

There is Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven: Eccl. 3:1-3

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301 Old Testament Books of Poetry

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Introduction

This paper is an exegesis of Ecclesiastes 3:1. Within this document, the interpreter will explore the context, content, application of Ecclesiastes 3:1. The interpreter will seek to the author and the authorial purpose of Ecclesiastes. The interpreter will also provide insight into the purpose for writing Ecclesiastes. The interpreter will outline the major divisions in Ecclesiastes 3:1.

In addition, the interpreter will endeavor to establish a 21st century relevancy of the principles and teachings that are found in Ecclesiastes 3:1. This paper is not intended to be an exhaustive literary work of Eccl. 3:1. However, the interpreter shall attempt to stay within the boundaries of the assigned meaning and significance of the passage.

Context

Ecclesiastes is one of the wisdom books of the Old Testament. The ultimate truth in this book lies in the acknowledgement of God's ever-present hand on our lives when injustices and uncertainty threaten to overwhelm us.

The actual author of Ecclesiastes is unknown, but the superscription (1:1) attributes the book to Qohelet (commonly translated "preacher," Greek ekklesiastes), who is identified as "the son of David, king in Jerusalem." These words can only refer to Solomon. This book is dated to be written during Solomon's reign as king of Israel around 970 B.C to around 930 B.C. This book is a book of perspective.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3 is about the perspective of human about time. These verses reveal that there is an appointed time or season for everything. And there is time for every activity or event under the heaven. The outline in Ecclesiastes 3:1-3 is:

- God is a God of time and makes everything beautiful in its time (Eccl. 3:1)
- There is time for every purpose (Eccl. 3:1)
- A time to be born and die (Eccl. 3:1)

- A time to plant and time to harvest (Eccl. 3:2b)
- A time to kill and a time to heal (Eccl. 3:3a)
- There is time to break and a time to build up (Eccl. 3:3b)

Content

God is a God of Time and makes Everything Beautiful in Its Time (Eccl. 3:1)

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” (Eccl. 3:1).

Although, the name of God is not mentioned in this verse, God created time and man. God is not bound by time, but He has confined man to operate within the limit of time. All the promises of God are fulfilled at an appointed time (Gen. 21:2). When Jesus was told to perform a miracle at the wedding at Cana, He told his mother that His time has not come (John 2:1-5). God has placed a season in time, and He makes everything beautiful in its time. The preacher, based on his observation of life, realizes that God made everything to happen in its time. God is timeless but He gave man time to operate with. Therefore, to enjoy the season of time, time must be invested.

There is Time for Every Purpose (Eccl. 3:1)

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” (Eccl. 3:1).

The preacher discovered that there is time for every purpose under the earth. The rain falls at a certain time, the sun shines at a certain time; God assigned time to purpose. Purpose, in this context, is what man intended to do or accomplish. And that nothing is done out of purpose. The purpose determines the time; for instance; if one has the desire to become a lawyer, he or she must go through a series of education to become a lawyer. Therefore, the events of things are beyond man because they all have purpose attached to it and man must wait for the time.

A Time to be Born and Die (Eccl. 3:2a)

“A time to be born, and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted.”
(Eccl. 3:2).

The preacher observed that there is time to be born and a time to die. That is why every man or woman came into this world at different time and everyone will die at different time. There are inevitable events in human's life; man has no control over it.

There is Time to Plant and Time to Harvest (Eccl. 3:2b)

“A time to be born, and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted.”
(Eccl. 3:2).

This verse represents beginning and endings. Plant life starts with sowing; in the process of time the plant produces fruits to be harvested. Those who work in agriculture know that there is proper time to plant and, time to harvest what has been planted. Life is full of contrasts. Birthing and planting represent the giving of life. There is season when we produce life by giving birth or planting seeds in the ground. And there is time to harvest what we have planted.

There is Time to Kill and Time to Heal (Eccl. 3:3a)

“A time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up.” (Eccl.3:3)

Application

Bibliography

Dr. Trevor Crenshaw: 2022 Spring Lecture Note on 301 Old Testament Poetry

Meaning Commentary on Ecclesiastes 3:1-3

