

LESSON 19

TIME AND ETERNITY

CENTRAL TRUTH: God rules supremely over time and eternity.

MEMORY VERSE: I 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. ----- **Ecclesiastes 3:14**

LESSON TEXT

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15; 9:1-2

Ecclesiastes 3:

1. There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:
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 from embracing,
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.
9. What do workers gain from their toil?
10. I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race.
11. He 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.
12. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.
13. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil this is the gift of God.
14. I 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.

15. Whatever is has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account.

Ecclesiastes 9:

1. So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them.
2. All share a common destiny the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good, so with the sinful; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.

INTRODUCTION

The bible teaches that life here on earth is short and that eternity (life after death) is real. This lesson will help us to learn about the seasons of life from a God- centered point of view which will enable us to re-arrange our priorities so we can make the most of each day that God has given to us.

LESSON

The book of Ecclesiastes calls upon us to assess life's significance in the light of God's standard for living and His eternal purpose. Without God, life is empty; even the greatest human achievements are meaningless. When life is understood to be God's gift and is seen to be full of His purpose, then everything we do in life becomes valuable.

The writer of Ecclesiastes teaches us that just as our lives have beginning and ending boundaries, our actions bring about beginnings and endings in other things. Hence the statement **"There is time for everything" (Eccl. 3:1)**. When we focus on God in the midst of various seasons of life, we recognize that He guides and gives significance to whatever we might experience. We should not allow our sorrow to overwhelm us to the point of depression, we should not let our times of joy be extravagant, to be used to put people down. Whether our

emotions move us to mourn or rejoice, they should be guided by the Holy Spirit, to impact people around us positively. Indeed, when we live with the joy of the Lord and express godly sorrow against everything that does not please God, we can serve him effectively and contribute greatly to the lives of those around us.

Very often we forget that life is full of changes but that God never changes. At times we breakdown under a season of sorrow forgetting that God promises to carry us through such a time and to help us grow spirituality in the process.

At other times we enjoy a season of joy and blessings but we live selfishly, ignoring others' needs. Knowing that God does not change and is consistent will help us to be stable in every condition of life. We cannot understand all that God does, God's eternal plan is truly beyond our capacity to explain, yet we must know that all God does is intended to capture our attention and bring us into relationship with Him.

In throwing more light on time and eternity the writer of Ecclesiastes makes it clear that although we cannot set date for our death, he invites us to accept the reality of death. This being so, the book of **1 Thessalonians Chapter 4:13-18** teaches that, the only way to skip physical death (which is inevitable) is through the rapture.

Knowing that death is real can help us to set right priorities in life. Our position in society, our wealth or any status cannot help us to avoid death (**Ecc. 9:1-3**). With life's end in view, we should make the most of each day. We should live with purpose for God every day that He gives us. We must dedicate and live each moment in obedience to our creator. All of us will be judged by Him. We will either enjoy His eternal reward judgment for our sin. With this understanding we should be wise and pursue the things that bring honour to God and blessing to others.

LIFE APPLICATION

Our study today, when understood from the New Testament perspective calls on us to prepare for eternity by living in right relationship with God today. This will also involve giving loving service to others with each opportunity we have. Time is short and we make the best use of it.

DAILY BIBLE READING

Monday: The Eternal Refuge. (Deut. 33:26-29).

Tuesday: The Brevity of Life. (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7).

Wednesday: The One Who Inhabits Eternity. (Isaiah 57:15-18).

Thursday: Eternal Blessings for the Faithful. (Mark 10:28-31).

Friday: An Eternal Home. (2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

Saturday: An Eternal Inheritance. (Hebrews 9:11-15).