

# Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 | 9/22/19

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- Review
  - The book of Ecclesiastes is Solomon's quest to find the meaning of life (under the sun- without God) with earthly wisdom.
  - Solomon looks at several things but they all are somewhat summed up in Eccl. 1:3
    - "What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?"
    - What is the benefit from everything that we can do on the earth without God?
    - This is much like a modern humanism view.
  - Solomon's discovery
    - **Solomon realized that nothing under the sun would provide a means to the end, that everything under the sun was futile.**
    - Eccl. 1:8 HCSB
      - "All things are wearisome; man is unable to speak. The eye is not satisfied by seeing or the ear filled with hearing."
    - There is no final satisfaction from the things of the world, he examined pleasure, he examined wisdom, possessions and work and he came up with the same conclusions.
    - There is no satisfaction in worldly things because you can never have enough, not enough money not enough possessions.
    - **That without God all of these things were meaningless.**
- **Time is a mystery to the world but it is known to God | Ecclesiastes 3:1-11**
  - **Read Eccl. 3:1-11**
  - **Solomon sees that there is an occasion and a time for everything.**
    - We see the extremes of different aspects of life as we have the cycle of life and death, war and peace, sadness and joy.
    - **Each of these has a beginning and an end.**
    - **The time that these things occur may at times seem like a mystery to man.**
      - The time that a child is born or a person dies.
    - **But to God they are anything but a mystery.**
      - Eccl.3:11a (HCSB)
        - "He has made everything appropriate in its time."
        - Everything is as God has appointed it to be nothing more nothing less.
    - **God determines these things he knows the exact hour that a baby is born and the minute that a person's body has breathed its last.**
      - Job 14:5
        - "Since man's days are determined and the number of his months depends on You, and since you have set limits he cannot pass"
    - **God knows when he chooses war or peace.**
      - Jeremiah 18:7
        - "At one moment I might announce concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will uproot, tear down, and destroy it"

- **But these things are a mystery without God.**
- **What does the world say to these things? What is their cause?**
- **Knowing that these things are fully under God’s control, we can only humbly accept His plans and accept that His ways are right. Because we are not capable of fully understanding these things.**
  - Eccl. 3:11b
    - “but man cannot discover the work God as done from beginning to end”
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  - Eccl. 8:17
    - “I observed all the work of God and concluded that man is unable to discover the work that is done under the sun. Even though a man labors hard to explore it, he cannot find it; even if the wise man claims to know it, he is unable to discover it.”
  - Though we may seek to understand all the things of God, we find that this is not possible
  - **Humanity with a finite mind cannot every fully understand God, there are many things we may not understand about life, but we must have faith and be obedient.**
    - When we are planning out our lives, we must always remember that while we play a part, that God ultimately is in control.
    - While we may make plans, they may not necessarily be what God wants from us.
    - We must continuously look to Him to seek His will and direction for our lives.
  - **If we believe God is really God, then we should be able to be fully confident with putting our lives in his hands and to trust him.**
- **There is a time for everything, how much do you leave to “chance” and how much do you leave to God? Is it disproportionate? Do you roll the dice or pray?**
- **Knowing that God is in control of everything how should we deal with the uncertainties of life?**
- **What does man gain from these tasks that God has given his people? (Eccl. 3:9-10)**
  - ***Read Eccl. 3:9-10***
  - Again what does man gain from all his work? The labor that man must endure has little profit as the money and possessions he gains will not last forever he certainly cannot take it with him at death.
  - **These things themselves as Solomon has previously spoken of is futile and short lived, but from reading the scripture we know that there IS great gain from the tasks that God has given us.**
    - We are to love our fellow Christians.
      - John 13:34-35

- “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
      - We are to stay away from evil and do what is good.
        - 1 Peter 3:10-11
          - “For the one who wants to love life and to see good days must keep his tongue from evil and do what is good. He must seek peace and pursue it.”
      - We are to love the Lord our God and our neighbors.
        - Matthew 22:37-39
          - “He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”
      - These tasks and commands from God cultivate our lives so that we can do the primary task that God has given us,
        - The fruit of this task lasts for an eternity,
        - The task that is not futile or meaningless.
      - And this is to be an ambassador for Christ.
        - 2 Corinthians 5:20
          - “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, Be reconciled to God”
        - It is our assigned task in life that we are to be messengers for God so that others may believe, hear God’s call on them and be saved.
          - **Without God there is not purpose with our tasks they are futile, but with the tasks assigned to us from God they are anything but.**
          - **Where do you set the priority between your “tasks of life” with God’s tasks? Who gets the priority?**
          - **When you put it in perspective that the “tasks of life” are futile but God’s can last for an eternity, does this give you a desire to re-prioritize?**
- **There is nothing better than to rejoice and to do good | Ecclesiastes 3:12**
  - **Read Eccl. 3:12**
  - Eccl. 3:12 – ESV
    - “I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live;”
  - Eccl. 3:12 – HCSB
    - “I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and enjoy the good life”
  - **Solomon realized that we are to live a “good life” by living by God’s standards and morals.**
    - This is literally being good in the moral sense, be good to our friends our family for the benefit of others.
      - **Contrary to society’s belief you were not born to only please yourself.**

- **Jesus lived the life of servitude and so should we. The Bible is full of instruction on how we are supposed to care for others.**
- From the New Testament we know that we are commanded and even rewarded:
  - Galatians 6:7-10
    - “Don’t be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap, because the one who sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. **So we must not get tired of doing good**, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up. **Therefore, as we have opportunity, we must work for the good of all**, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.”
  - The life we live here on earth is short, but yet we have a purpose for the time we are here.
  - We are preparing for the next life, for the one of eternity.
  - We must do good, to live the life that God has called us to in the Scriptures, to shine the light of the Gospel and to be an example unto the world.
  - To do good for others, we are not called to only serve ourselves.
    - Galatians 5:13
      - “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
  - **What might be the difference between an earthly and biblical world view when examining what it means to “enjoy the good life”?**
- Solomon also said that we are to enjoy the things that God has given us | Ecclesiastes 3:13
  - This of course does not mean that is all you live for Solomon has seen that those things alone are short-lived and in the long term meaningless. But nonetheless we can certainly enjoy what God has given us as they are blessings.
- **We cannot change God’s will | Ecclesiastes 3:14-15**
  - ***Read Ecclesiastes 3:14-15***
  - This verse hints at the practical conclusion that Solomon comes to and the end of Ecclesiastes.
  - **Just as the word of God is perfect so are the works of God. He is the eternal God that lives forever. We cannot change God’s will for our life or for His plans in the world.**
    - Eccl. 12:13
      - “When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is: fear God and keep his commands, because this is for all humanity.”
  - **This does not mean that we don’t have a say in our lives and were mere puppets, but that we cannot force God’s hand or change His desires and plans.**
    - We do make decisions that have an effect on the rest of our lives and on the lives of others, but if God wants something to be done it will be.
  - **We must look upon God with great reverence and awe, knowing that He directs the world on a level that we cannot even begin to comprehend.**

- What does this say about the choices and decisions that God makes? Do you think He ever makes decisions like us where they may not be thought out or have a holy purpose?
- Would it make sense for us to try to change God's mind even if we do not agree initially with His plan for our life?
- **There is wickedness and injustice on the earth | Ecclesiastes 3:16-17**
  - *Read Eccl. 3:16-17*
  - **Solomon saw that on earth under the sun that there seemed to be injustice. Where those that judge who should be dealing good moral judgment are in fact wicked.**
  - He also saw where those that should be Righteous were also in fact wicked.
    - Ecclesiastes 8:14
      - "There is vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity."
  - **This is certainly true of our time today, where we see many signs of injustice.**
    - Where you have those who deny and hate God seem to prosper.
    - Or where those who do evil and sin against God seem to "get away with it"
  - **But Solomon came to the conclusion that "God will judge the righteous and the wicked".**
    - God will ultimately judge everyone even if there seems to be injustice where someone seems to be abusing their power or getting away with it. We need to leave it up to God.
    - God will judge all and it may not be for us to see the time when this happens.
  - **God will judge everyone, we will all have to give an account to Him.**
    - Romans 14:9-12
      - "Christ died and came to life for this: that he might rule over both the dead and the living. But you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the tribunal of God. For it is written: As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue will give praise to God. So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.
  - **God the ultimate judge who is not under the sun but above it and is incorruptible will judge us all.**
  - We know that God is the final judge for all injustice but do you struggle with letting things go? Do you find you want justice now?