

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 196 – To Every Thing There Is A Season (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

1. People often use Ecclesiastes 3:1 to teach that everything happens for a reason. How do you know that this is not what this verse teaches?

The verse says: *“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”* (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

- We know this is not the case because this same book teaches that everything does not happen for a reason: *“I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all”* (Ecclesiastes 9:11).
- The context will bear out what “to everything there is a season” means. We will find that means birth, death, planting, plucking up, kill, heal, etc.
- The question comes down to what the word “purpose” means. The Strong’s number is 2656. The term is defined as, “pleasure; hence (abstractly) desire; concretely a valuable thing; hence (by extension) a matter (as something in mind): - acceptable delight (-some) desire things desired matter pleasant (-ure) purpose willingly” (Strong’s Dictionary).
- This shows that there is a time to every pleasure under heaven.
- Other verses translate this same Hebrew term as “delight” (I Samuel 15:22, Psalms 1:2, and Psalms 16:3), “desireth” (I Samuel 18:25), “desire” (II Samuel 23:5, I Kings 5:8, I Kings 5:9, I Kings 5:10, I Kings 9:11, I Kings 10:13, II Chronicles 9:12, and Proverbs 3:15), “pleasure” (Job 21:21, Job 22:3, Job 31:16, Psalms 111:2, Ecclesiastes 5:4, Ecclesiastes 12:1, Isaiah 44:28, Isaiah 46:10, Isaiah 48:14, Isaiah 53:10, Isaiah 58:3, Isaiah 58:13, Jeremiah 22:28, Jeremiah 48:38, Hosea 8:8, and Malachi 1:10), “desired” (Psalms 107:30 and Proverbs 8:11), “willingly” (Proverbs 31:13), “purpose” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, Ecclesiastes 3:17, and Ecclesiastes 8:6), “matter” (Ecclesiastes 5:8), “acceptable” (Ecclesiastes 12:10), “pleasant” (Isaiah 54:12), and “delightful” (Malachi 3:12).
- The point is, there is an appropriate time for things to be done (Ecclesiastes 7:14).

2. Do living things have a season wherein they will end?

Yes: *“A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted”* (Ecclesiastes 3:2).

- Birth physically (Psalms 127:3-5) and spiritually (John 3:1-5 and Romans 6:3-5).
- Death physically (Genesis 3:19, Psalms 89:48, and Hebrews 9:27) and spiritually in the bad (Luke 15:24 and Romans 6:23) and good (Romans 8:13, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:24, and Colossians 3:5-10).
- Planting physically (Psalms 107:37) and spiritually (Luke 8:11-15 and I Corinthians 3:6).
- Plucking physically (Luke 6:1) and spiritually (Matthew 15:13 and I Corinthians 5:6-7).
- Even plucking to plant (Jeremiah 1:10; cf. II Corinthians 10:3-5).

3. Is there ever an appropriate time to kill and destroy?

Under the Old Law (we'll also consider the New Law too) there was a time to kill: "*A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up*" (**Ecclesiastes 3:3**).

- A time to kill [smite with deadly intent; Strong's # 2026] under the Old Law (**Exodus 22:2** and **Deuteronomy 20:16-17**) and the New Law (**Luke 11:21**, **Luke 22:36**, and **Romans 13:1-5**).
- A time to heal physically (**Ezekiel 47:12**) and spiritually (**Mark 2:17**, **Acts 28:27**, and **James 5:16**).
- A time to break down (**Exodus 34:13** and **Deuteronomy 12:3**).
- A time to build up (**Ephesians 4:16**).

4. We know that as God's people we should be happy (Psalms 144:15), but are there appropriate times for us to mourn and be sorrowful?

Yes: "*A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance*" (**Ecclesiastes 3:4**).

- Times for joy and laughter (**Psalms 32:11**, **Psalms 126:2**, and **Proverbs 29:18**).
- Times for mourning and sorrow (**Ecclesiastes 7:1-4** and **James 4:8-10**).
- There are even times to dance (**I Samuel 18:6** and **Jeremiah 31:13**).

5. What are some things you could think of that would involve appropriate times to cast away stones or gather stones?

The first part of the verse says: "*A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together...*" (**Ecclesiastes 3:5**).

- Removing stones that are in the way of something (**Genesis 29:8**).
- Gathering stones to build something (**I Chronicles 22:2**).
- To block a passageway (**Mark 15:46**).
- Spiritually speaking, if our hearts have stony places the word of God cannot take root (**Matthew 13:20-21**).
- Gathering up stones to stone someone (**John 10:31**).

6. Are there times when we should not embrace?

Yes, "*...a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing*" (**Ecclesiasts 3:5**).

- The usage of this word could be embracing in the sense of a hug (i.e. **Genesis 29:13** and **Genesis 33:4**) or even sexual contact (**Proverbs 5:20**).
- Times to embrace in a friendly (**Acts 20:1**) and sexual manner (**I Corinthians 7:1-5** and **Hebrews 13:4**).
- Times not to embrace in a friendly (**II John 9-11**) and sexual manner (**I Corinthians 6:18**).

7. Are there times for gain and times for loss?

Yes: *"A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away"*
(**Ecclesiastes 3:6**).

- Times to get spiritually (**Proverbs 23:23**) and physically (**John 4:8**).
- Times to lose (**Mark 8:35-37**, **Luke 14:33**, and **I Corinthians 6:7**).

8. Are there times when we should not speak?

Yes: *"A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak"*
(**Ecclesiastes 3:7**).

- We have know when to speak and when not to speak (**Psalms 39:1**, **Proverbs 13:3**, **Proverbs 18:21**, **Proverbs 29:11**, **Ecclesiastes 5:1-2**, **Micah 7:5**, **Ephesians 4:29**, **Ephesians 5:3-4**, and **James 1:26**).

9. Is there any time when love and peace have to be set aside?

Yes: *"A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace"*
(**Ecclesiastes 3:8**).

- We are obviously supposed to be a loving people (**Romans 13:9-10** and **Galatians 5:14**).
- Yet, we have to be able to hate also (**Psalms 26:5**, **Psalms 97:10**, **Psalms 119:104**, **Romans 12:9**).
- We are also supposed to be a people of peace (**Matthew 5:9** and **Romans 14:19**).
- However, physical (**Exodus 15:3**, **Numbers 32:29**, and **I Corinthians 14:8**) and spiritual (**Proverbs 28:4**, **I Timothy 1:18**, and **Jude 3-4**) warfare are sometimes necessary.