**A Time to Weep, A Time to Rejoice**

The writer of Ecclesiastes penned, *“There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event* (lit. *delight*) *under heaven… A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance,”* 3:1,4. I don’t know where **you** are on this *time continuum,* but there has been, and likely will continue to be, both *weeping* and *mourning* as well as *laughing* and *dancing* (and plenty of *stones thrown* and *tearing apart,* cf. vv.5,7) recently, with surely more of the same to come.

Jeremiah was known as “the weeping prophet” for good reason, Jer.1:13-19! But the apostle Paul wrote what is considered “the book of Joy,” Philippians. One wept for the sins of his people and their predicted trials, sufferings, and captivity. The other urged his readers to *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”* Phil.4:4.

**Scan some passages with me while I summarize them:**

1Kings 11:1-13; Solomon’s *foreign* wives turned his heart away from God to idolatry, and God promises to *tear the kingdom from him* and *give it to his servant.*

1Kings 12:1-11; Rehoboam *forsook the counsel of the elders* in favor of that from *the young men who grew up with him* concerning *heavy taxation* (rather than *reduction of it*).

1Kings 12: 12-20; When *all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them* regarding this matter, they *revolted* and *seceded* from the nation. The ten tribes in the north became *Israel* under *Jeroboam,* and the two tribes in the south became *Judah* remained under Rehoboam’s control.

1Kings 12:21-24; Rehoboam prepared *to fight against the house of Israel to restore the kingdom,* but God sent him word through *Shemaiah* not to *fight against his relatives.*

1Kings 12:25-33; Jeroboam *set up idolatrous alternate places of worship* at *Bethel* and *Dan,* fearing that if Israel *returned to Jerusalem* (the place designated for all Jewish males to worship three times a year) their *hearts would return to Rehoboam* under the guise of *convenience.*  Jeroboam also *appointed priest from among the people who were not of the sons of Levi* (as prescribed by law).

2Chron.11:13-16; The *Levites* and *those from all the tribes of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the Lord God* migrated southward and *strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam.*  This created a *spiritual vacuum* in Israel that would ultimately hasten their *apostasy* and *destruction.*

2Kings 18:9-12; Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, *came up against Samaria* (the capital of Israel) and besieged it for *three years. At the end of three years they* (Shalmaneser had died previously and Sargon II became king of Assyria) *captured Samaria* and *carried away Israel into exile to Assyria* because *“they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded; they would neither listen, nor do it,”* vv.11-12. **This was the end of Israel (the northern ten tribes).**  Those who were *undesirable as captives,* and were thus *left behind,* intermarried with the peoples brought in to settle the vacated land and became the *Samaritans,* vv.24-41; cf. John 4:9; 8:48.

**But the kingdom of Judah continued…**

Throughout the northern kingdom of Israel’s history, there had only been one king who was remotely inclined toward God and righteous (Jehu), but even he was at best a mixture of *good* and *evil.*

In the southern kingdom of Judah, however, there were a few kings (4 of 19) who endeavored for the most part to rid the nation of idolatry and serve Jehovah (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah). There were also some (again, 4 of 19) who were a spiritual mixture of good and bad (Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham). The rest (12 of 19) however, were evil- some of them abhorrently so, cf. 2Kings 21:1-9,16,19-22; *e.g.*

2Kings 23:36 – 25:12; Eventually, the Lord had enough. He sent Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, who from 605 to 586 B.C. took Judah captive through three separate deportations, leaving only *“some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowman,”* 25:12.

The Babylonian captivity lasted for 70 years, just as God predicted through the *weeping prophet* Jeremiah, Jer.25:11-12.

But throughout the Minor Prophets, predictions were included for a *remnant* to be spared and returned their homeland. These *‘glimmer of hope’* passages in otherwise predicted *gloom* and *calls for repentance* point to the coming Messiah, Jesus the Christ- the *Lamb of God* from Judah.

**Now, what does all of this have to do with us?** Quite a bit, actually (cf. Rom.15:4).

1. I don’t know if you’re *weeping/mourning* or *rejoicing/dancing* regarding the events of the last few daysthis morning, or which you will be doing in the next few days and weeks. But Eccl.3:1,4 said there would be *“an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event* (lit. *delight*) *under heaven…”*  However, Paul wrote to the Philippians *from prison* and to them as they faced persecution telling them to *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice! Let your forbearing spirit be know to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made know to God,”* Phil.4:4-6. The *peace of God* is then promised to *“guard your hearts and minds in Christ,”* v.7; and they were told to *let their minds dwell* on things that were *true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent,* and *worthy of praise,* v.8. So, are you: *rejoicing; anxious for nothing;* with *thanksgiving letting your requests be made known to God;* enjoying *the peace of God;* and *letting your mind dwell on* “good” things?
2. Acts 10:35 says (in part) that *“in every nation the man who fears God and does what is right, is welcome to Him.”* And in Rev.3:4 the *“few people in Sardis”* who had *“not soiled their garments”* were promised to *“walk with Me* (the Lord) *in white; for they are worthy.”* **You can only control you.** Stop trying to control others, let alone the nation. I understand you’re concerned “for our nation,” but it is NOT the same as “God’s people,” and this is NOT your home, cf.Phil.3:20; 1:27-30.
3. Whatever happens to this country is in God’s hands and His power to control, and even the pagan Nebuchadnezzar came to realize it, with God’s help of course, Dan.4:25b,34-35! Judah had some *good kings* and some *really bad kings.* Ultimately, God punished them for their **spiritual apostasy**. I don’t know what lies ahead for this country, but I do know that constantly *worrying, obsessing,* and *ranting* over it will distract you from *fearing God* and *keeping His commandments,* as well as stealing your *joy* and depriving you of the *“peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,”* Phil.4:4,7.
4. So: **stop obsessing; keep praying; and busy yourself with the business of the King, Matt.6:33-34!**  Everything else is *above your pay grade!*