

Essay: Seeds and Seasons (Part One)

One of the tragedies of modern life is how far removed we are from the splendor and intricacies of the natural world. God's physical creation, a traditional source of insight, is steadily disappearing—if not in actuality, then at least in terms of accessibility. Those who live in cities cannot even see the stars at night, a reminder of our place in the vast creation now denied by light pollution. It is no wonder that people lose track of who they really are and what their lives are really about.

For many, the seasons of the year have little practical application beyond wearing different clothes, setting the thermostat differently, or watching other television shows. For most of us, gone are the days when spring meant tilling the earth and planting seed, and autumn no longer means full days of harvesting the fruit of the ground, eating an abundance of fresh food, and preparing and storing away for winter. We rarely view time over the long range but live in the immediate and pressing now.

However, the seasons are an integral part of God's creation and play a foundational role in helping us understand what [God](#) is working out.

Just as the cycle of seasons repeats every year, so we also rehearse the plan of God in the annual holy days each year. The spiritual growth cycle begins with the

spring holy days. Then comes the small, early harvest of Pentecost, followed by the late harvest of the Feast of Tabernacles, and at the very end of that late harvest is the Eighth Day. Also in the early autumn, we keep the Feast of Trumpets, foreshadowing the [return of Jesus Christ](#), and the Day of Atonement, reflecting on the work of [Jesus Christ](#) in dealing with human [sin](#).

By His appointed times, God intends us to mark the passing of the seasons, the waxing and waning of the moon, and the week's cycle by the [Sabbath](#) because these cycles demonstrate how He operates. When we look at matters cyclically, we begin to see things more in line with God's creation—both physical and spiritual.

In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon poetically informs us that there is a season for everything, but each activity is not appropriate for every circumstance. There is a time to break things down so that better things can be built. There are appropriate times to plant and appropriate times to harvest. A farmer does not spend all year planting seed, nor does he spend all year harvesting. Because of the laws God has put into effect, such activities are generally appropriate only at certain seasons of the year.

Even so, the farmer's overall purpose is the same: He is still committed to feeding his family and selling his crops at the market. But in this example, the conditions

and the seasons dictate when he plants and when he gathers. The farmer works within the cycle of the seasons to accomplish his purpose.

These general principles apply to the purpose that God is working out. It does not mean that God is limited or that conditions dictate to Him, but when we look into the plan of God in [the holy days](#), we see Him using the same pattern. There is a time when God plants and another time when He harvests.

However, it is essential that we first understand exactly what God is planting and intends to harvest. Notice [John 6:28-29](#): "Then [those who followed Him] said to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'"

This far-reaching statement summarizes what God is doing, and it also instructs us about what *we should be doing*. It hints at what seeds God is planting, as well as what crop He seeks to harvest.

But, to begin to grasp the fullness of God's work, we need to tie the principle of belief in this verse with what is said in [John 1:12-13](#): "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right [power, privilege, authority] to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This verse shows that belief in Jesus Christ means a great deal more than just acknowledging the fact that He

lived or that He [died for our sins](#). It means believing that, just as He became the firstborn of God, others will also experience a similar process of spiritual birth into the [Kingdom of God](#).

This spiritual process is what God is undertaking; this is His work. He is promoting belief in His firstborn Son, certainly, but He is also encouraging [faith](#) in the process that Jesus went through so that the rest of humanity can follow in His footsteps. When an individual has that belief, it will be evident. If a person truly believes that eternal life and glory in God's Kingdom is his destination, he will conduct his life in a manner that befits the title "son of God." Being a "son of God" refers not only to parentage, but it also means "to have the same characteristics as" or "to resemble." The Son resembled the Father because His character was exactly the same.

What is God planting? He is planting seeds of belief and spiritual truth. He is imparting understanding that will enable and empower those who receive that truth to succeed in the same process that Jesus Christ completed (see [Hebrews 2:10-15](#); [I Peter 2:20-23](#); [I John 2:6](#); 2:28-3:3; 4:17). This process also answers the question of what crop God is harvesting: He is gathering children in His image.

Throughout this process, God employs the same pattern. He prepares the soil by disturbing it and turning it over so the seed has a place to take root. God typically

scatters the seed, His truth, through His human servants. He waters the seed by supplying the Holy Spirit. When the seed begins to grow, He tends to it personally, along with His ordained human servants.

At this point, the church enters the picture. The work of the church should be the same as the work of God—to promote belief. The church must publish truth and encourage belief, especially to those already called and to [the world](#) to a lesser degree. The seed must have a conducive environment to grow to maturity, and that environment is a believing, truth-preaching church.

Christ said in [John 6:29](#) that the work of God is that men *believe*—but He does not say that everyone will believe all at the same time! The timing of this process is so important, but it is one of the things that most professing Christians get wrong. But through understanding the holy days, we know that there is a harvest of the firstfruits, then a larger harvest of those who are alive during the Millennium, and finally, a vast harvest after the Second Resurrection.

In Part Two, we will see more detail about God's work in preparing His seed for harvest.

- David C. Grabbe