

The Appointed Time

by Len Grates

We are living in one of the most exciting times (seasons) this world has ever seen. It is a time of great shaking, of great persecution and great blessing. Everything that can be shaken is being shaken. We are seeing individuals, the Church, banks, religions, businesses, and governments all being shaken like never before. I believe that we have entered an 'appointed time' that God has set in his great purposes. It is wonderful to know that God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the universe has supreme power, in heaven and on earth. God has always, and always will work to his time schedule. He has set appointed times for all things in heaven and on earth. We can see this throughout the whole of the Bible. In Genesis chapter 18 v14 we read of God returning to Abraham and Sarah at an appointed time. This was the time of God promising the birth of a son in fulfilment to his covenant agreement. Although He and Sarah were well advanced in age where it was naturally impossible to give birth, Isaac was born on the right day, right on time (Gen 21 v2). We see also that God set appointed times for the feasts of Israel (Exodus 13 v10; 23 v15; 34 v18 etc). All that God does is according to his timetable. That timetable works within Israel, the Nations, the Church and Individuals. Israel was born in a day (Isa 66 v8). That day was set before time began and nothing could have prevented it from happening, because God had set the appointed time for the rebirth of Israel in 1948. God has a time for the Gentile nations also, a time of amazing Grace that is giving the nations access to the throne of God for salvation, but that time is coming to a close. Jesus, in Luke chapter 21 v24, refers to " ...the times of the Gentiles...". I believe that those times set by God for the Gentile nations to come to a believing knowledge in Jesus the Saviour is coming to a close. And that time is almost upon us when "all Israel will be saved" by them believing in Yeshua Hameshiach (Romans 11 v26). Throughout the book of Daniel we read of the vision that Daniel had was for an appointed time. That vision was of the last days. For those who have eyes to see it is clear from the Bible and from what we see happening around us in the world in which we live that we have entered the appointed time of the last days. Even the great political leaders are recognising that this is a different time, though they don't recognise it as the last days they sense that change has happened, a time for world order, as President Barak Obama stated "a defining moment...a time for change". Prime Minister Gordon Brown has stated that "times have changed...." Many European leaders are referring to "time to make changes - to work towards closer integration...a new season... a new order." God has set in motion the events that will ultimately result in the return of the Messiah Jesus to the earth once again as the King of all Kings. Jesus challenged his disciples saying "Can you not discern the signs of the time?" (Matthew 16 v3). We must be those

people who are like the sons of Isaachar, who understood the times (1 Chron 12 v 32). The problem with most of us is that we know His will but struggle knowing the timing of God. We know something is different - but what?

It is an amazing truth that God is interested in the individual as well as the Nations and Israel. We read in Psalm 31 verse 15 that "all my times are in your hands". What a wonderful security it is knowing that God is in charge of my times and my timetable! He is ordering our steps and overruling in all our ways. What peace and security knowing this brings to the believer who walks uprightly before his God. That in the midst of everything being shaken, where men's hearts are failing with fear and insecurity, those that trust in the Lord do not have anything to be afraid of, but have much to thank God for.

It is so important that in these days the Church is awake to what God is doing. We need to align ourselves with his purposes and will and be in step with what He is doing in the earth at this time. All too often churches and Christians are so busy doing their own thing, working out their own programmes, that they do not understand what God is about on the earth. It is not about our programmes, our plans or building our empires, it is all about understanding the will of God and aligning ourselves to that. We have to move on from activities, programmes, events and other church things. This is the time for the Church to rise up and to be about his will, aligning ourselves with his purposes. Amos 3 v7 says "Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets." God is looking for men and women who know Him, His will and His timing who will then have the courage and integrity to be faithful to calling. We need to be entering into deep intercession, returning to the pure Word of God and loving God and our neighbour like never before. We must return to our first love and get involved with God's people instead of doing our 'own thing'. This is not the time for 'hang-ups', 'petty' reactions and beliefs or isolating ourselves from the centre of church (with all its challenges!). Get stuck in!

Queen Esther knew that she was in a position "for such a time as this" (Esther 4 v14). God had placed her in the right place at the right time and she recognised it (with a little of help from her friends!). Believers also need to awake to the fact that this is an appointed time for them to rise up and declare the glories of our majestic God. These 'appointed times' are not necessarily just one day but often cover a period of time. In Esther's case it was for a specific act at a specific time. God often spends a lifetime in preparing us for one specific task (or maybe many) - I wonder how many believers have missed their task by not being in a good place with God. The call is upon all believers to enter into their priestly role, it is not just for a chosen few (1 Peter 2 v 5-9). What a wonderful and amazing Church we would be if all believers fulfilled their destiny in God and

accomplished the purposes set in God's heart! There are too many 'soldiers' sitting on cold pews - Arise and shine for your time has come! The time to "Stand up, Stand for Jesus you soldiers of the cross".

The Changing times.

In the last 60 years since the rebirth of the state of Israel we have seen this world develop like never before. We have seen the amazing growth of the Church worldwide with outpourings of the Holy Spirit in nations we would never have dreamt of 30 years ago. The rise of the charismatic movement and its impact upon the Church has been unprecedented. We have seen economic growth beyond many people's dreams. We have seen computers, mobile phones, the Internet, international travel, sophisticated weapons, endless electronic inventions, and wealth develop and grow at an amazing pace. This is a time of amazing opportunity in every area of life. This list could go on and on. The world is also speeding towards self-destruction unless there is some intervention. We hear on the news daily about global warmth, the rise in sea levels, the growing divide between rich and poor nations. The future, with all the developments of modern inventions, is looking bleak. We can thank God that he will intervene. This appointed time of growth and development appears to be dissolving before our eyes. The shaking of God has begun. The time is quickly coming upon us when only the unshakable things will remain. The question we must ask ourselves is are we ready? Am I ready? Are we prepared for what lies ahead? Are there things in our lives that God is trying to shake out? For although we see that Jesus is coming back soon, before he does there will be an appointed time of testing for the Church and the nations. In the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 3 verse 1 the writer states that "there is a time to every purpose under heaven". Down the centuries many men and women have been used unknowingly by God to accomplish his purposes at appointed times. Today, God who is sovereign is working out his purposes on the earth. The Bible clearly states that he raises up kings and puts them down, but the heart of the King is in the hands of the Lord, that he set the boundaries to the nations, that he has all power in heaven and on earth. I remember recently coming to an understanding that the scene is being set for a 'false prophet' and 'false messiah' to rise. Like never before, the possibility of this happening is before us. No political leader seems to have any answers or solutions to the present financial crisis, international terrorism, the Middle East and other world crisis'. Someone with extraordinary ability and power could easily arise with the 'answer' - a false Christ. I sense within my own spirit that we need to be wide awake with eyes and ears wide open to discern the times. All that Jesus spoke to us about in Matthew chapter 24 - 25 is happening all about us. We need to be READY (Matt 24 v44).

The time has come for us to stop messing about, and to order our lives in a way that pleases God. For too many the Christian life is just a hobby, attending a 'club' once or twice a week. God seeks for true disciples who will pick up their cross and follow him no matter what the cost. Romans Chapter 12 verse 1 states that we should offer our lives as a living sacrifice, it goes on to say in verse 2, that we would prove the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. The key to knowing God's will is to present ourselves to the living God that he may align us to his purposes and be the sons and daughters he wants us to be.

I believe with all of my heart that we have entered the times of the last days, the appointed time of God. The return of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour to the nations is imminent. We need shake off sin, leave worldly desire and set our course to follow the Lamb. Like never before our nations need prophetic voices to declare the time is at hand. Men and women who understand the times and are not afraid to declare them.

Let The Book have the final say:

"Rev. 22:10 And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: *for the time is at hand.*

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, *behold, I come quickly*; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they *that do his commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."