into practice. Because what you do. And how you live. And what you believe. Will matter. And it will matter now. And you might think. Oh. It's not going to matter. In 50 years time. It's not going to matter. In 100 years time. Is it? I mean. People who lived and died. 100 years ago. Who remembers them now? The people of their generation. Will have known all about them. And God will see it all. Past. Present. Future. As though it were right there. In front of them. It's not 100 years ago. You're called upon to live. It's not 100 years ago. You're called upon to be part. Of the church of Jesus Christ. It's now. It's today. [33 : 06] And all our tomorrows. That we may be spared for. This is the time. This is the day. This is the year. This is the hour. In which the Lord has placed you and me.

There is a time there. For every purpose. And for every work. And the time for our work. And our witness. Is the time the Lord has given us. Now. This day matters. Each day matters. That the Lord has given you. Next year. If we be spared to see it. And there's no kind of being shot. We all know. But the tragedy of the situation. In Garibaldi. And the funeral. There will be. In a couple of days. An old gentleman. Going for a walk. He never returned home again. Because of the tragedy. By which he was literally struck down. He went out that day. That evening. As though it were normal. Not knowing. And none of us knows. [34 : 03] The day of the day. And we all say. Yes. But that's other people. That doesn't really happen to us. Does it? It doesn't happen to me. It doesn't happen to people. Immediately in my circle.

Well it doesn't. Until it does. And they think. Oh. He never thought this would happen to me. Well it happens to others. And it happens a plenty. We've no guarantee. We'll be spared to see the new year. But let's assume. For the moment. That we are. If we are. Then how we behave. In each day. And the relationship. We have with the Lord. In each day of that year. As of this. Will matter. The day that you are given. Matters. There is a purpose. A time. There. For every purpose. And for every work. The work the Lord has given you to do. You might think. Well it's not very important. Compared to what some people are. [34 : 56] Big stars. And important movers. And shakers. And millionaires. And people whose jobs really matter. Your job. Your work. Your life. Really matters. Because God.

Went to the trouble. Of creating it. God went to the trouble. Of causing you to be. The person that you are. And placing you. In this portion. Of time. Where he has placed you. Which matters. Every bit as much. As whatever future centuries. May or may not get come. And every bit as much. As all the centuries. As have been before. They may look nicer. In retrospect. But they will not have looked nicer. At the time. They will not have been better. And more godly. And more enjoyable. And more rich. And good. And so on. Yes of course. There will have been times. Of revival. And blessing. When things weren't good. [35 : 52] But you know. One of the most. Heartbreaking things. About revival times. Must have been. For those who lived through it. The sense that. As it was coming to an end.

And they all come to an end. As it was coming to an end. The desperation. To try and claw it back. And stop the tide. From going back out. And you can't. Because that moment. Passes. And that time of blessing. And richness. Passes. But we trust. And believe. They will come again. But we can't wait. Until they do. We can't sit in our hands. And do nothing. Our calling. Is to seek the Lord. Now. While he is to be found. Our calling. Is to seek him. While he is near. Our calling. Is to make the day. We are given. To count. God shall judge. [36 : 46] The righteous. And the wicked. He holds off. Until all is fulfilled. And all is perfected. Then everyone is seen. For how they really are.

How will you be. If there is no immediate reward. For following the Lord. If it's not popular. If it's not trendy. If it's not part of a revival. Wave then. Are you still the Lord's. In the desert. Just as much. As in a holy huddle. At a time of spiritual. Heightened awakening. Are you still the Lord's.

When there are few. As well as when. They are favorable. Are you still the Lord's. And still loving him. When it seems at times. Like you may be the only one.

Will you still love him there. In the dark. And if we think. We can get away with it. Will we be as wicked. As we can be. Because well. If God cared. He'd strike me down.

[37 : 41] The earth would open. And swallow me up. And look. It hasn't happened. So. God must be okay with this. Otherwise. Surely he would have done. Something about it. God. Holds. Till his perfect time.

God shall judge the righteous. And the wicked. For there is a time there. For every purpose. And for every work. The time that you and I.

Have been given. That time is today. That time is now. It is each day you are given. Matters. As much as all the days. And the centuries. That went before. Each piece of work.

You are given to do. Matters. As much as those. Who may be in the headlines. Or may be earning millions. They too will perish. And die. And their millions. Will perish with them. But the day you are given.

And the work you are given. To do. There is purpose. There is reason. There is value. There is time. For it. For your work. For my work. And for God's work.

[38 : 39] There is a time. For every purpose. And for every work. Including yours. Including mine. And especially.

God's. Let us pray.