**"Everything in its Time"**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-15**

 ***Overview***

In 1965 the British band The Byrds released a recording of a song entitled “Turn! Turn! Turn!”. The song was written by Pete Seeger and became the number one song at the top of the US Music charts within about two months.



The song’s lyrics are primarily from a portion of the passage we are studying today (King James Version). The only non-Biblical words in the song are the title and the closing line which is... ”a time for peace, I swear it’s not too late.”

Released during the escalation of the Vietnam War, the song quickly became a call for world peace. However the true meaning of the Biblical words can only be attained by considering human history in the light of God’s plan.

 ***Getting Started*** *All In Its Season*



1. What is your favorite season of the year? What makes it your favorite?

2. Has your perception of time changed at all over the past several weeks? Explain.

3. Have you ever experienced something surprising that was initially frustrating but in hindsight you recognized as timely (and maybe even better than your own plan of events)?

 ***The Text***

There is a time for everything,



 and a season for every activity under the heavens:

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

 a time to plant and a time to uproot,

 3a time to kill and a time to heal,

 a time to tear down and a time to build,

 4a time to weep and a time to laugh,

 a time to mourn and a time to dance,

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

 a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

 6a time to search and a time to give up,

 a time to keep and a time to throw away,

 7a time to tear and a time to mend,

 a time to be silent and a time to speak,

 8a time to love and a time to hate,

 a time for war and a time for peace.

9What do workers gain from their toil? 10I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. 11He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. 12I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. 13That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. 14I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

15Whatever is has already been,

and what will be has been before;

and God will call the past to account. Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 (NIV)

 ***The Video (optional)*** “Everything in its Time” – Eccl. 3:1-15 - by Kyle Corbin, May 3/20

 (view at www.immanuelonline.ca)



 NOTES:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 ***Understanding***

 1. List the various spheres of activity referred to in vs. 2-8 (eg. “human relationships”). Do the pairs of items follow any kind of pattern or chronology? How many of these things are in our control? How do these things emphasize the writer’s meaning?



 2. In the OT “totality” is often expressed by using pairs (eg. “man and woman” (Ex. 36:6) means “everyone”, “land and sea” (Jon. 1:9) means “everywhere”). What is the writer trying to say about mankind with the pairs listed in these verses? What is he saying about God?

 3. What does the writer say in verses 9-11 that would be considered “positive”? What “negative” ideas are in these verses?

 4. In verse 11, we read that God has “set eternity in the human heart”. How does eternity factor into the faith and heritage of God’s people (Gen. 3:22, 9:16, 2 Sam. 7:12-13, Ps. 90:2, 111:5, Is. 35:10)?

 5. What are the good things listed in vs. 12-15 that we can enjoy? Why are they considered good in these verses but not in 2:1-8? What has changed?

 6. What are the three aspects of God’s work mentioned in verse 14? How do these things contribute to man’s “fear” of God? NB: To understand the author’s use of the word “fear”, check out 5:6-7, 12:13-14.

 7. What is the author anticipating in verse 15?

 ***Applying***

 1. What do you think is the overall sentiment expressed in vs. 1-8 (i.e. is the writer depressed by the ceaseless contradictions of life OR does he take comfort in the certainty of alternating history)? How does the passage impact you?



 2. What role does eternity (vs. 11) play in your thinking and actions?

 NB: Consider Augustine’s words: “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you.”

 3. Recalling the activities listed in vs. 1-8, how might the anticipated reality of verse 15 bring comfort? How might it challenge us? Which one of these two results (comfort or challenge) do you tend to focus on right now (if any)? Why?

 4. Notwithstanding the claim of vs. 1, can you think of anything that the writer might say there is not time or a season for?

5. Have you ever sensed God’s control in your life or seen Him doing something beautiful when life felt completely out of your control? Explain. How might this passage help us prepare for the many trials we will encounter in life (cf. Rom. 8:28-30)?

6. Are there some aspects of our lives that we find difficult to express to God (or

 surrender to Him) more than others? Why do you think that is so?

7. In the light of this passage, how would you explain the current COVID pandemic to someone seeking after God?

***Memory Verse(s)***

There is a time for everything,



 and a season for every activity under the heavens:

 Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)

***Extra Resources***



* *“Everything in its Time – Eccl. 3:1-15”* – by Pastor Kyle Corbin (“Immanuel Church” website, May 3, 2020). Pastor Kyle unpacks the writer of Ecclesiastes’ approach to time and the events of life.
* *"Every Hard Day Will Be Beautiful Someday”* – by Christine Hoover ([www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org), article, June 20, 2018). Ecclesiastes can be depressing. Here’s an uplifting take on looking at life with God’s big-picture perspective.
* *"Living on the Ragged Edge”–* by Chuck Swindoll (Thomas Nelson, 2005). This commentary on Ecclesiastes by a veteran pastor and author will assist you in “Finding Joy in a World Gone Mad”.