

Ecclesiastes 3

A Time for Everything

1 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:

2 a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,

3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,

4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,

5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,

7 a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,

8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

9 What does the worker gain from his toil? 10 I have seen the burden God has laid on men. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. 12 I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. 13 That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God. 14 I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him.

15 Whatever is has already been,
and what will be has been before;
and God will call the past to account. ^[a]

16 And I saw something else under the sun:
In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

17 I thought in my heart,
"God will bring to judgment
both the righteous and the wicked,
for there will be a time for every activity,
a time for every deed."

18 I also thought, "As for men, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. 19 Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath ^[b]; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. 20 All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. 21 Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal ^[c] goes down into the earth?"

22 So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?