

New Year Covenant

Time

^ Eccl
3:1-11

New Year - New You?

Diets

Good intentions

I: Swimming

Joining Fitness Club

Dry January

However - do we really become new

Or is it still the same old you?

Eccl 3

Funerals

Time to born and time to die

Time to weep and time to laugh

Time to mourn and time to dance

World situation

time to kill, time to heal

time for war and time for peace

Or relationships?

Time to embrace, refrain from embracing

time to keep silence or to speak

time to love and to hate

Or even our relationship with God?

a time to seek and time to loose

a time to plant and time to reap

a time to break and time to build up

Eccl recognises seasons

we can't do all things all the time

Sometimes there is more distructions

Other times there is more healing

And he recognizes the meaningless of it

why build when it gets destroyed

why destroy when it gets rebuild

why love when hate is the result

or why hate when love is the response?

What do we gain from all this effort?

God has given is things to keep busy with and time to do it in?

Why then, he asks, has he given us a

sense of past and future

even though we cannot understand what God is doing

One example

The Book Oracle - Jonthan Kahn

Prep for Israel trip / holiday

Demonstrates that God restores Israel according to biblical prophecies

Maybe sometimes far fetched

But also shows that God has control over time and world events

And that we do not see everything that God sees or does

Another example

Jesus is described in Hebrews as the heavenly priest

Not as an earthly priest

functioning in an earthly tabernacle / tent

Which Moses had to construct using God's precise specifications

But is still a sketch and a shadow of the heavenly tabernacle

^ v5

Where Jesus is being priest

Old and New Covenant

^ Hebrews
8

So God created an early Covenant - the Old Covenant

^ Also a sketch and a shadow of the heavenly covenant

The people of Israel will obey God using the Law

and if they sinned - they make sacrifices to atone for those sins

But that did not work - as the people broke the old covenant

The did not obey

Are atone properly

In their hearts

Only for form

Not for real change of lives

Hence the New Covenant - The Heavenly Covenant

^ Presided over by the Heavenly Priest - Jesus Christ

Paraphrasing Jer 31:31-34

^ Heb

8:8-12

This covenant God will write on peoples minds and hearts

"I will be their God and they will be my people"

This covenant is completed in the gift of the Holy Spirit

Who sanctifies us - makes more as Jesus

as he writes God's law on our hearts

As soon as we commit to Christ

Repent and believe

Jesus forgives

And their sins are atoned for by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross

^ v12

And restores and returns

But even this New Covenant is under pressure

As the world and Satan do not accept this covenant

And want to do everything in their power to stop us participating in this covenant

And steal our salvation from us

The rest of the book of Hebrews speaks on this

exhorting the Helenistic Jewish people

To live according to the new Covenant

And so does Hebrews exhort us as well

But when Jesus return again

And is restored as the Messiah of the whole world

And Satan is routed

Then this new covenant is complete

Methodist Covenant Prayer

In the mean while - God still wants us to live according to his covenant

"I will be their God and they will be my people"

One expression of this is the Methodist Covenant prayer

Which you can see on the wall

Read it out loud

Not part of our tradition

but is a form of words that we can use to respond to God and Jesus

as He offers his covenant

to write his law on our hearts

To give him permission to do so

The words are easy but also profound

And they may also be costly

Put me to what you will / rank me with whom you will

Put me to suffering

Let me be laid aside for you

Be brought low for you

Let me have nothing

This is recognising that God grace is not cheap

All the things Jesus has done for us

On the cross and on the way to the cross

These words recognise that our response ought not to be cheap as well

Thank you Lord, and continue living as nothing has changed

But that we are also willing to pay our fair share

Grace is free

Forgiveness is free

But our response in gratitude should be to partake in the covenant - freely!

Not because you have to, but because you want to

You may not be ready for this (yet or ever)

But if you are, can you pray with me?

As a New Year Resolution

Or maybe as a real New Year - New You

Not superficial change

But real following of the one who created you

And the one who wants to make you as he intended you to be

Pray out loud

I am no longer my own but yours.

Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;

put me to doing, put me to suffering;

let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,

exalted for you, or brought low for you;

let me be full, let me be empty,

let me have all things, let me have nothing;

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things

to your pleasure and disposal.

And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

you are mine and I am yours.

And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.