

A Time for All Events in Life

v. 1-8

Ecc 3:1 There is an appointed time
for everything. And there is a time
for every event under heaven--

(2) A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. (3)

A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear 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 throw stones and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing. (6) A time to search and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep and a time to throw away. (7) A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; 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.

A Calvinist wrote, “In the light of God’s orchestration of human affairs, man’s efforts cannot change anything.”

But God has given us free choice -- the prodigal son (Lk 15.11-32)

We recognize the time and the we continue to labor, but we have no control over the events that bring about change in our lives.

Man is Ignorant of God's Timing

v. 9-11

Ecc 3:9 What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils? (10)

I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves. (11) He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

We are as workers in the vineyard
(Mt 20.1-16), and our job is to
continue in our labor expecting the
reward awaiting us beyond this life.

Tit 1:2 in the hope of eternal life,
which God, who cannot lie,
promised long ages ago,

Enjoy Life in the Present

Ecc 3:12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; (13) moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor--it is the gift of God.

God's Sovereignty

v. 14-15

Ecc 3:14 I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him. (15) That which is has been already and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by.

Jas 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." (14) Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. (15) Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

The Problem of Injustice and Oppression

v. 16-22

Ecc 3:16-17 Furthermore, I have seen under the sun that in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness. (17) I said to myself, "God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man," for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.

2Co 5:10 For we must all appear
before the judgment seat of Christ,
so that each one may be
recompensed for his deeds in the
body, according to what he has
done, whether good or bad.

Ecc 3:18 I said to myself concerning the sons of men,
"God has surely tested them in order for them to see
that they are but beasts." (19) For the fate of the
sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one
dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same
breath and there is no advantage for man over beast,
for all is vanity.

“The point would be that God allows human injustice
to exist in the world in order to make it clear to
mankind that they are essentially no better than the
beasts” -- without God

Rev 9:20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; (21) and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

(20) All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.

(21) Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?

(22) I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities [work – NET online], for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?

Luk 12:16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. (17) "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' (18) "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19) 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" (20) "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' (21) "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Evil Oppression on Earth

v. 1-3

Ecc 4:1-3 Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them; and on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort them. (2) So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living. (3) But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

Who comes to the rescue of those under dictatorships? Before the establishment of Christianity, no one!

In 1785, William Wilberforce underwent a conversion experience and became an evangelical Christian, which resulted in major changes to his lifestyle and a lifelong concern for reform. In 1787, he was persuaded to take on the cause of abolition, and he soon became one of the leading English abolitionists. He headed the parliamentary campaign against the British slave trade for twenty-six years until the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807.

Labor Motivated by Envy v. 4-6

(4) Then I considered all the skillful work that is done: Surely it is nothing more than competition between one person and another.

(6) Better is one handful with some rest than two hands full of toil and chasing the wind.

Labor Motivated by Greed

v. 7-8

Ecc 4:8 There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches and he never asked, "And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?" This too is vanity and it is a grievous task.

Labor is Beneficial When Its Rewards Are Shared

v. 9-12

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. (10) For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. (11) Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? (12) And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart

Labor Motivated by Prestige- Seeking

v. 13-16

Ecc 4:13-16 A poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction. (14) For he has come out of prison [from the house of bonds] to become king, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.

(15) I have seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces him. (16) There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them, and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him, for this too is vanity and striving after wind.

Earthly kingdoms rise and fall on the popularity of a leader, and one who does not please the people will be replaced with great joy only to be replaced by another who gives greater gifts for the time.