

Ecclesiastes 4

LESSON 05

People and Their Place

1. Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 – Men are Beasts

- a. What Solomon expresses is reality (the facts) skewed without the mind of Christ
- b. He is considering here people and their place and work in the time they have
- c. 3:16-17 - No justice... (it is better that) God shall judge – Heb 9:27
- d. *“they are beasts”* – 2Pet 2:12; Titus 1:12; Psa 49 – no understanding, no control
 - i. Animals seek self-preservation, self-propagation, and self-gratification
- e. 3:19 - No preeminence – men are animals? Naturalism – w/o spiritual knowledge.
 - i. The place of men and animals is the dust just as Gen 3:19 says
 - ii. *“who knoweth the spirit ... that goes upward?”* – 1Co 2:9-14, 2Cor 5:8
- f. 3:22 – *“I perceive there is nothing better”* – naturalism turns to nihilism
 - i. *“who shall ... see what shall be after him”* – answer: Christ from heaven

2. Ecclesiastes 4:1-9 – Men at Work

- a. Better to rejoice in his own works / portion (3:22); what about the oppressed?
- b. 4:1 - No comfort – Better to have already lived and died (4:1-3)
 - i. Oppression is a popular hit song of human history: totalitarian gov't, slavery, dictatorships, religious laws,
- c. 4:4-6 - No appreciation, no peace – Better with less and quiet (4:4-6) – 1 Tim 2:2
 - i. Having much enters puts you in the place of envy – 4:4
 - ii. You will learn about life, either by faith or sight - Prov 15:16, 16:8, 17:1
- d. 4:7-9 - No second (heir) – Better with two (4:7-9)
- e. Solomon starts with rejoicing in your “own work”, then considers wrong work; right work; no work; all work; working alone; working together; wise work; work in vain

3. Ecclesiastes 4:9-16 – Wise Work

- a. Something better then he returns - 3:22 to 4:1; 3:3 to 4:4; 3:6 to 4:7; 4:13 to 4:15
- b. 4:8-9 – Loneliness here a result of selfishness – to be together requires “giving”
- c. 4:10-12 - No other – Better together – strength in numbers (but...1 Tim 6:7)
- d. 4:13-16 - No status - Better at the bottom – a better chance of moving up.
- e. 3:22 vs 4:16 – *“rejoice in his own works”* b/c *“they... shall not rejoice in him”*
- f. God may not save from oppression; God saves from sin, hopeless, despair, vanity.
- g. The dispensation of grace tears down all religion (Romans, Galatians)
- h. Ecclesiastes and Colossians tear down every vain philosophy and deceitful work
 - i. Ecc ends with the law; Colossians ends with Christ – which is far better.