傳道書 3:1-22

神掌控萬事

1. 定期

3:1 凡事都有定期,

天下萬務都有定時。

3:2 生有時, 死有時;

栽種有時, 拔出所栽種的也有時:

3:3 殺戮有時. 醫治有時:

拆毀有時, 建造有時;

3:4 哭有時, 笑有時;

哀慟有時, 跳舞有時:

3:5 拋擲石頭有時, 堆聚石頭有時:

懷抱有時,不懷抱有時:

3:6 尋找有時, 失落有時:

保守有時, 捨棄有時:

3:7撕裂有時, 縫補有時;

静默有時,言語有時;

3:8 喜愛有時, 恨惡有時;

爭戰有時, 和好有時。

3:9 這樣看來,做事的人在他的勞碌上有甚麼益處呢?

1『凡事, 萬務 everything, every matter/activity』

每一件事物,每一個事務/活動,即人生各樣的情況和所發生的事情。這『務』有喜愛的意思,可以是神喜愛的,也可以是人喜愛的。

『定期 appointed time. 定時 time』

所羅門繼續闡述他對人生百態的觀察。他以空前絕後的智慧和無與倫比的財富與權勢,遍察萬事萬物。結果他發現一切事物/事務似乎都伏在一個規律之下,就是它們都『定期,定時』發展進行。定期 appointed time 比定時 time 更凸顯出這些事務的發生乃是早就安排好的,即使這些事情看起來好像是人根據自己的喜好所計劃安排的。

2-8 『···有時 a time to』

所羅門發現日光之下每一件事情的發生都有它特定的時間,而這些事件並不以人的意志為轉移。有些事乍看之下似乎是某個人或某些人推動完成的,如人們常說的『英雄造時勢』,但從長遠的角度來看,其實都是遵循某種大勢在運作罷了。如我們中國人的名言: 『天下大勢,分久必合,合久必分』,這個『必』字就說明了這個規律。

『有時』也表明我們任何的遭遇都是暫時的。今年的新冠疫情在全球已經殺死了將近兩百萬人,我們雖然不知道為什麼會有這樣的瘟疫流行,但我們知道這一切都是神許可才會發

生,有他的美意在其中。而且『殺戮有時,醫治有時』,我們相信疫情終究會過去,醫治會臨到(疫苗?),因此我們不懼怕,也不絕望,深信神掌管這一切事情。

所以從消極的角度來說,在困境中我們不至於灰心喪志,因為知道它必定會過去。不但如此,從積極的角度來說,我們可以經歷聖經所說的,在試煉與患難中有喜樂,因為我們有聖靈的同在,使我們在困境中仍然有信心與盼望。因此面對這些苦難,我們的態度可以從消極變為積極—因為神可以使憂傷成為讚美,喜樂代替悲哀,咒詛化為祝福,失敗變為得勝。

作者一共舉了 28 個例子,分成 14 組,每一組都是一正一負,或是一好一壞。意即每一組事件的發生與結束都有它們特定的時候。表現在人生事務中,就是在某時刻錯誤的行動,可能在另一個時間卻是正確的。例如在喪禮時哀哭是合宜的,跳舞是不當的;而在婚宴時,相反的做法卻是對的一哀慟有時,跳舞有時(3:4)。

對那些眼目專注於日光之下的人來說,當他們發現了這個規律之後,可能會產生悲觀、消極,甚至絕望的感覺。因為他們看到不論自己如何努力,最終的結果都是已經注定了。既然如此,那我們為什麼還要努力去奮鬥呢?所以第9節可能就是作者對這個結論所發出的感慨:做事的人在他的勞碌上有甚麼益處呢?

然而對那些定睛於日光之上的人來說,這個規律證明了神在宇宙中掌權,一切事都在他的管制之下。因此對信靠神的人來說,沒有一件事叫做幸運或意外,因為都是出於神。這讓他們更加的依靠仰望神,能夠以一個積極樂觀的態度面對萬事,因他們知道他們背後有一個永不動搖的靠山。

在這14組的事務當中,有許多都是人們的活動。換句話說,都是傳道書裡面經常提到的 『工作』。這說明神所定規的萬務經常是藉著人去推動完成的。就像我們前面說的,人在 執行這些事務(喜愛)的時候,常常是憑著自己的喜好去做的,卻是不知不覺的就遵循了 神的旨意。所以我們看見神的主權和人的自由意志很自然的就調和在一起。

『定期/定時』是什麼意思? 『有時』是什麼意思? 本段共出現了幾次『有時』? 分成幾組? 有什麼特點? 這些事務是否都是人的作為? 是否都是人掌控的? 在本段中我們是否可以看出神的作為? 與人的抉擇有什麼關係? 『有時』在我們面對苦難時有什麼意義? 試從消極和積極兩方面來討論。

2. 永恆

- 3:9 這樣看來,做事的人在他的勞碌上有甚麼益處呢?
- 3:10 我見神叫世人勞苦, 使他們在其中受經練。
- 3:11 神造萬物,各按其時成為美好,又將永生(原文是永遠)安置在世人心裏。然而神從 始至終的作為,人不能參透。

- 3:12 我知道世人, 莫強如終身喜樂行善;
- 3:13 並且人人吃喝, 在他一切勞碌中享福, 這也是神的恩賜。
- 3:14 我知道神一切所做的都必永存; 無所增添, 無所減少。神這樣行, 是要人在他面前 存敬畏的心。
- 3:15 現今的事早先就有了,將來的事早已也有了,並且神使已過的事重新再來(或譯:並且神再尋回已過的事)。

9「這樣看來 |

原文沒有這個字。可能是中文翻譯者認為本句是前面 8 節的結論,所以加上去的。的確,如果將本節併入前 8 節的話,這樣翻完全沒有問題。但是許多學者則認為第 9 節應該是另一段的起頭,因此不應該有這個字。

「做事的人 worker」 就是工作的人。

「勞碌 work, labor, trouble |

原文可以指「身體的辛勞」或「心靈的痛苦」。泛指人在世上為了達到某種目標而做出的一切身心的努力和掙扎。

「益處 gain,benefit」

原來是一種商業用語,指「利益」或「利息」。這裡傳道者再一次複述前面他提到的勞碌 無益的結論(1:3)。

10『勞苦 task, burden, business, 受經練 occupy, busy with』 傳道者觀察到神將勞苦重擔放在人身上, 使人為此忙碌。這也是世上絕大多數人的寫照, 為了溫飽或是為了享受而勞碌, 日子就這樣一天一天過去。

11『神造萬物,各按其時成為美好 He has made everything beautiful in its time』『造』字翻的不太正確,應該是『使』。這裡『使成為美好』是完成式,不是如有些人說的是指的將來基督再來的時候才會發生的事。起初神創造萬物的時候,他看著一切所造的都甚好(創1:31)。後來始祖犯罪,整個宇宙就受到咒詛,以致於一切受造之物受到敗壞的轄制,一同歎息勞苦,直到如今(羅8:21-22)。但我們現在仍然能夠不時(in its time)看到這個『美好』的殘影,如嬰孩的純真,彩虹的絢麗,四季的輪換等。

『將永生(eternity)安置在世人心裏』

永生應該是『永遠或永恆』。前面提到『有時』表明所有的事務都是暫時的,會過去的, 因此世界上沒有任何真正值得存留或爭取的事物。但這裡傳道者卻觀察到了一個不一樣的 東西,就是永恆。這是一件非常奇妙的事。人本身是有限的,他生活的疆界,他生存的時 間都是有限的。參徒17:26『他從一本造出萬族的人,住在全地上,並且預先定準他們的 年限和所住的疆界。』然而在這有限的範圍之內,人卻有一個『無限』的概念存在。因此 人想要追求永恆的事物,如長生不死,流芳百世等。傳道者看出這個永恆的觀念乃是神放 在人心裡的,叫人可以去思想日光之上的事物。他也發現當人在日光之下費盡心力得到想要的東西時,卻發現對自己內在永恆的空虛沒有任何的幫助。

『然而神從始至終的作為,人不能參透 yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end』

雖然這個永恆的觀念讓人可以去思想日光之上的事物,但他卻發現憑人自己的智慧並不能 完全了解神的作為,因此人無法知道世事會如何發展。人只能摸到一點皮毛,但沒有能力 真正去了解。人世間的科學、哲學、宗教都對此無能為力。只有當神自己向人啟示時,人 才能了解。

祂做事,有定時 按祂時候能成就美好事 主,求祢每日指示,教我明白祢心思 我願遵行祢旨意,等候祢

In His time, in His time;
He makes all things beautiful in His time.
Lord, please show me every day, As You're teaching me Your way,
That You do just what You say in Your time.

12-13『喜樂行善 rejoice and do good, 勞碌中享福 take pleasure in all his toil』 在不能完全明白神的作為下, 傳道者發現人在他一生的勞碌中最大的益處就是終身喜樂並 行善, 並且在他的勞碌中享福。他認為工作所帶來的享樂是神給人的恩賜。

14『無所增添, 無所減少』

神所做的一切事,不論是他的創造,他的救贖,或是他的計劃都是永存的。人不能加添什麼,也不能減少什麼。人不能無中生有的創造任何東西,他只是利用已經存在的事物製造各樣的物件而已。科學上『質能不滅定律』很好的說明了這一點。

『神這樣行,是要人在他面前存敬畏的心』

人不能猜度下一刻要發生的事,他也知道自己不能操控一切的事。當人發現自己的有限和神的永存的時候,就不能不對神生出敬畏的心,因為感到自己的渺小和神的偉大。

15『早先就有了、早已也有了 already has been』

傳道者在這裡再次感嘆他之前的觀察, 1:9 已有的事後必再有; 已行的事後必再行。日光之下並無新事。

如果結果都已經注定,我們還要努力嗎?我們勞碌工作有什麼益處呢?你覺得萬物都美好嗎?為什麼這裡說神造萬物,各按其時成為美好? 『永恆』是什麼?和『有時』有什麼關係? 人活在有限的時空之中,為什麼會有永恆的觀念?你覺得你裡面有永恆嗎?你明白神的作為嗎?能否舉例說明?

你是從何得知?如果沒有神的啟示你會知道嗎?

傳道者認為人一生的勞碌中最大的益處是什麼?你同意他的說法嗎?

『無所增添, 無所減少』能否舉例說明? 神如何藉此使人對他存敬畏的心?

3. 歸宿

- 3:16 我又見日光之下,在審判之處有奸惡,在公義之處也有奸惡。
- 3:17 我心裏說,神必審判義人和惡人;因為在那裏,各樣事務,一切工作,都有定時。
- 3:18 我心裏說。 這乃為世人的緣故,是神要試驗他們,使他們覺得自己不過像獸一樣。
- 3:19 因為世人遭遇的,獸也遭遇,所遭遇的都是一樣:這個怎樣死,那個也怎樣死,氣息都是一樣。人不能強於獸,都是虛空。
- 3:20 都歸一處, 都是出於塵土, 也都歸於塵土。
- 3:21 誰知道人的靈是往上升, 獸的魂是下入地呢?
- 3:22 故此, 我見人莫強如在他經營的事上喜樂, 因為這是他的分。他身後的事誰能使他 回來得見呢?
- 16「日光之下,在審判(judgment, justice)之處有奸惡(wickedness)」 日光之下乃是屬世界的,被撒但掌控的,是不完全的。因此本來應該是公平公正(審判)的地方卻出現了奸惡;本來應該是有公義的地方也出現了奸惡。難怪有人認為最糟糕的壓迫是來自政府的壓迫。然而,那些無權的人也不一定是更好的人。(今天美國的種族衝突就是一個例子)自覺無權無力的人常常會嫉妒那些有權、有錢、有地位、有關係、有資產或擁有其他自己所沒有的事物的人。嫉妒和壓迫一樣糟糕。
- 17「我心裏說、神必審判義人和惡人」

因為有惡人,所以在公義審判之處有奸惡。傳道者他相信也盼望,神將來必定會按公義審判萬民,不論是義人或惡人。

『因為···各樣事務 matter, 一切工作 activity/deed, 都有定時』 他的思想又回到了本章的開頭,即『凡事都有定期, 天下萬務都有定時』。他相信神也設 定了日期要按公義審判每一個人的所作所為。不但如此, 我們今天也知道, 當基督再來的 時候, 邪惡必被消滅, 公義必定掌權, 這種不公不義的事情就再也不會發生。參徒 17:31 因為他(神)已經定了日子, 要藉著他所設立的人(基督)按公義審判天下。

這裡我們可以看見神的兩個屬性。第一,神是偉大,永恆,無所不知的,他要人在他面前 存敬畏的心(v14)。第二,神是一位公義的神,他必審判義人和惡人(v17)。

18『這乃為世人的緣故 as for humans,是神要試驗他們 that God is testing them』比較正確的翻譯是『至於世人,神正在試驗他們』。傳道者認為日光之下所有的事情都是神對人的試驗,『使他們覺得自己不過像獸一樣』。

19-20 『因為世人遭遇的、獸也遭遇…都是虚空…都歸於塵土』

『因為』就解釋了前面所說的『不過像獸一樣』,因人和獸的遭遇都一樣。從物質層面來說,人與獸的構造都和塵土一樣,活著時都是呼吸同樣的空氣(氣息都是一樣),死後也都歸於塵土。既然如此,人比獸有什麼值得誇耀的地方呢?人所作的一切都是虛空。

- 21『誰知道 who knows whether 人的靈 spirit 是往上升,獸的魂 spirit 是下入地』原文靈與魂是同一個字。雖然人內心深處知道人與獸有本質上的不同(例如神將永恆放在人心裡,人能夠思想、交流形而上的觀念等),但若沒有神的啟示的話,沒有人能確知是否人死後靈魂是往上升,而獸死後靈魂是下入地。
- 22『故此 so…在他經營的事上喜樂 rejoice in his work』

他再次回到前面 v13 的結論。對於日光之下的人來說,一切都是暫時的,沒有永恆的價值。既然人不勝於獸,他最好的選擇就是享受他今生工作的結果,因為這是他所獲得的報酬。對基督徒來說,當我們為了主而盡心工作時,我們也可以享受工作的成果。參西3:23 無論做甚麼,都要從心裏做,像是給主做的,不是給人做的。

『(因為)他身後的事誰能使他回來得見呢? For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?』

中文翻譯少掉一個『因為』。一個只看到日光之下的人若沒有神的憐憫,必定是一個唯物主義者,因為他不會相信靈魂的永存。他認為人死如燈滅,一死百了,以後就不存在了。因此沒有人能夠讓他看見他死後的事情—他終身勞碌所積攢的後來會歸給誰呢?

為什麼在審判之處有奸惡? 這是發生在何處?

這個問題要怎麼解決? 用革命的方法嗎?

神會怎樣處理這種不公不義的事情?完全公義的日子什麼時候會出現?這裡神怎樣試驗人?試驗的目的是什麼?

為什麼傳道者認為人不勝於獸?這種說法你是否覺得熟悉? (進化論)你認為人勝於獸嗎?為什麼?在哪方面勝於獸?

傳道者最後的結論是什麼?基督徒是否可以享受他工作的成果?今天的查經對我有什麼提醒和鼓勵嗎?我願意在那些方面有所改進?

和合本

- 3:1 凡事都有定期,
- 天下萬務都有定時。
- 3:2 生有時, 死有時;
- 栽種有時, 拔出所栽種的也有時;
- 3:3 殺戮有時,醫治有時;
- 拆毀有時,建造有時;
- 3:4 哭有時, 笑有時;
- 哀慟有時, 跳舞有時;
- 3:5 拋擲石頭有時, 堆聚石頭有時;
- 懷抱有時,不懷抱有時;
- 3:6 尋找有時, 失落有時:
- 保守有時, 捨棄有時:
- 3:7 撕裂有時, 縫補有時;
- 静默有時, 言語有時:
- 3:8喜愛有時, 恨惡有時;
- 爭戰有時, 和好有時。
- 3:9 這樣看來, 做事的人在他的勞碌上有甚麼益處呢?
- 3:10 我見神叫世人勞苦, 使他們在其中受經練。
- 3:11 神造萬物,各按其時成為美好,又將永生(原文是永遠)安置在世人心裏。然而神從始至終的作為,人不能參透。
- 3:12 我知道世人, 莫強如終身喜樂行善;
- 3:13 並且人人吃喝, 在他一切勞碌中享福, 這也是神的恩賜。
- 3:14 我知道神一切所做的都必永存: 無所增添, 無所減少。神這樣行, 是要人在他面前存敬畏的心。
- 3:15 現今的事早先就有了,將來的事早已也有了,並且神使已過的事重新再來(或譯:並且神再尋回已過的事)。
- 3:16 我又見日光之下,在審判之處有奸惡,在公義之處也有奸惡。
- 3:17 我心裏說,神必審判義人和惡人;因為在那裏,各樣事務,一切工作,都有定時。
- 3:18 我心裏說, 這乃為世人的緣故,是神要試驗他們,使他們覺得自己 不過像獸一樣。
- 3:19 因為世人遭遇的, 獸也遭遇, 所遭遇的都是一樣: 這個怎樣死, 那個也怎樣死, 氣息都是一樣。人不能強於獸, 都是虛空。
- 3:20 都歸一處, 都是出於塵土, 也都歸於塵土。
- 3:21 誰知道人的靈是往上升, 獸的魂是下入地呢?
- 3:22 故此, 我見人莫強如在他經營的事上喜樂, 因為這是他的分。他身後的事誰能使他回來得見呢?

NIV	ESV	NASB
¹ There is a time for everything,	¹ For everything there is a season,	¹ There is an appointed time for
and a season for every activity	and a time for every matter under	everything. And there is a time for
under the heavens:	heaven:	every matter under heaven—
² a time to be born and a time to	² a time to be born, and a time	² A time to give birth and a time to die;
die,	to die;	A time to plant and a time to uproot
a time to plant and a time to	a time to plant, and a time to	what is planted.
uproot,	pluck up what is planted;	³ A time to kill and a time to heal;
³ a time to kill and a time to heal,	³ a time to kill, and a time to heal;	A time to tear down and a time to
a time to tear down and a time to	a time to break down, and a time	build up.
build,	to build up;	⁴ A time to weep and a time to laugh;
⁴ a time to weep and a time to	⁴ a time to weep, and a time to	A time to mourn and a time to dance.
laugh,	laugh;	⁵ A time to throw stones and a time to
a time to mourn and a time to	a time to mourn, and a time	gather stones;
dance,	to dance;	A time to embrace and a time to shun
⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time	⁵ a time to cast away stones, and a	embracing.

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.

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[a] 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. ¹⁴I 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.^[b]

¹⁶ And I saw something else under the sun:

In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,

in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

¹⁷ I said to myself,

"God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity.

a time to judge every deed."

18 I also said to myself, "As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals.
19 Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath [c]; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless.
20 All go to the same

time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; ⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

⁷ a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate;

a time for war, and a time for peace.

What gain has the worker from his toil? ¹⁰ I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. 12 I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; ¹³ also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man.

¹⁴ I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. ¹⁵ That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away. ^[a]

¹⁶ Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness. 17 I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work. 18 I said in my heart about the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. 19 For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath,

⁶ A time to search and a time to give up as lost:

A time to keep and a time to throw away.

⁷ A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; 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 benefit *is there for* the worker *from that* in which he labors? ¹⁰ I have seen the task which God has given the sons of mankind with which to ^[a]occupy themselves.

¹¹ He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, without *the possibility that* mankind will find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

¹² I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime. ¹³ moreover that

12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime; 13 moreover, that every person who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor—this is the gift of God. 14 I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it. And God has *so* worked, that *people* will be fear Him. 15 That *which is*, is what has already been, and that which will be has already been; and God cleseeks what has passed by.

¹⁶ Furthermore, I have seen under the sun *that* in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness. 17 I said do myself, "God will judge the righteous and the wicked," for a time for every matter and for every deed eis there. 18 I said to myself regarding the sons of mankind, "God is testing them in order for them to see that they are as animals, they to themselves." ¹⁹ For the fate of the sons of mankind and the fate of animals [g]is the same. As one dies, so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath, and there is no advantage for mankind over animals, for all is futility. ²⁰ All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust. ²¹ Who knows that the spirit of the sons of mankind ascends

place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. ²¹ Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?"

²² So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?

Footnotes:

Ecclesiastes 3:11 Or also placed ignorance in the human heart, so that

Ecclesiastes 3:15 Or God calls back the past

Ecclesiastes 3:19 Or spirit

and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. [b] 20 All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. 21 Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth? 22 So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

Footnotes:

Ecclesiastes 3:15 Hebrew what has been pursued Ecclesiastes 3:19 The Hebrew term hebel can refer to a "vapor" or "mere breath" (see note on 1:2)

upward and the spirit of the animal descends downward to the earth? ²² I have seen that nothing is better than when a person is happy in his activities, for that is his ^[h]lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?

Footnotes:

Ecclesiastes 3:10 Or trouble
Ecclesiastes 3:14 Or be in awe before
Him

Ecclesiastes 3:15 Or finds
Ecclesiastes 3:17 Lit in my heart
Ecclesiastes 3:17 I.e., exists with God
Ecclesiastes 3:18 Lit in my heart
Ecclesiastes 3:19 Lit and they have
one fate

Ecclesiastes 3:22 Or reward