

ECCLESIASTES

Ecccl. 3:12-17



Eccl. 3:12 I know that *there is* no good in them, but for *a man* to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it *is* the gift of God.

14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.

15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, *that* wickedness *was* there; and the place of righteousness, *that* iniquity *was* there.

17 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.

This evening, we continue on a wonderful, spiritual journey through the Book of Ecclesiastes, known also as “The Preacher.”

I. THE PREACHER’S SUBJECT, 1:1-11

A. The Preacher, 1:1 (Solomon)

B. The Problem, 1:2-3

C. The Process, 1:4-11

II. THE PREACHER’S SERMON, 1:12-10:20

A. Things He Had Sought, 1:12—2:26

B. Things He Had Seen, 3:1—6:12

1. The Problem of Time Without Eternity, 3:1-11

a. The Logic of Time, 3:1-8

b. The Limitations of Time, 3:9-11

(1) What He Discerned, 3:9-10

(a) The Penetrating Question, 3:9

(b) The Perpetual Quest, 3:10

(2) What He Discovered, 3:11a

(3) What He Decided, 3:11b “

Last week we considered “The Limitations of Time” in 3:9-11, beginning with a penetrating question that considered “The Problem of Time Without Eternity.”

This evening, we look at “The Problem of a New Leaf Without a New Life, 3:12-17.

2. The Problem of a New Leaf Without a New Life, 3:12-17

a. The Works of the Creature, 3:12-13

(1) Man’s Limitations, 3:12

(a) The Realization, 3:12a “I know that *there is* no good in them, but for *a man* to rejoice...”

(b) The Resolve, 3:12b “...and to do good in his life.”

(2) Man's Labors, 3:13

(a) His Acceptance of Life's Bounty, 3:13a "And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour..."

Eccl. 2:24 *There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should **make his soul enjoy good in his labour**. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.*

(b) His Acknowledgement of Life's Benefactor, 3:13b "...it is the gift of God."

- Mankind, facing the limitations of finite weakness, can only do what God allows or enables.

"A man must know his limitations." Detective Harry Callahan (Clint Eastwood)

b. The Works of the Creator, 3:14-17

(1) In the Material Realm, 3:14

(a) The Permanence of God's Works, 3:14a "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it..."

Psa. 19:1 **The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth** his handywork.

2 Day unto day **uttereth speech**, and night unto night **sheweth knowledge**.

3 *There is* **no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.**

- This principle is shown by the 1st , 2nd and 3rd Laws of Thermodynamics:
 - The first law, also known as Law of Conservation of Energy, states that energy cannot be created or destroyed in an isolated system.
 - The second law of thermodynamics states that the entropy of any isolated system always increases.
 - The third law of thermodynamics states that the entropy of a system approaches a constant value as the temperature approaches absolute zero.

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/introchem/chapter/the-three-laws-of-thermodynamics/>

(b) The Purpose of God's Works, 3:14b "...and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him."

- When mankind views creation, the opportunity to "see" the Creator is right before them.

Psa. 8:3 **When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars,** which thou hast ordained;

4 **What is man, that thou art mindful of him?** and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

- The illusionary faith in evolution is mankind's refusal to believe God and fear Him.
- G. K. Chesterton – “When a man stops believing in God, he doesn't then believe in nothing, he believes in anything.”
- Solomon was wavering between hedonism and fearing God – now he says, “...men should fear before him.”

Jas. 1:8 **A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.**

(2) In the Moral Realm, 3:15-17

(a) The Past Required, 3:15

Eccl. 3:15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

“The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

German philosopher whose three stage process of dialectical reasoning was adopted by Karl Marx (1770-1831). <https://www.quotes.net/quote/14055>

- Reformation of life is NOT equal to the transformation of a heart that only God can do.
- What we have always been, we are, and we always will be – and will be accountable unto God.

Rom. 14:12 So then **every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**

(b) The Present Reviewed, 3:16

i. Public Wickedness, 3:16a “And moreover **I saw under the sun** the place of judgment, *that wickedness was there...*”

- From the human perspective, “under the sun,” there is no such thing as pure justice in the modern judicial system.
- “Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.” – Ben Franklin

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/49575-justice-will-not-be-served-until-those-who-are-unaffected>

Prov. 17:23 **A wicked man** taketh **a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.**

Deut. 16:19 **Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.**

Deut. 24:17 **Thou shalt not pervert the judgment** of the stranger, *nor* of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge:

Job 8:3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

Job 34:12 Yea, **surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.**

- God's plan, for Israel, was to be a "universal blessing" to all the earth.

Isa. 42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, **till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.**

5 **Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out;** he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

6 **I the LORD have called thee in righteousness,** and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

7 To open the blind eyes, **to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.**

ii. Personal Wickedness, 3:16b “...and the place of righteousness, *that iniquity was there.*”

Rom. 2:1 **Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest:** for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; **for thou that judgest doest the same things.**

2 **But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.**

3 **And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?**

- The “place of righteousness” are represented by churches.

1 Pet. 4:17 For **the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:** and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 **And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?**

- Churches today represent worldly, weakened testimonies that compromise the truth.

2 Tim. 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**

5 **Having a form of godliness,** but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

<https://www.norc.org/NewsEventsPublications/PressReleases/Pages/american-acceptance-of-homosexuality-gss-report.aspx>

(c) The Prospect Revealed, 3:17

i. The Truth of Judgment is Sure, 3:17a “I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked...”

Prov. 22:22 Rob not the poor, because he *is* poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

23 For **the LORD will plead their cause**, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.

ii. The Time of Judgment is Set, 3:17b
“...for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work.”

Rom. 14:12 So then **every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**

2 Cor. 5:10 For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;** that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

Conclusion (The New Testament parallel to Eccl. 3)

Rom. 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. **Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.**

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with **brotherly love**; in honour preferring one another;

11 Not slothful in business; **fervent in spirit; serving the Lord**;

12 **Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer**;

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

15 **Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.**

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. **Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.**

Eccl. 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and **keep** his commandments: for **this is the whole duty of man.**