

Turn! Turn! Turn!

(The Byrds)

[Chorus]
To Everything (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
There is a season (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
And a time to every purpose,
under Heaven

[Verse 1]
A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep

[Chorus]
To Everything (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
There is a season (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
And a time to every purpose,
under Heaven

[Verse 2]
A time to build up, a time to
break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones, a
time to gather stones together

[Chorus]
To Everything (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
There is a season (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
And a time to every purpose,
under Heaven

[Verse 3]
A time of love, a time of hate
A time of war, a time of peace
A time you may embrace, a time
to refrain from embracing

[Chorus]
To Everything (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
There is a season (Turn, Turn,
Turn)
And a time to every purpose,
under Heaven

[Verse 4]
A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rend, a time to sew
A time for love, a time for hate
A time for peace, I swear it's not
too late

"Turn! Turn! Turn!", sometimes known as "Turn! Turn! Turn! (To Everything There Is a Season)", is a song written by Pete Seeger in the late 1950s. The lyrics, except for the title, which is repeated throughout the song, and the final two lines, are adapted word-for-word from the English version of the first eight verses of the third chapter of the biblical Book of Ecclesiastes. The song was originally released in 1962 as "To Everything There Is a Season" on folk group the Limelites' RCA album *Folk Matinee* and then some months later on Seeger's own *The Bitter and the Sweet*.

The song became an international hit in late 1965 when it was adapted by the American folk rock group the Byrds. The single entered the record chart at number 80 on October 23, 1965, before reaching number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart on December 4, 1965. In Canada, it reached number three on Nov. 29, 1965, and peaked at number 26 on the UK Singles Chart.

The lyrics are taken almost verbatim from the book of Ecclesiastes, as found in the King James Version (1611) of the Bible (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8), though the sequence of the words was rearranged for the song. Ecclesiastes is traditionally ascribed to King Solomon who would have written it in the 10th century BC, but believed by a significant group of biblical scholars to date much later, up to the third century BC.

The Biblical text posits there being a time and place for all things: laughter and sorrow, healing and killing, war and peace, and so on. The lines are open to myriad interpretations, but Seeger's song presents them as a plea for world peace because of the closing line: "a time for peace, I swear it's not too late." This line and the title phrase "Turn! Turn! Turn!" are the only parts of the lyric written by Seeger himself.

The song is notable for being one of a few instances in popular music in which a large portion of the Bible is set to music, other examples being the Melodians' "Rivers of Babylon", Sister Janet Mead's "The Lord's Prayer", U2's "40", Sinéad O'Connor's "Psalm 33" and Cliff Richard's "The Millennium Prayer".

"Turn! Turn! Turn!" was adapted by the Byrds using a folk rock arrangement. Columbia Records released it as a single on October 1, 1965, with the Gene Clark original composition "She Don't Care About Time" as the B-side. The song is included on the band's second album, *Turn! Turn! Turn!*, which was released on December 6, 1965. The Byrds' single is the most successful recorded version of the song, having reached number one on the US *Billboard* Hot 100 charts and number 26 on the UK Singles Chart. The book of Ecclesiastes was written between the 3rd and 10th centuries BC, thus "Turn! Turn! Turn!" is the number one pop hit with the oldest lyrics.

The song's plea for peace and tolerance struck a nerve with the American record buying public as the Vietnam War escalated. The single also solidified folk rock as a chart trend and, like the band's previous hits, continued the Byrds' successful mix of vocal harmony and jangly twelve-string Rickenbacker guitar playing. Pete Seeger expressed his approval of the Byrds' rendering of the song.