



[Ecclesiastes 9:11](#)

(11) I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

King James Version

What does Solomon mean? How could the fastest runner not win the race? How could the strongest man not be victorious in battle? Is all human activity subject to fate?

Time in this verse means "opportunity," and *chance* suggests "occurrence" or "incident." We all have the opportunity to make something of our lives, but eventually, death occurs to us all. Moffatt translates this phrase as "death and misfortune happen to all." [Ecclesiastes 2:14](#) reinforces this, "The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. Yet I myself perceived also that the same event happens to them all." Albert Barnes notes, "[*Event*] does not mean chance, independent of the ordering of Divine Providence: the Gentile notion of 'mere chance,' or 'blind fate' is never once contemplated by the writer of this book." Good or bad, we will all have the same fate, death, because we have all sinned ([Romans 6:23](#)).

A writer once stated in a magazine article, "Life is a lottery, not a chess game." We can only assume that he meant that we ultimately have no control over our lives and the events surrounding us. While this might be true to an extent, in the strictest sense of [God's sovereignty](#), he is well off the mark. We always have the ability to rebel against [God](#), to say "No," and walk away from our calling. God is always in charge, but we do have free moral agency.

The dictionary defines *chance* as "the abstract nature or quality shared by unexpected, random, or unpredictable events; luck; the likelihood of occurrence of an event." Chance suggests total absence of design or predictability. It essentially leaves God out of the picture. While it does rain on the "just and the unjust," as [Christ](#) says in [Matthew 5:45](#),

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Ecclesiastes 9:11 (<http://www.theberean.org>) and trials affect us all, it is not luck or chance that governs our lives.

On a recent Fourth of July, my family and I went to Stone Mountain Park, outside Atlanta, Georgia, for the laser and fireworks show. We usually go every year, and it rains on us just about every year. Sure enough, after three trips back to the parking lot, lugging blankets, coolers, chairs, and so on to the lawn in front of the mountain and putting them in place, we had a sudden shower. We huddled under the tarp of the man next to us and waited it out. A lot of folks packed up and went home. True, our blankets were soggy, my newspaper and novel were soaked, our hair looked weird, but we had a great time. We all got rained on. That was chance, an unexpected and random event.

Luck is defined as "the fortuitous happening of fortune or adverse events." Being caught in a rain shower could be called bad luck, although a possibility of showers was in the forecast. But was it an adverse event? That depends on one's outlook. Was God involved? Sure, He was. There was lightning along with this rain, and we were sitting in an open field. He answered our prayers and kept the lightning away from us. Did He make it rain on us? Probably not. It was a random event.

However, God was in control at all times. He protected and guided us. Had the lightning been on top of us, had I sat in the middle of Stone Mountain's large lawn holding a metal rod, and had I been struck and killed, would that have been bad luck or stupidity? The answer is obvious. Random events happen to us all, but luck does not control our lives.

We do not need a rabbit's foot in our pockets. It will not bring us luck. It did not bring the rabbit much luck, did it? We should not be crossing our fingers "for luck," which is pagan in origin anyway. Many times, in talking to someone in [the world](#), I find myself saying, "Good luck!" to him or her. I have determined to eradicate that phrase because, as we have seen, it is really not appropriate. Instead, we should say, "Do your best!" "I [hope](#) things go well!" or maybe, "*Vaya con dios!*"

— Mike Ford

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[Do You Feel Lucky?](#)

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