

LAW THREE: WE REAP IN A DIFFERENT SEASON THAN WE SOW TEXT: ECCLESIASTES 3:1-11

Law One: We Reap Only What Has Been Sown

Law Two: We Reap the Same in Kind as We Have Sown

Law Three: We Reap in a Different Season Than We Sow

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There are 31 references to time in this section.

First, Solomon declares,

"To everything there is a season." A season refers to an appropriate period. You don't plant vegetables in the winter.

It's inappropriate. Birds don't build their nests and lay their eggs when the snow is falling. It's the wrong season.

This world in which we live works according to a plan.

A farmer knows that he must cooperate with nature if he wants to be successful.

In the same way, men must adhere to God's principles if they want their lives to prosper.

Additionally, Solomon declares that **to everything there is a time.**

Not only is there an appropriate period, but there is also an appointed moment.

"There is a time to be born..." When it is time for birth to commence, you can't slow it down or put it off.

The appointed moment has arrived. That, too, is according to God's design. In the normal course of events, babies are not born too soon, or too late. Crops mature and ripen according to God's schedule. Everything in our lives is governed by time.

Solomon observed that there is a time for sowing, and a time for reaping. **(Verse 2)** As we have already learned, there is **no reaping without sowing** and what we reap is determined by what we sow.

Today, we are going to see that we always reap later than we sow. This is what is sometimes so deceptive about life. If we do not see the immediate results of our actions, we may become discouraged and give up a good activity, such as soulwinning.

Or, we may think we got away with a bad choice or a sinful action – not realizing that having sown the seed of sin, we will reap the consequences at point in the future. God will not be mocked. Having sown, we will reap – but in a different season.

I. The Foundation of this Law

The creative purpose of God – **Genesis 8:22**

1. The seasons of life cannot be ignored.

God has ordained that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, and night and day will not cease to occur in their normal cycles if the earth remains.

2. This promise of God has both a positive and a negative impact upon our lives.

a. Positively, we know that God has a rewarding day to acknowledge the service we have done for Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

b. Negatively, we know that we will eventually have to **"pay"** for the choices we make. **It doesn't work to sow our wild oats and then pray for crop failure.**

Galatians 6:7

The "in due season" principle

1. The harvest never comes immediately.

a. The time between sowing and reaping will vary.

You can plant a kernel of corn and be eating ears of corn in a matter of weeks.

It takes years for a pecan to sprout, grow, and develop into a tree that produces more pecans.

b. This is what can make life seem so deceptive.

Psalm 73:12-17 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

¹³ Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

¹⁴ For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

The psalmist, Asaph, saw that the ungodly appeared to "prosper" and the godly seemed to suffer.

When he tried to reconcile this difference with the truth of a wise and just Creator, it was "too painful" for him – he couldn't make any sense to him.

It SEEMED as if the ungodly were able to sow the seeds of sin and reap the good life ... until Asaph "**understood their end.**" God had to remind Asaph that the season of reaping had not yet arrived for the ungodly.

2. In due season – at the appropriate, appointed time – men will reap that which they have sown, whether good or bad.

Deuteronomy 32:35 To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time...

b. **Psalm 145:15**

Psalm 145:15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season.

c. **Galatians 6:9 – And be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.**

d. **1 Peter 5:6 - Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.**

II. Considerations of this Law

We must not be deceived because the season of harvest is put off.

We are tempted to think that if consequences of sin do not come quickly, we have escaped God's laws and are free to continue to sin. **Ecclesiastes 8:11.**

1. We must remember that what is sown in one season is reaped in another.

No one has ever been hospitalized for lung cancer the day after he or she smoked their first cigarette.

A girl is not sitting in an abortion clinic or delivering a baby the morning after she has yielded her body outside the holy bonds of marriage.

No one ever went to jail for tax evasion the day they mailed a falsified tax return.

2. No harvest comes the moment the seed is planted. It must wait for God's appointed time.

a. God is longsuffering towards sinners and doesn't always punish our sins immediately.

b. However, it is a mistake to look upon God's mercy as though it were ignorance.

We must not be discouraged because the season of harvest is delayed.

1. We live in a day of instant gratification.

a. We have instant tea, quick oats, Minute-Brand rice, microwave popcorn, and "no payments for six months" credit purchases.

b. We can cross town in a few minutes, cross the state in a few hours, and circle the world in just a couple of days.

c. We watch deep personal conflicts resolved in one-hour dramas.

2. We tend to be an impatient people who want to see the results of our efforts immediately.

a. A bus route, a Sunday school class, or a church is not built over night.

b. Strong marriages take a long-term commitment to build.

c. It takes years of faithful instruction to train our children and build godly character into their lives.

All through life, we are confronted with this truth: we reap in a different season than we sow.

We must not allow ourselves to become discouraged and quit while waiting to see the results of our labor.

III. Applications of this Law

We must sow with patience.

**James 5:7-8 reminds us,
Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.**

We must wait with patience for the Lord to reward our service.

1. Because of His goodness – **Psalm 27:13-14**
2. Because of His justice – **Proverbs 20:22**
3. Because of His faithfulness – **Isaiah 40:27-31**
 - a. He never becomes discouraged;
He never grows weary of doing good.
 - b. In the weakness of our humanity,
He gracefully demonstrates His power
and imparts His strength.

Many missionaries have faithfully spread the seed of God's Word and yet had to wait long periods before the season of reaping.

William Carey labored 7 years before the first Hindu convert was brought to Christ in India.

Adoniram Judson (Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) was an American Baptist missionary, lexicographer, and Bible translator to Burma.) also toiled 7 years before his witness was rewarded with a soul won in Burma (Asia).

In western Africa, it took 14 years to win the first soul to Christ. In New Zealand, it took 9 years; and in Tahiti, it was 16 years before the first harvest of souls began.

However, in each case, in due season, souls were won and churches were established.

(Gal 6:9 KJV) And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

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