

ECCLESIASTES



Life in a Wind-chasing World

Part 4: Time

Time in the rest of the Scriptures

My Times are in Your Hands:
Psalm 31:14-16

Now is the Time:
2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Life as a Breath:
Psalm 39:1-6

In the Fulness of Time:
Galatians 4:1-5

Number our days:
Psalm 90:1-17

Redeem the Time:
Ephesians 5:8-20

Everlasting to Everlasting:
Psalm 103:13-19

Like a Thief:
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

For Such a Time as this:
Esther 4:12-13

If the Lord Wills:
James 4:13-17

No one knows the Hour:
Mark 13:26-37

The Lord's Promise:
2 Peter 3:3-15

Time in Ecclesiastes

On a number of occasions in the book of Ecclesiastes the Preacher is very philosophical on the subject of time. There is the famous section in chapter 3 where he speaks of the changing seasons of life, and the fact that there is a time for everything . Life is truly very up and down, and as people we need to be able to embrace that which is in front of us, whatever the appropriate response might be. Despite this, it can often be our human instinct to try and control time, and manipulate it to our own ends - to avoid the unpleasant parts of life, and fill it with more positive experiences. However, a big part of the message of this book is to show us that we just can't do that. No matter how hard we try, life's twists and turns are simply uncontrollable by us mere human beings. We may for some time seem like we're in control of everything, but we all know the reality of situations being thrown our way that there's just nothing we can do to stop, change or avoid.

This is the reality check the Preacher wants to bring us in this area. He tells us that God has orchestrated time so that man 'cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end' (3:11). We just can't predict what's going to happen next week, next month, or next year. Chances are that life will tick over as normal and we could correctly predict for the most part what will be going on

in those time frames, but there's just no way of knowing. Yet again, as with much of the book of Ecclesiastes, knowing and living in the light of this truth can save us from much frustration as we view life as it really is, not as we want it to be. We must live in a place far more of acceptance, and responsiveness to the situations around us, than in a place of control where we think we're in charge of what is happening. When we live as a control freak, ultimately what we do is try to take the place of God, and attempt to do His job for Him which when you sit down and really think about it is utter foolishness. However, this leads us to the liberating truth that runs alongside the our impotence in the face of changing situations - the reality of God's control over every area of life.

Just as he states our complete lack of control over the passing of time, the Preacher also asserts for us the truths that God makes 'everything beautiful in its time' (3:11), and that 'whatever God does endures forever' (3:14). Nothing can be added or taken away from what God does, and He has set it up like this so that we might fear Him - live our lives in respect and reverence for the Now ho orders everything. Not only that though, for those of us who belong to God we can live our days in absolute rest because as the song says, we 'know who holds the future' and for those who love Him everything He does is for our good and weaving together His perfect plan for His world (Rom 8:28).