

# Ecclesiastes

## Chapter 3

### I. Introduction

- a. In a sense, this book has seemingly come full circle already
  - i. Solomon has realized that life without God is completely meaningless
    - 1. It could even be said that a believer could live a life apart from considering God and become worldly
      - a. This would bring on a defeated Christian life full of misery
      - b. This would also bring on the chastening hand of God
      - c. Solomon tried this for a while and found that it was all "vanity and grasping for the wind"
- b. The chapter before us today is quite the popular passage of Scripture
  - i. The first portion of this chapter was taken almost verbatim and adapted into a song which was recorded by The Byrds and reached #1 on the charts
    - 1. It's rare that popular music integrates Bible passages into their songs, obviously
      - a. This song obviously has the oldest lyrics for any song that ever reached #1 on the Billboard charts ☺

### II. Commentary

#### a. Verses 1-8

- i. In the previous passage, Solomon had come to the realization that the meaning of life was to do all things for the glory of God (2:24, 1 Corinthians 10:31)
  - 1. This passage is building up from that point

- a. This is important because the world looks at this passage from a very pessimistic perspective
- ii. The first verse in this wonderful passage is a declaration that God is sovereign over the events of this world
  - 1. God controls the "season" and "time" in which events occur
    - a. Without this knowledge, life is full of questions and doubt
    - b. Knowing this, we can be assured that He is watching over us
    - c. Without doubt, the perspective between the believer and the unbeliever is 100% opposite
      - i. I've often wondered how the unbeliever faces any trials in their lives as they have nobody to pray to
- iii. This passage weaves in the sovereignty of God with our responsibility all the way through
  - 1. There are things we cannot control in this passage
    - a. "A time to be born, and a time to die" (vs. 2)
    - b. "A time of war, and a time of peace" (vs. 8)
  - 2. There are some of these phrases in which we do play half a part
    - a. "A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted" (vs. 2)
      - i. We can only plant but we cannot make it grow
  - 3. There are other of these phrases where we play a major part in discerning the proper time
    - a. "A time to tear, and a time to sew" (vs. 7)
    - b. "A time to keep silence, and a time to speak" (vs. 7)
  - 4. The key to this passage is realizing that God is sovereign over human events

- a. In this, we must wait on God when things are out of our control
- b. We must live in light of our death and God's timing of it
  - i. In this, we must set our goal for the end of the race (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
- c. We must learn to redeem the time (Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5)
  - i. That is, we must learn to use our time wisely
    - 1. We cannot do this when our only perspective is "under the sun"
      - a. We must consider the Lord in all we do

b. Verses 9-11

- i. When man tries to live apart from considering God, there is no eternal profit
  - 1. Only the rewards we earn for our service to Christ will be taken into eternity (1 Corinthians 3:9-15; Revelation 22:12)
- ii. Solomon has seen people occupied with finding the real meaning of life
  - 1. The vast majority of these live a life of "vanity and grasping for the wind"
    - a. As a result, they die feeling like life was unfulfilled
- iii. Everything is working perfectly on God's timetable
  - 1. Though it may appear out of hand to the onlooker, God is very much in charge of the events of the day
    - a. The problem comes with our limited understanding of things
      - i. We are eternal beings in a sense

1. Every human being will live eternally in one of two places – Heaven or the Lake of Fire
2. To a degree, this knowledge of eternity is placed in our hearts by God
  - a. This is why we see even the pagans searching for eternal life, though the wrong way
3. Part of the problem, though, is that we are very much finite in this life and subject to time
  - a. It's difficult to make these harmonize practically in our daily lives
    - i. The key is considering God in all that we do

c. **Verses 12-15**

- i. What a turn we see in this chapter from Chapter 1!
- ii. We are to be joyful, to rejoice, and to enjoy the many blessings that God has given us
  1. However, if we, as humans, believe these blessings are the work of our own hands and not the gift of God, we cannot really be joyful in them
- iii. As stated in the earlier part of the chapter, God is sovereign over the events of mankind
  1. As our Sovereign, He is worthy of our admiration
  2. As our Sovereign, He holds us accountable for our actions
    - a. However, this book is looking far deeper than actions
      - i. God will hold us accountable for our motives as well

d. **Verses 16-22**

- i. "Under the sun", man is often cruel and unfair

1. In the very places where things should be carried out rightly, often sin is the dominating motive
  - a. Do we not see this today many times? People in respectable, authoritative positions that take advantage of others?
- ii. It should be known that all will be judged for their actions by the Lord Himself
- iii. Solomon compares humanity to animals
  1. He is not saying that we are part of the animal kingdom or that we are no more eternal than they are
  2. He is not saying that we have no "free moral agency" which the animals lack
    - a. Certainly, man has a conscience and is bound to it before His Creator
      - i. While the animals are not responsible to God, mankind is
  3. Mankind and animals will die alike
    - a. This life will come to a close and eternity will set in at that moment
      - i. We would all do well to keep this in mind
- iv. We must learn to live for today, as Jesus taught
  1. We do not know what is coming tomorrow
    - a. We certainly do not know what will happen with our possessions here on Earth after we die
      - i. And honestly, we shouldn't care
        1. Our desires must be Heavenly
        2. We must live for God daily so that we can rejoice when we leave this sin cursed Earth