

## Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

August 1, 2021

Ecclesiastes 3

God's Time

**Situational Context:** In his pursuit of the ultimate meaning in life for a person, the teacher has begun to in his journal, ponder the various mysteries in life. His frustration is over the brevity of life, so he looks at his life and wonders what's the use, everything he has accomplished is temporary. Why bust your energies only to have them deflect to someone who comes after him? His question revolves around, "what's the point?" Wwhen we come to this chapter he has already tried out wisdom in itself and then mover to pleasure and self indulgence. He has not yet realized that he is responsible for the use of his life as a whole.

**Lesson Theme: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** Every person has been given a set amount of time to use for living. The times and seasons in life have been providentially set. The boundaries of those times are unknown to him. There fore he must be able to discern the time that has come upon him so as to realize the moment for that season. The word for time here is not the word for chronological time but appointed time or season.

**1. Appointments: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:**

<sup>2</sup> a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

<sup>3</sup> a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

<sup>4</sup> a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

<sup>5</sup> a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

<sup>6</sup> a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

<sup>7</sup> a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

<sup>8</sup> a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

**Interpretation:** The truly wise know that all their "times" are in God's hand and that there is an appropriate time for every human activity. Humans have little or no

control over times and changes. The eternal God sovereignly determines all of life's activities.

### **Supporting Texts:**

**Psalm 31:15 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!

**Ecclesiastes 3:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.

**Luke 12:56 (ESV)** <sup>56</sup> You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

**John 7:6 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.

**Ephesians 5:15-16 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

### **Discussion Starters:**

**What value is there in discerning the seasons if we cannot change them?**

**What would good stewardship of a season look like?**

**What wise adjustments in life should we make in response?**

**2. Live Life: Ecclesiastes 3:9-13 (ESV)** <sup>9</sup> What gain has the worker from his toil?

<sup>10</sup> I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. <sup>11</sup> He has made everything beautiful in its time. **Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.** <sup>12</sup> **I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live;** <sup>13</sup> also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

**Interpretation:** God's beautiful but tantalizing world is too big for us, yet its satisfactions are too small. Since we were made for "eternity" the things of time

cannot fully and permanently satisfy. This is a prequel to the book's conclusion. God's people find meaning in life when they cheerfully accept it from the hand of God. This is the Hebrew term translated eternity from the beginning to the end." The heart knows that history is not meaningless but is frustrated in its efforts to discern the pattern of events.

### **Supporting Texts:**

**Romans 11:33 (ESV)** <sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

**Ecclesiastes 8:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> then I saw all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out.

### **Discussion Starters:**

**How should the truth of verse 11 effect our focus?**

**What is the difference between activity that is temporary and activity that yields eternal results?**

**How can we know?**

**Do our lives under the sun matter?**

**How does faith in Christ give ultimate meaning in the seasons of life?**

**3. God Judges: Ecclesiastes 3:14-15 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, **so that people fear before him.** <sup>15</sup> That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away.

**Interpretation:** The term means to give God the honor corresponding to what and who He is. God the Judge is in view.

### **Supporting Texts:**

**Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

**Luke 5:8 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

**Revelation 1:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last,

### **Discussion Starters:**

**How does this verse impact our view? Isaiah 46:10 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’

**What does verse 15 guarantee?**

**Evaluate this thought, time is the opportunity we have in life to know God.**