



The Times and the Seasons

When Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's first dream he warned the king that it is the God of heaven Who "changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings" (Dan 2:21). That is an amazing statement! It should remind us that God sovereignly controls everything that happens in our world (His creation). As soon as the flood subsided God said to Noah, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen 8:22). I watched the beautiful sunrise this morning and thought about those statements and contemplated that the beautiful picture on the sky is painted by God's almighty hand. I was thankful.

On our yearly American calendar, we have many "secular" holidays and two "religious" holidays. Though we should thank God for all of our freedoms and blessings, a growing secularism is eliminating God's hand from all of these opportunities to give Him glory. On July 4 we should remember that God has given us freedom to live according to our conscience and religious convictions. Yet, that "secular" holiday passed this year as many were rioting, looting, and burning someone else's private property. Many were tearing down statues, monuments, and anything that might remind us of God's hand of blessing over the years of our history.

On November 25, Thanksgiving day, we should be giving God thanks for daily bread and continued provision just as He providentially protected and blessed those first Pilgrims in the midst of a devastating winter and growing season. Though many believing Americans still bow their heads reverently before partaking of God's abundant blessing, our leaders were too embarrassed to acknowledge God's hand and advertisers were too busy planning for black Friday and cyber Monday and the profits that can only be made during this special week.

Christmas is upon us. Paul wrote that Jesus came "in the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4), another one of those amazing statements regarding God's sovereign control over times and seasons. It was not Caesar Augustus who decreed that Joseph and Mary must return to Bethlehem for the taxing but God Himself. Caesar was merely the

pen in God's hand. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," John wrote (John 1:14), because this would be the fullness of time for the first of two providential, sovereign events that would fulfill the purpose for God's creation, the incarnation of God into flesh. We should be praising and thanking God for His great love wherewith He loved us in planning and performing the redemption of a lost world. But don't look for governmental officials to lead the way, nor for commercial enterprises to advertise the sacredness of the season, nor for the media to picture anything other than trees, presents, and human emotion.

Imagine the Sovereign of all times and seasons planning the coming of the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, and that world ignoring it as something that must not be mentioned in public because it might offend. But God knew this also from the beginning. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (John 1:10). "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him" (Isa 53:3).

Easter is also coming on April 17th. It is doubtful that our attitude regarding these things will change before then. We should be praising God for finished redemption brought about by the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of God in the flesh. "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hell and of Death" (Rev 1:18). Will we only see bunnies and eggs and other pitifully secular celebrating? Probably.

For me, since I'm reminded that God made times and seasons as well as days and nights, I will thank God tonight for the sunset as I did this morning for the sunrise. I will thank God for the miraculous coming of the Son into the world, which we celebrate this winter, and also for the miraculous departing of the Son from this world, which we celebrate later next Spring. "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You ordained . . . O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth!" (Psa 8:3).