

## **Time and Judgment**

**By David Pyles**

*Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing:  
and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.  
Because to every purpose there is time and judgment,  
therefore the misery of man is great upon him. – Eccl 8:5-6*

Solomon took a deep philosophical dive in this text. He claimed that much of the misery of man on the earth is owing to the fact that God has made every purpose to have both an aspect of time and an aspect of judgment. For every purpose, there is right and wrong or wise and foolish. This is the aspect of judgment. However, there is nearly always a delay between what is right and its reward and also between what is wrong and its retribution. Solomon was referring to this when he said that to every purpose there is an aspect of time. A wise man will discern both. The delay can vary from one thing to another. For example, there is a right way to plant turnip greens, and a man who does it can expect something to eat in only a few weeks. There is also a right way to plant an apple tree, but the man who does this must wait many years for the fruit. A man who robs a bank can expect retribution in a few hours or days. A man who smokes cigarettes may not endure consequences for several decades.

This delay is part of God's curse on the earth for sin. This is why it contributes to the misery of man. The world would be a very different place if evil were instantly punished and good were instantly rewarded. In that case, evil would seldom get past the first step, and all men, even otherwise evil ones, would be anxious to do good so as to secure their rewards.

This observation then led Solomon to another conclusion:

*For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this,  
that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the  
hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all  
that is before them. – Eccl 9:1*

When he said that the works of the righteous and wise are in the hand of God, his meaning was that the *reward* for such things is reserved in His hand to be distributed at a future time. God does not distribute this reward instantly. Because of this delay, a man cannot tell if God loves him or hates him on the basis of what is

immediately before his eyes. The fact that a man has just endured a car wreck does not mean that God hates him. The fact that a man has just won the lottery does not mean that God loves him. The previously mentioned delays leave man in a disconcerted state about this, thus furthering his misery. These delays can also lead man to insane ways of thinking. Hence, Solomon continued with:

*All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. – Eccl 9:2-3*

The meaning is that, for the time being, bad things can happen to both good and bad, and good things can also happen to both good and bad. This leads foolish men to the insane conclusion that it does not matter whether their lives are good or bad. Worse yet, it leads other men to the insane conclusion there is no God. Atheists almost invariably complain of the “problem of evil” when defending their position. Their argument is insane. They have been deceived by the delays between right and its reward and between wrong and its retribution.

The upshot of all this is that God has purposefully designed the world to where a man *must* have faith that good will be rewarded and evil will be punished. As Paul said:

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. – Heb 11:6*

God will not be pleased with a man who has no faith, and it is also true that a man who has no faith will not be pleased with God. To prevent himself from the insanity of others, Solomon resolved to commit himself to the following principle:

*Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are*

*as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.* – Eccl  
8:12-13

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