

Ecclesiastes 3:16-22

Unrighteousness in Government and the Universality of Death

Anomalies do not deny God's plan—3:16-4:16

Understanding God's all-encompassing plan—3:1-5:20

- 1) Does unrighteousness in our rules deny God's plan?—3:16-17
 - a) Distortions
 - i) In the hall where justice is expected—¹⁶ *And yet again I saw under the sun that in the place of judgment there was wickedness,* (cf. 5:8; 8:9)
 - ii) In the hall where righteousness is expected—*and in the place of righteousness there was wickedness.*
 - b) God will ultimately judge the judges—¹⁷ *I myself said in my heart, “God will judge the righteous and the wicked, because there is a time* (cf. 3:1-8, 11) *for every matter and for every work.”* (cf. 11:9; 12:14)
 - i) Remember Proverbs 17:15
 - ii) Be thankful God's justice is not immediately implemented.
 - 2) Does the universality of death deny God's plan?—3:18-22
 - a) People tend to think of themselves as invincible—3:18 ¹⁸ *I myself said in my heart concerning the sons of Adam, “God tests them to show them that they are like animals.”*
 - b) But death is inevitable—3:19-21
 - i) All creatures die—3:19 ¹⁹ *For the event that happens to the sons of Adam also happens to the beasts; one event belongs to them; as one dies, so dies the other; both have the same breath. Man has no advantage over the beast, because all is illusory.*
 - ii) All creatures share the same future—3:20 ²⁰ *All go to the same place. All are from the dust, and all return to the dust.* (cf. Genesis 1:24-31; 2:7, 18-19; 3:19)
 - iii) People are ignorant apart from God's revelation—3:21 ²¹ *Who knows, (it may be possible) that the spirit of the sons of Adam goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth?* (cf. 3:17; 12:7)
 - c) Recommendation—3:22
 - i) Man can enjoy this life while it lasts—3:22a ²² *I saw that there is nothing better than that the man should enjoy his activities, for that is his allotted portion.*
 - (1) Don't let what you don't understand destroy what you can enjoy.
 - ii) Man does not have the answer in himself—3:22b *For who will bring him to see what will happen after him?* (i.e. after he dies)
- Cynicism confuses us and can give us temporary Scripture-amnesia.
- Thank God that He uses such circumstances of injustice, etc. to humble us, to make us more dependent on Him, and to be thankful for what He has given us to enjoy.