

Time I

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under Heaven...¹ a most profound observation of Solomon, which unfortunately he did not observe for himself and failed to do what needed to be done during his time as successor to David. Instead of using his time and the peace brought by his father's years of war to consolidate the supremacy of Israel over all other nations because of her relationship to God, Solomon spent his time introducing other gods, which led Israel into prostitution. The proper use of his time, for Solomon, would have been to use his gift of wisdom to establish the superiority of the way Israel worshipped God over all other nations.

Indeed, one of the real meanings of holiness at a practical level and not at the 'religious' level is the proof of superiority. Superiority in this sense: that what you have set yourself aside for – dedicated yourself to – is so perfect that there is no need to add or subtract or detract from it. So when God said to Israel, "...be holy, because I am holy,"² He was in fact saying, "Be superior, because I am superior. Be supreme, because I am supreme."

Had Solomon made good his word to God and remained 'holy' to God and therefore rejected every other god, then that would have been a way – the way – of saying to all other nations, "What I already have is more than adequate and superior to what you offer." Put simply, no one buys a new vacuum cleaner unless the one he has is not doing what he needs it for. As such, any prostitution – any diversion of a person from the God they serve – is an admission that their God is insufficient for their needs.

Like Solomon, we have squandered two millenniums of time. Instead of using what Jesus had already achieved and built upon it from the beginning, we began to add our own personal little touches and variations as if that which the Master had shown us was not enough. Just like Solomon who added a little altar here for a demigod and a little altar there for another demigod in and next to the temple of God, so that the people could beseech this deity for rain or that deity for fertility... so likewise, from the moment we were let loose from Jesus' personal supervision, we began to add little extra practices to that which He showed us.

When Jesus sent out the twelve in Mark 6.12-13, it is written: They went out and preached that people should repent. They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. Now where did Jesus show them to do that? It is not recorded. Did Jesus ever tell us to anoint the sick with oil and they will be healed? He just said, "...they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."³ Yet the twelve started anointing in oil, a practice that James would encourage the elders of the church to continue for those Jews who came seeking healing in James 5.13-15, which now has been extended to those who are sick, regardless of their type or state of circumcision (that is, this is now a favourite ritual with Christians when praying for the sick).

If you have ever wondered where their habit of not listening to Jesus but modifying His exact commands as it suited them began, look no further than Mark 6.13. From the moment we (they) began to change and add to that which was shown us, was the moment the unholiness began and the loss of the superiority of what Jesus had actually given us began in our minds and hearts.

Yes, they healed the sick and drove out demons, but it was not exactly how the Lord showed them. Now compare this to the statement of the Lord, "...the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what My Father has commanded Me."⁴

They added anointing of oil as they laid hands to heal the sick... and it worked! Since it worked, it must be alright, and this is the very state of mind that has led everyone astray. The very state of mind that caused them to ignore Jesus' command in Mark 6.45 a few days later to go ahead of Him immediately to Bethsaida while He dismissed the crowd, yet they chose to wait till it was dark and then set off for Capernaum in John 6.16 instead... and then later to completely ignore and change virtually every single one of Jesus' post resurrection commands:

1. "...tell My brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see Me."⁵ Yet no one went that morning.
2. And later that evening when Jesus went to them in Jerusalem because none of them had gone to Galilee that morning, He commanded them, "I am going to send you what My Father has

¹ Ecclesiastes 3.1

² Leviticus 11.44, 45

³ Mark 16.18

⁴ John 14.31

⁵ Matthew 28.10

promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."⁶ Yet Peter decided to go fishing instead, saying, "I'm going out to fish," and the others joined him, saying, "We'll go with you."⁷

3. Causing Jesus to have to catch up with them and to lead them back to the others.
4. And finally when Jesus was leaving, His final instructions were, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..."⁸ Yet Peter decided it was time to replace Judas and they did so before the Holy Spirit arrived.

You see, elect, that is how it happens... little by little. An altar here and an altar there for Solomon... and for us, an 'alteration' here and an 'alteration' there... and when you have done enough of it, certainly any catholic person, be he from here or from India, would feel at home in Solomon's temple by the time he had filled it with all the gods of his 700 wives and 300 concubines. So really we cannot blame James the Younger for the alterations he introduced when he convinced the Jerusalem council to have the gentiles practise partial observance of the Law of Moses instead of a strict adherence to the words of Jesus without alteration.

You see, elect, Jesus never had to anoint with oil to heal the sick even when He laid hands, for His hands were already oiled by the natural oils of His body. The real temple oil – the real holy oil – was already flowing and was on His hands. If that was the case, what need was there of olive oil, however blessed it may be by some lengthy prayer or incantation? So when we add some tree oil to our fingers, we are saying the oil from our bodies, which are the temples of the Holy Spirit, is insufficient, and so belittle the superiority of our God and we lose holiness.

So then, true holiness takes the form of an acknowledgment of the total supremacy of the ways of our God such that there is no need for addition, detracting or alteration. Indeed, He is the Lord God Almighty and His ways are perfect. If we truly believe that, then why do we change and alter His words, His ways and His timing? If there is anything that experience teaches us, it is this: timing is everything. No matter what you do or say, without a sense of timing the words and actions either fail or do not have their full effect. In the kingdom of mammon, anyone of his servants will tell you shares can be bought and sold anytime, but to make a profit, timing is the key.

As you watch and listen to Jesus, I hope by now it is apparent to you of the Lord's impeccable sense of timing. Indeed, He turned down the mother's request for Him to intervene at Cana, not on the basis of ability or propriety, for He could certainly do it, and supplying more wine may not have been the most appropriate thing to do as the reason they ran out of wine was probably because some had already overindulged in the liquid. It was the time that He raised His objection on, saying, "Dear woman, why do you involve Me? My time has not yet come."⁹ And again when His brothers who did not believe in Him were taunting Him, He told them, "The right time for Me has not yet come; for you any time is right."¹⁰

It is not just what the Father told Him to say or how to say it and even showed Him what to do... it was also when the Father told Him to do it that He kept exactly. That is His true holiness... and in never deviating from the what, how, where and when set for Him by His Father, He declared absolutely that which His Father had shown Him was **supreme**.

That is why when Satan tempted Him, Jesus declined at every turn. It was not due to the fact that Jesus could not and did not want stones to be turned to bread... it was just not the right time. It was not due to the fact that He did not want all the authority and splendour of the kingdoms of the Earth... it was just not the right time yet. For indeed He will rule over every nation with authority and the kings of the Earth will never cease to bring their splendour to Him, even on New Earth... how much more on this Earth? It was not the fact that He will not show Himself to all and sundry that He is the Son of God... it just was not the right time yet.

The secret then of how Jesus overcame Satan's temptation is timing! Timing goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. Adam fell and sinned because he did not resist the temptation with the most powerful weapon we have that God has – time and its usage, timing. All Adam had to do was say to Eve, "The time is not right yet. Let's eat of all the other fruits first, including of the Tree of Life. And then we will ask God when He comes in the cool of the day for His walk."

⁶ Luke 24.49

⁷ John 21.3

⁸ Acts 1.7-8

⁹ John 2.4

¹⁰ John 7.6

So now that you have become one and ones who do know what was said, how it was said even, what was done and where, it is time for you to appreciate the most powerful weapon God has – His **time** and His perfect **timing**.

Now do not let these words of Jesus to the eleven deter you, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority."¹¹ For in context Jesus was replying to their question, "Lord, are You at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"¹² Jesus did not want them, the eleven, to be distracted by a concern for the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, but wanted them to focus on the Kingdom of God's establishment first... the kingdom that would be established first by power, which is why He also said, "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..." hoping to remind them of what He had said earlier, "But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you,"¹³ as well as the fact that He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the Kingdom of God.¹⁴ Rather, be bold and be reminded that He has said, "I tell you the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My Name."¹⁵

So as we begin our journey with time and its action – timing – what do we know now and what do we have? For it always begin with what we have, including what we know. What do we know of the timing of His return? We know 1,900 years ago He said, "Behold, I am coming soon!"¹⁶

So what do we know? We know He has been delayed, for 1,900 years is not soon in anyone's language, not even God's... and we know who is responsible for the delay – us – because of all the alterations we made and continue to make even after He had said, "Yes, I am coming soon."¹⁷

So what do we know? We know we are late... we are delayed and have delayed like the twelve who waited till dark and should have repented and gone straight to Bethsaida before Jesus finished His prayer meeting with the Father. So we repent and make up for the delay the best we can.

The Lord Jesus has told us, "...those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning... If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has shortened them."¹⁸ For our sake, elect, the Lord will shorten these days, days of distress. Now the shortening of days can also mean the hastening of the finishing of the work – being able to do the work in less days than it would otherwise take. We have the Lord's words on this, that the Lord would shorten the days of distress... distress unequalled from the beginning when God created the world.

Does that mean we have to wait for the days of distress as defined by the disasters of the end times as it is for everybody else? Of course not, for we conform not to the world, and we do not fear what they fear or call a conspiracy what they call a conspiracy. So then what is their distress is not our distress at all. No, the earthquakes, famines and so on – the seven bowls of God's wrath – will be their distress, but what should be our distress? Our distress that should exceed the distress from the beginning of the world?

It is this: the distress of our repentance from our alterations of His words and ways, and hence our delay of His arrival should exceed the distress of Adam and Eve when they were kicked out of the garden. Our distress... our time of distress is now... not when the earthquakes, famines or plagues come... no... it is now because our King remains unhonoured and delayed.

It is when, elect, you are distressed beyond anything since this world was created over what we have done to Jesus because we failed to listen to Him that the Holy Spirit can fulfil the Lord's word and begin the shortening of days for you so that as it was in the middle of the lake, if only they had repented, they would have arrived immediately at the shore of Bethsaida as soon as they let Jesus into the boat.

So what time is it, elect? It is time to be distressed for all the right reasons.

¹¹ Acts 1.7

¹² Acts 1.6

¹³ Matthew 12.28

¹⁴ Acts 1.3

¹⁵ John 16.23

¹⁶ Revelation 22.12

¹⁷ Revelation 22.20

¹⁸ Mark 13.19-20