

Study of Ecclesiastes: Chapter 3
Questions for Discussion

1. What does the Koheleth say about everything under heaven? (vv. 1-8, Deut 32:39)
 - What do these verses say about the nature of God? Man? What are the future plans of man subject to? (vv. James 4:13-16)
 - How do the fourteen contrasted items support these ideas?
2. What question does the Koheleth restate? (vv. 9, 1:3)
3. What does “everything” refer to in verse 11? In what way is “everything” beautiful?
4. What does it mean that “God has put eternity in man's heart?” What does this cause man to do? If man has “eternity” in his heart, then why can he not fathom what God has done from beginning to end? (vv. 11; Gen 1:27; Rom 8:28)
5. What does the Koheleth conclude is best for people to do? (vv. 12-13, 22 ; 2:24-26)
6. Why has God made what He does unchangeable? What does this say to man? (vv. 14)
7. Is verse 15 talking about judgment? How does this relate to 12-14? (vv. 1:9-10)
8. What answer does the Koheleth have for the injustice present in high places? (vv. 16-17; Rom 12:19)
9. What does man have in common with animals? Why does God test us to show us these similarities? (vv. 18-21)

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3. What does “everything” refer to in verse 11? In what way is “everything” beautiful?

He is referencing back to verses 1-8. It is a burden to man to discern the right time when something is appropriate. When we properly discern this, it is “beautiful.”

4. What does it mean that “God has put eternity in man's heart?” What does this cause man to do? If man has “eternity” in his heart, then why can he not fathom what God has done from beginning to end? (vv. 11; Gen 1:27; Rom 8:28)

It is also a burden to have eternity on our hearts, but not be able to fathom the nature and working of God. We cannot understand, because the workings of God are beyond our comprehension. He is infinite, and we are finite.

Since the Fall, we have been filled with the desire to understand the whole (science, philosophy, human knowledge, theology). We are frustrated, because seeing the whole is beyond our ability.

Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

The only way we can deal with this burden/frustration is by putting faith in God that he is working for our eternal good, even though we don't understand it.

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

5. What does the Koheleth conclude is best for people to do? (vv. 12-13, 22 ; 2:24-26)

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 (ESV)

²⁴ There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵ for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶ For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

6. Why has God made what He does unchangeable? What does this say to man? (vv. 14)

God is in control / God sets the rules / God sets the standards / God is truth / God is unchanging

7. Is verse 15 talking about judgment? How does this relate to 12-14? (vv. 1:9-10)

God has been consistent in His workings / standards throughout history / Even though we may discard history, God does not, and He can see infinitely

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. ¹⁰ Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new”? It has been already in the ages before us.

