**It Is Not For You to Know Times or Seasons**

(by Kent Heaton)

 The inquisitive mind of man has always sought to know what lay just beyond the horizon of the unknown. Our desire to search out the outer limits has led man to find great discoveries. From the early days of the tower of Babel (**Genesis 11:1-9**) man went into the vast regions of the world (**Genesis 10:25**, **32**; **1 Chronicles 1:19**). Our country was created from those who dared cross the unknown. Great men of science led mankind to set foot upon the moon and send machines far into the outer reaches of our universe. Medicine has kept in check many diseases through the continual pursuit of wanting to solve the riddles of the human body.

 It is from this pursuit of knowledge that man is able to find God. Paul said on Mars hill, **“*So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us*”** (**Acts 17:27**). All men can find God if they look for Him. **“*His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*”** (**Romans 1:20**).

 Finding God has its limitations though. Jehovah has revealed Himself through natural revelation and through the special revelation of His Word (**Psalm 19**). Peter wrote that the Lord by **“*His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue*”** (**2 Peter 1:3**). Yet man can only go so far in this pursuit of knowledge. God has placed a limitation on what man can and will know (**Acts 17:26**).

 **“*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law*”** (**Deuteronomy 29:29**). All that we can know is revealed to us through the word of God. Beyond those words there is no knowledge. No one can stand in the counsel of God and know His mind (**Jeremiah 23:18**).

 The early disciples asked Jesus, **“*Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?*”** and He said to them, ***“It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority”***(**Acts 1:6-7**). They wanted to know but it was not to be revealed to them. In the discourse Jesus had with Peter in **John 21** the Lord described the persecution Peter would face. Peter then asked the Lord what would happen to John. The answer Peter received was basically to let God take care of those matters; it was not any of his business to know (**John 21:20-23**).

 Do you hear men today talking about the coming of the Lord and how we are living in the *“end times”*? Prognosticators declare the Lord is near and the world is coming to an end during our life time. Whether or not the Lord is coming today, tomorrow or next week is not relevant to man because he does not know. ***“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of Heaven, but My Father only”***(**Matthew 24:36**). Every generation is scared into believing the Lord is coming because the signs point to the imminent return. One generation will be right (because He is coming – **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**) but not because they knew He was coming.

 The times of seasons belong to God and not to man. ***“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world”*** (**1 John 4:1**).

**Establishment**

(by Gary Henry)

A skyscraper must be able to bend or flex slightly with the wind, but it can’t do that if it’s not established on a solid foundation. In a similar way, we must be established as human beings. To “establish” a thing means to make it firm or secure. So to enjoy the benefits of establishment, we must be stable. Consider three areas where stability is especially important.

 **Principles**. Our principles are our beliefs about what is real, and about what kind of conduct people ought to engage in. These convictions determine every other thing about us, so it should go without saying that we need to be careful. If we haven’t established what our convictions are, then we’re at the mercy of every wind that blows.

**Character**. It takes a while for us to finally figure out what kind of character we really want to have as mature adults, but eventually, we need to have an established character. That doesn’t mean we can’t grow or change, but it does mean that we know who we are and that the character that we’ve chosen is stable, rather than wishy-washy.

**Conduct**. Based on the establishment of our principles and our character, we then need to erect a consistent pattern of behavior. People around us need to be able to count on some predictability in our manner of living. Our lifestyle needs to be one that is solidly built.

All three of the above are important, but of the three, our principles are more basic than our character, and our character is more basic than our conduct. In other words, our character is an outgrowth of our principles, and our conduct is an outgrowth of our character. Too often, we try to reverse these: we try to establish our conduct without having established our character, and we try to establish our character without having established our principles. But that procedure never works, at least in the long run. Life’s great challenge, then, is first to find out what the valid, true-north principles are. When we discover these and establish ourselves upon them, both our character and our conduct will stand firm. And out of them, good things will grow.

***“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.”*** **2 Peter 3:18**