

# Ecclesiastes 8:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because to every purpose there is time and judgment,  
therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

## Analysis

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**Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.** This verse presents a paradox: the appointed time (et, תְּעֵד) and proper manner (mishpat, מִשְׁפָּט) exist for every purpose (chephets, צְדָקָה), yet this truth increases human misery (ra'ah, רַעַת) rather than relieving it.

Why does knowing 'there is a time for everything' produce misery? Because humans cannot always discern what time it is or what the proper response requires. We know opportune moments exist but often cannot identify them until past. We recognize proper courses of action exist but lack wisdom to choose them. The gap between knowing times and judgments exist and actually possessing wisdom to discern them creates anguish. This echoes 3:11—God 'set eternity in their hearts, yet they cannot fathom what God has done.' We're aware of order and purpose but cannot fully grasp it, producing frustration. Only divine wisdom, ultimately revealed in Christ, resolves this misery (Colossians 2:2-3).

## Historical Context

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Ancient wisdom literature recognized human limitations in understanding timing and propriety. Despite studying omens, consulting advisors, and seeking wisdom, people still often misjudged situations. Even Solomon, wisest of men, made tragic errors in timing (1 Kings 11). The verse reflects realistic assessment of human condition: we possess enough knowledge to recognize order exists but insufficient wisdom to navigate it perfectly. This creates what moderns call 'existential

anxiety'—awareness of meaningful structure we cannot fully access. Post-exilic readers, trying to discern God's purposes amid difficult circumstances, found validation in this honest acknowledgment. The gospel resolves this misery—Christ embodies divine wisdom, revealing the Father's purposes and providing guidance through the Spirit (John 16:13).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What situations cause you misery because you recognize a right time and way exist but cannot discern what they are?
2. How does trusting God's perfect timing even when you cannot see it reduce the anxiety this verse describes?

## Interlinear Text

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לְכָל	כִּי	כִּי	וְמִשְׁפָּט	כִּי	וְמִשְׁפָּט	כִּי		
H3588	H3605	Because	to every	purpose	there is	time	and judgment	H3588
		H2656			H3426	H6256	H4941	

עַלְיוֹן	בְּהַרְבָּאָדָם	כַּעֲמֵד	כַּעֲמֵד	
therefore	the misery	of man	is great	H5921
	H7451	H120	H7227	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 3:1** (Parallel theme): To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

**Ecclesiastes 3:17** (Judgment): I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

**Ecclesiastes 3:11** (Parallel theme): He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

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