

It's About Time!
(Ecclesiastes 3)

“Time”

- Thirty-one times in Ecclesiastes 3.
- Eight more times in rest of Ecclesiastes.

I. It's About Time, 1-15

Fourteen pairs of opposites (1-8)

+Born ▪ -*die*

+Plant ▪ -*pluck*

-*Kill* ▪ +heal

-*Break down* ▪ +build up

-*Weep* ▪ +laugh

-*Mourn* ▪ +dance

-*Cast away stones* ▪ +gather

+Embrace ▪ -*refrain...*

+Gain ▪ -*lose*

+Keep ▪ -*throw away*

-*Tear* ▪ +sew

-*Keep silence* ▪ +speak

+Love ▪ -*hate*

-*War* ▪ +peace

Application (1-8)

- Do not depend on chance or fate; God controls time, 17. Acts 17:26-27

“The times they are a changing”

“The more things change, the more they stay the same”

- Inventions change, but “people are going to be people.”

9 repeats question of 1:3

- Some things are beyond our control.
 - Birthday
 - Death
 - We are not self-sufficient
- Ps.31:15

We desire gain (6); we do not always find it.

10 echoes 1:13

- God is not subject to time; He is in control.
- Dn.2:21.
- Ec.3:1-8 = God's appointed times.

11: God does not explain everything

God does not put everything under our control. Gn.3 – Ro.8:18-20.

Keeps us humble and dependent.

- Time is our opportunity. Ga.6:10.
- Time is limited. Jn.9:4. Ep.5:16; Col.4:5.
- God made everything beautiful... Gn.1:31
- God put eternity in hearts (sense that life continues beyond the grave).
 - Animals have no such understanding.

12: Be content

- Rejoice: life is God's gift to us.
 - "*I know*" (12, 14): from God
 - "*I have seen*" (10, 16, 22): observation
- Prov.1:7
- "Do good": practice a happy life; enjoy good

13-15 . . .

13: be humble. Earthly blessings are God's gift, 2:24.

14: fear God (be in awe). He is sovereign.

“There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man that cannot be filled by any created being, but by God alone made known through Jesus Christ” – Blaise Pascal

15: live in view of judgment.

... Previews 12:13-14.

I. It's About Time

II. Injustice And
Judgment, 16-22

16: God is in control (1-15)

- Why does injustice exist?
 - “I saw” – observation
 - “Under the sun” – setting
- Wickedness and iniquity replace judgment and righteousness.

17: future judgment answers present injustice

- Injustice teaches us that God will judge (8:11).

“If it were not for injustice, men would not know justice” – Heraclitus

- Even unreligious people see it.
- There is a time for every purpose and work.

18-21

- God uses injustices to show that, without Him, men are like animals.
- “This is a test”
- Psalm 32:9

19-20

- We are like animals in the way we die.
 - Death is the great leveler.
 - Gn.3:19, gods?
 - Common origin (dust)
 - Common destiny (grave; dust...to dust)

21

- We are like animals in the way we view death
 - “...which...which...”
 - Distinguishes destiny of man / animal
- Most live as if there is no difference...
 - Ps.49, alike in death, distinct in destiny
 - Ps.73, the problem of injustice
 - Prov.7:22-23, the problem of morals
 - Jude 10, willful ignorance

22, summary

- Remedy to life's riddle: live on God's goodness and promises . . .
 - even when He gives no explanations.

People appear as a giant ant-hill like ants to be crushed. God's word corrects this appearance.

“As you desire, after death, a better state than that of beasts, see to it, then, that in life you distinguish yourself from the beasts by a reasonable, godly demeanor” – Starke

Concluding thoughts (1)

“I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it’s not the answer”

Concluding thoughts (2)

“Only the moment that we live in life, is our possession. Every hour lived sinks irrevocably into the sea of the past: the future is uncertain: therefore is he a fool who lets the present slip by unused, wastes it in vain amusement, or grieves with useless lamentations” – Wohlfarth

