

Ecclesiastes 3

New King James Version (NKJV)

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Everything Has Its Time

1 To everything there is a season,

A time for every purpose under heaven:

2 A time to be born,

And a time to die;

A time to plant,

And a time to pluck what 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;

A time to embrace,

And a time to refrain from embracing;

6 A time to gain,

And a time to lose;

A time to keep,

And a time to throw away;

7 A time to tear,

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.

The God-Given Task

9 What profit has the worker from that in which he labors?
10 I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

12 I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, 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 whatever God does,
It shall be forever.
Nothing can be added to it,
And nothing taken from it.
God does it, that men should fear before Him.

15 That which is has already been,
And what is to be has already been;
And God requires an account of what is past.

Injustice Seems to Prevail

16 Moreover I saw under the sun:

In the place of judgment,
Wickedness was there;

And in the place of righteousness,
Iniquity was there.

17 I said in my heart,

“ God shall judge the righteous and the wicked,
For there is a time there for every purpose and for every
work.”

18 I said in my heart, “Concerning the condition of the
sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they
themselves are like animals.” 19 For what happens to the
sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls
them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have
one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is
vanity. 20 All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all
return to dust. 21 Who knows the spirit of the sons of men,
which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which
goes down to the earth?[a] 22 So I perceived that nothing is
better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for
that is his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will
happen after him?

“ As it happens to the fool,
It also happens to me,
And why was I then more wise?”
Then I said in my heart,

“ This also is vanity.”

16 For there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever,

Since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come. And how does a wise man die?

As the fool!

17 Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.

18 Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity. 20 Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. 21 For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. 22 For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? 23 For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

24 Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. 25 For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I?[b] 26 For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of

gathering and collecting, that he may give to him who is good before God. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.