

'All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.'
2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

The Book of Ecclesiastes

Chapter 3



Kerrville Bible Church

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Ecclesiastes Review



- ❑ Koheleth's conclusion was there is only one way for men to be satisfied with life "*under the sun*".
- ❑ Enjoyment in life is given from the hand of God to men of faith.
- ❑ For the unbeliever, life turns out to be a bitter disappointment and any joys become empty and fleeting.



"There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God" ECC 2:24



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Declared

The Certainty of Death (2:12-23)

²⁴There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.

²⁵For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?

- ❑ William D. Barrick insists “nothing better” suggests other ways for men to be satisfied under the sun.
- ❑ V24b insists there is only one way – God is the Giver.
- ❑ V25 says, There is no enjoyment in life apart from the Giver
- ❑ V25 says, for the unbeliever, life turns out to be a bitter disappointment and its joys become empty and fleeting.
- ❑ Life in this world can only have significance and provide enjoyment for the believer

Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)



¹There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven:

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). We see God's **SOVEREIGN PLAN**
 - God has set an appointed time for everything
 - "Under heaven" brings in the divine perspective!
 - "Every event" matters "under heaven"
 - Nothing is meaningless or "hebel"
 - Fourteen pairs of opposites
 - Representing all aspects of life



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

²A time to give birth and a time to die;
A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). God appoints:
 - The time things are born
 - The death time as well

 - The time things are planted
 - The time when they are uprooted



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

³A time to kill and a time to heal;
A time to tear down and a time to build up.

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). God provides:
 - A time to kill: War ... self-defense ... executing murderers (Gen 9:6)
 - A time to heal: Literally, “to make healthy again”
 - A time to tear down: Nations, leaders, old walls, businesses, relationships ...
 - A time to build them up and restore old ones or build new ones ...



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

⁴A time to weep and a time to laugh;
A time to mourn and a time to dance.

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). Koheleth contrasts the extreme emotional seasons in life – all in God’s timing:
 - Weeping and Mourning – God will inevitably bring disappointments, losses and rejections into this life. Such events serve a good purpose – they remind us of our mortality and to put our faith and hope in God because our time on earth is so brief.
 - Laughing and Dancing – Those times will be offset by seasons in this life where God will bring experiences of elation, happiness and pleasure as well.



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

⁵A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). One interpretation:
 - Stones - God ordains appropriate times to:
 - Throw stones into enemy fields to destroy crops/soil
 - Gather stones to clear fields for cultivation and to use gathered stones as building materials
 - Embrace – God ordains appropriate times for enjoying or refraining from the embrace of love.



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

⁶A time to search and a time to give up as lost;
A time to keep and a time to throw away.

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). God sovereignly controls:
 - The times we search.
 - The times we give up searching.

 - The times we keep.
 - The times we throw away.



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

⁷A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;
A time to be silent and a time to speak.

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). God appoints times:
 - To Tear Apart
 - To Sew Together

 - To Be Silent
 - To Speak



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

⁸A time to love and a time to hate;
A time for war and a time for peace.

- LOOK UP (3:1-8). God sets divinely appointed times :
 - To Love
 - To Hate

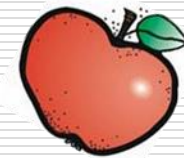
 - For War
 - For Peace



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

⁹What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?
¹⁰I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.

- ❑ LOOK WITHIN (3:9-14)
- ❑ Koheleth brings us back to his question in 1:3
- ❑ Life is a gift from God
- ❑ All the labor, worry and scheming of man cannot change the times, circumstances or God's control of events
- ❑ Our task is to accept the gift of life
- ❑ Accept and Enjoy the apple before us





Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹¹He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

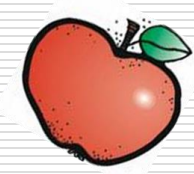
- ❑ LOOK WITHIN (3:9-14)
- ❑ Everything God has made is **appropriate** from the perspective of eternity.
- ❑ All events and relationships in life are appropriate, even beautiful, when seen as parts of the eternal work of God
- ❑ The problem, of course, is that man, in his own power, “under the sun”, cannot perceive God’s plan or see its order
- ❑ But, since man was made for eternity, the things “under the sun” cannot permanently satisfy
- ❑ We must focus on eternity and trust God in this life



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹²I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime;
¹³moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor -- it is the gift of God.

- Again, Koheleth comes to *Enjoy Life*:
 - There is ~~nothing better~~ **only one way** “under the sun”
 - Eat, drink and ~~see good in labor~~ **get satisfaction**
 - The **gift of God** is for **redeemed man**
- **Feast on** that apple that is **before you**
- **Savor the perfume** before it vanishes





Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹⁴I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him.

- ❑ LOOK WITHIN (3:9-14)
- ❑ God's Plan and Works will remain forever
- ❑ Man cannot stop anything, add anything or change anything
- ❑ Men should fear Him:
 - Obedience to EXOD 20:3 must come first
 - He must be Lord and God above all
 - Men must not trust their abilities, their devices, their wisdom or their connections (ROM 9:16)



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹⁴I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him.

- ❑ LOOK WITHIN (3:9-14)
- ❑ The “fear of God” is not an attitude of terror
- ❑ It is:
 - A commitment of your total being
 - To love, trust, believe and obey the living God, and
 - To give God all reverence, honor and glory
 - As Sovereign Lord who reigns over the whole earth
- ❑ If we fear God, we need not fear anything else, for He is in control



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹⁵That which is has been already and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by.

- ❑ LOOK AHEAD (3:15-22)
- ❑ This is not a simple restatement of the futility in “nothing new under the sun” from V1:9
- ❑ This is in the context of God’s Sovereignty and his control of both time and events
- ❑ In that context, it is true that what has happened will happen again, and what will happen has already happened
- ❑ But this verse adds: “God seeks what has passed by”, meaning that **every little event matters** and **will be recalled by God to judgment.** (v12:14)



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹⁶Furthermore, I have seen under the sun that in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness.

- LOOK AHEAD (V3:15-22) Wickedness prospers?
 - God instituted human “courts” to give judicial relief
 - Yet wickedness is common where justice should be found
 - If this life is all there is, then many wicked and evil people **win**
 - And many good and righteous people **lose**



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹⁷I said to myself, "God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man," for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.

- LOOK AHEAD (V3:15-22) Wickedness prospers?
 - Man wants justice now
 - God Himself will rectify these inequities
 - In His plan ... in His **time** ...
 - In His **future judgment**



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

¹⁸I said to myself concerning the sons of men, "God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts."

¹⁹For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity.

- ❑ LOOK AHEAD (V3:15-22) Death and the Beasts
- ❑ God has tested ... simply by allowing sinful, prideful man, "under the sun", to indulge his desires for the world, the flesh and the devil.
- ❑ Without even much thought, they can see they are living lives very much like common beasts – work, eat, sleep, procreate, survive.
- ❑ Death is the great leveler ... it happens to men just as it happens to beasts ... man has no advantage



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

²⁰All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust. ²¹Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward, and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?

- ❑ LOOK AHEAD (V3:15-22) Death and the Beasts
- ❑ Certainly, both men and beast are made of dust ... and will return to dust.
- ❑ But we should translate 3:21 as a statement (see verse 12:7): “The spirit of man goes upward, but the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth.”
- ❑ This is the difference between men and beasts
- ❑ The spirit of man goes upward ... for paradise or for judgment



Ecclesiastes – The Problem Discussed The Monotony of Life (3:1–5:9)

²²I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?

- ❑ Solomon concludes: Man should be happy in his activities.
- ❑ Life is a gift from God
- ❑ Enjoy it ... one apple at a time, for that is our lot.



- ❑ We cannot see what will occur in the future but, knowing that God is in control, we can trust in Him and be at peace.

Ecclesiastes



"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10"

'For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?. ECC 2:25