

Message #11

Ecclesiastes 3:16-22

Most people tend to want a God that is sovereign when things are going well, but how about when they aren't? When all kinds of mishaps and injustices seem to occur, is God really still calling the shots?

GOD IS ALWAYS SOVEREIGN AND ALWAYS WORKING OUT HIS PLAN EVEN WHEN THINGS ARE UNJUST AND UNRIGHTEOUS, AND ONE WHO FEARS HIM AND HIS FUTURE JUDGMENT WILL BE HAPPY.

When one “fears” God (3:14), one begins to realize that God has a sovereign purpose and plan for everything, including things negative, unjust and unrighteous. When one lives life “under the sun” without a focus “above the sun,” none of the negative stuff makes any sense.

Notice carefully the repetition of some personal verbs “I have seen” (3:16, 22) and “I said to myself” (3:17, 18). Solomon saw things and said things and thank God he also wrote things. He personally came to understand these conclusions about the sovereignty of God.

OBSERVATION #1 – Solomon saw a lack of justice and a lack of righteousness . 3:16

Judgments from leadership are a serious matter (II Chron. 19:5-7). God takes the judgments seriously, so should His people.

Solomon observed “under the sun” that in places where there should have been justice, there was wickedness and in places where there should have been righteousness there was wickedness. Amos 5:15 says, “Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate.” It wasn't always happening in Solomon's day.

Now one immediate question comes to our mind concerning this observation:

“If Solomon is King of Israel and he saw these things happening, why didn't he do something about it?” He is the authoritative King of Israel. Why didn't he step in and solve the problem? This is one reason why some say Solomon didn't write Ecclesiastes.

- 1) He was focused on life “under the sun.” Solomon was seeing things clearly, but he wasn't handling things spiritually.
- 2) Solomon observed this is not only just in the nation Israel, but also other nations, over which he had no say.

Solomon could somewhat control what happened to Israel, but he couldn't control everything that happened in the whole world.

3) Solomon observed this every place he looked and there is no way he could stop this in every place.

This is a principle that happens everywhere—in courts, in government, in business, in homes and in life. There are times when wickedness overtakes justice and wickedness overtakes righteousness. To resolve this, all of society would have to be destroyed (which it eventually will).

Total justice and righteousness will never reign until Jesus Christ reigns!

OBSERVATION #2 – Solomon knew God would judge the one righteous and the one wicked. **3:17**

Even when Solomon was focused “under the sun” he still knew that there would be a day of reckoning for everyone. He knew both the righteous and the wicked would be judged by God.

Notice the end of the verse—there eventually comes a time for “every matter” and “every deed” to be judged. Nobody is getting away with anything.

1) If you are one wicked—without Christ—every sin you have ever committed will be brought up by God against you and you will be judged and sentenced to hell.

You may think you are getting away with your sin—you aren’t. You’re storing up wrath for yourself (Rom. 2:5) and eventually you will be judged.

2) If you are one righteous—with Christ—our lives are also on display before God and we, too, will be judged. Our judgment is not one that loses heaven, but it is one that can earn or lose rewards.

Our service is not going unnoticed by God and neither is our sin. God will judge every matter and every deed and wise is the man and woman who lives life with this perspective and fears God.

OBSERVATION #3 – Solomon knew God had a purpose for permitting acts of injustice and acts of wickedness. **3:18**

God permits sin to exist so that he may test man to show him he is a beast. In other words, God wants man to clearly see that he is totally depraved, so God allows all kinds of things to happen that give man this judgment about himself and eventually will bring God’s judgment on him.

When man leaves God out of his life, in many ways he becomes an animal. When God is not at the center of life, man is capable of the most wicked acts of depravity.

Here is one Biblical answer as to why God permits sin to exist; to show man he is a depraved animal.

OBSERVATION #4 – Solomon knew of the fate of those who are depraved. **3:19-20**

Both the beast and the human eventually die and end up in the ground and become dust.

Both the beast and the human physically die. Neither the man nor the beast can stop time. Suffering and death will eventually catch them both and one by one every animal and every human dies.

This verse is given to show the temporality of man in contrast to the sovereignty of God.

Psalms 49:20 says this: “Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beast that perish.”

OBSERVATION #5 – Solomon knew of the ignorance of those who are depraved. **3:21**

A depraved sinner has no idea what happens to him after death. The truth is there is a great difference between a man and a beast. The beast that dies, dies. Its life ends right there. His breath is gone and goes in the earth. Man, on the other hand, dies and faces God. His breath ascends upward for judgment.

OBSERVATION #6 – Solomon knew man could enjoy life. **3:22**

The key to happiness is to recognize the sovereignty of God and then live life in a fear of God.

Live life with a sense of future judgment and you will live a happy and joyful and fulfilled life. God will judge everything, including us.

If you want happiness, meaning, fulfillment and joy, live your life above the sun. Keep your focus on God, build a close relationship with Him and your life will be blessed abundantly.