

SCRIPTURE READING

Eccl. 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: **2** A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; **3** A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; **4** A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; **5** A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; **6** A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; **7** A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; **8** A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. **9** What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? **10** I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

THE PURPOSE OF PROBLEMS AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM!

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter— On the side of their oppressors *there is* power, But they have no comforter.

"The Words of The Preacher"

ECCLESIASTES

- The main focus of the book is the VANITY of material, earthly things
— 1:1-11:9
- The main point of the book is the importance of serving God throughout life — 11:9-12:1, 13-14



"The Words of The Preacher"

THE QUEST FOR SATISFACTION

- There is a purpose & order for everything under the sun and we are subject to things beyond our control— (Eccles. 3:1-10),
- God makes everything beautiful in its season, & wants us to enjoy His gifts — (Eccles. 3:11,12).
- God is in control (Eccles. 3:14,15).



Ecclesiastes 3:16–4:12 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Moreover I saw under the sun: *In* the place of judgment,
Wickedness *was* there; And *in* the place of righteousness,
Iniquity *was* there. ¹⁷ I said in my heart, “God shall judge
the righteous and the wicked, For *there is* a time there for
every purpose and for every work.” ¹⁸ I said in my heart,
“Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests
them, that they may see that they themselves are *like*
animals.”

Ecclesiastes 3:16–4:12 (NKJV)

19 For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all *is* vanity. 20 All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. 21 Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?

Ecclesiastes 3:16–4:12 (NKJV)

22 So I perceived that nothing *is* better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that *is* his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

1 Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter— On the side of their oppressors *there is* power, But they have no comforter.

Ecclesiastes 3:16–4:12 (NKJV)

² Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead,
More than the living who are still alive. ³ Yet, better than
both *is he* who has never existed, Who has not seen the evil
work that is done under the sun. ⁴ Again, I saw that for all
toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his
neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. ⁵
The fool folds his hands And consumes his own flesh.

Ecclesiastes 3:16–4:12 (NKJV)

⁶ Better a handful *with* quietness Than both hands full,
together with toil and grasping for the wind. ⁷ Then I
returned, and I saw vanity under the sun: ⁸ There is one
alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother.
Yet *there is* no end to all his labors, Nor is his eye satisfied
with riches. *But he never asks,* “For whom do I toil and
deprive myself of good?” This also *is* vanity and a grave
misfortune.

Ecclesiastes 3:16–4:12 (NKJV)

⁹ Two *are* better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls, For *he has* no one to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm *alone*? ¹² Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

"The Problem of Problems"

- The problem of **injustice** – (3:16,17)
- The problem of **death** – (3:18-22)
- The problem of **oppression** – (4:1-3)
- The problem of **self inflicted** problems – (4:4-8)
- The problem of **being alone** – (4:9-12)



“The Problem of Problems”

Is There A Purpose For Problems?

Ecclesiastes 3:1
(NKJV)

¹ To everything
there is a season, A
time for every
purpose under
heaven:



“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of injustice

Ecclesiastes 3:16

¹⁶ Moreover I saw under the sun: *In* the place of judgment, Wickedness was there; And *in* the place of righteousness, Iniquity was there.

Where there is NO FEAR of God, injustice abounds

- Injustice is briefly mentioned here and is mentioned again in later passages (5:8; 8:10-15; 9:13-16; 10:5-7; 10:16)
- Anticipating an objection to the fact that God rules, knowing corruption abounds, Solomon acknowledges the problem

“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of injustice

Ecclesiastes 3:16

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Where there is NO FEAR of God, injustice abounds

- Injustice occurs today - In the place where godly, righteous and fair-minded men should be, there are liars, thieves & outright criminals who care only for the advancement of their agenda.
- The wealthy & powerful defeat justice with bribes or threats - double standards abound.

“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of injustice

Ecclesiastes 3:17

¹⁷ I said in my heart,
“God shall judge the
righteous and the
wicked, For *there is*
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**Where there is NO FEAR of God, injustice
abounds**

- “God will judge”-This is the ultimate and final season, the time of judgment and nobody is exempt (2 Cor. 5:10).
- God’s judgment will be RIGHT and impartial —Matt. 16:27; 25:31-46;
- God will avenge - 2 Thess. 1:6-9

“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of death

Ecclesiastes 3:19–20
1⁹ For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. ... ²⁰ all return to dust.

Man's Acknowledged Impotence (3:19–20)

- The one thing that befalls both man & animals – (3:19)
- Physically – humans & animals go to the same place – (3:20)
- But – there is a major difference – Verse 21 is intended to be a corrective to the potential misinterpretation of verse 20 — cf 12:7; Lu. 16:22, 23; Heb 9:27

“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of oppression

Ecclesiastes 4:1¹

Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter—

The Suffering of the Oppressed (4:1–3)

- A great evil – (4:1)
- Oppressed often ignored – (4:1)
- Those who have died are no longer oppressed by evil men in power (4:2) – (Not taking into consideration their spiritual state)
- Better never to have been born – (4:3; 6:3,4; Job 3:10-16)



“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of self inflicted problems

Ecclesiastes 4:4

⁴ Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

The Pressures on the Successful (4:4–6)

- . . . every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor.
- . . . all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of self inflicted problems

Ecclesiastes 4:4

⁴ Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

The Pressures on the Successful (4:4–6)

- The fool consumes himself - (4:5; Job 5:2; Prov 14:30)
- The value of contentment over chasing “the wind” at the expense of others — (4:6; Ps. 37:16. Pr. 15:16, 17; 16:8; 17:1)

“The Problem of Problems”

The problem of being alone

Ecclesiastes 4:9

⁹ Two *are* better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.

The Loneliness of the Wealthy (4:7-12)

- The value of a friend – (4:9)
- But woe to him who is alone when he falls - (4:10)
- Companionship is helpful, & profitable – (4:11)
- A friend provides strength in times of trouble – (4:12)
- The importance of unity – Mark 3:24-26; Ep 4:1-3; Phil 1:27-30

"The Problem of Problems"

- The problem of **injustice** – (3:16,17)
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"The Problem of Problems"

- God's desire is that we turn our hearts to Him!
- He is secure and provides us security in the midst of turbulence



"The Problem of Problems"

- Our happiness depends, NOT on external circumstances, but upon our making the best of the present – without anxious care – through reverential trust in God.
- Eternal HAPPINESS CAN ONLY Be found IN CHRIST — Those of us in Christ have a knowledge & PEACE none outside of Him can know or have! - John 14:6;

