

Ecclesiastes 3

A Time for Everything

- 1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
- 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
- 3 a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- 5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- 7 a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- 8 a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
- 9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth?
- 10 ¶ I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.
- 11 He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.
- 12 I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.
- 13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God.
- 14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.
- 15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln's two addresses, in 1861 and 1865, are regarded as the best not just among inaugural addresses but in the history of American oratory.

In the first address, Lincoln, speaking to an assembled throng in front of the East Portico of the Capitol, tried to prepare the North for war.

"The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as they surely will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Four years later, before a crowd that historians believe included John Wilkes Booth, who would assassinate the president a month later, Lincoln delivered a short but remarkable address, asserting that the 600,000 killed in the Civil War were God's punishment to the nation for the sin of slavery.

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

Lincoln's second inaugural address "is probably the best inaugural address ever delivered because of its great explanation of why we had the Civil War -- God's punishment for slavery," Ryan said.

"It had an Old Testament language and cadence," said Chris Matthews, The Chronicle's national columnist and onetime speechwriter for President Jimmy Carter. "The level of the language was so eloquent, so sublime."