



Daily Verse and Comment

[Ecclesiastes 3:1-8](#)

(1) There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven: (2) a time to be born and a
time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot, (3) a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build, (4) a time to weep and a time to
laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance, (5) a time to scatter stones and a
time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain, (6) a time to search and a time to
give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away, (7) a time to tear and a time to
mend,
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.

New International Version

Ecclesiastes 3 ties directly to the end of the preceding chapter. In [Ecclesiastes 2:24](#), Solomon's approach in writing the book takes a turn. There, he begins to lead the reader toward the more specific details about the repetition of events that everybody experiences. It does not mean everything he mentions occurs to everybody. He is speaking in general terms: There is a time to be born, and a time to die. There is a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted. There is a time to kill, and a time to heal. All these things occur in most people's lives.

The chapter's overall tone is neutral. However, we can take positive value from what Solomon writes. He describes a series of opposites or contrasts. He is leading us to realize that there is a perplexing aspect to this reality: that most of the events he mentions are out of a person's control.

We have no control over when we are born and little or no control over when we die. We have little or no control over when we have to plant things; we must do it according to the seasons that [God](#) has arranged. We are also forced to pick what we have planted unless we want to lose it. All these events have aspects beyond our control.

Solomon wants the godly to understand that much of life is beyond human control. We just have to deal with it. If our lives are to mean something worthwhile, we have to deal with this fact: that completely controlling our lives is an act of futility. We can do very little about it. If we fail to deal with this properly, we will live in frustration.

He wants us to understand that human beings are not the masters of their destiny as many would like to think they are. Everyone wants to control his destiny, but Solomon is saying that is vanity. It is frustrating. We can exercise a bit of control, but far more of the events of life will be well beyond our control.

So, what is the positive aspect of Solomon's teaching for us? It is part of what preceded it—[Ecclesiastes 2:24](#): "I saw this was from the hand of God." He also writes in verse 26, "For God gives [wisdom](#) and knowledge and [joy](#) to a man who is good in His sight." In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon is saying that that they are not haphazard, but for the godly, God is involved in these events! He is exercising a measure of providential control in the cycle of these occurrences. In other words, He is in control.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Ecclesiastes and the Feast of Tabernacles \(Part 2\)](#)



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