

Ecclesiastes 3-5 –20 July 2023

“To Meet Our Expectations”

Introduction

*Solomon, the philosopher, in a time spent a part from God sought to find satisfaction “under the sun”

*Much thought is put to the question, “How can we turn a profit from this life”?

*How can we put into this life in such a way that we gain a great reward out of it?

*If chap 1-2 he focused on a look at this world’s processes or procedures & found them empty

*Then chapters 3-5 he focuses us on this world’s attributes or characteristics with their limitations

*Have you ever entered a job or relationship with certain expectations only to have them dashed?

*This world tries to meet our hopes & dreams...& then falls short...every time

***Today we’ll see 5 ways this world will disappoint**

#1 – This world has its beauty, but it's not lasting enough (Chap 3:1-11)

Read Chap 3:1-8

1. This poetry is beautiful, reminding us that all facets of life will be experienced if we just wait
2. But this list is also ominous, reminding us all these things are inevitable & monotonous
3. 'Born & die' – the boundaries of life itself begins the list
4. 'Kill & heal' – It doesn't say murder
5. 'Love & hate' – You can only love to the extent that you hate what would threaten it
6. List reminds us to take advantage of the season that we're in b/c it comes and goes quickly

Read Vs 9-10

1. As in Chap 2, there is no profit in our labors
2. Whatever beautiful art is made, is destroyed
3. Beautiful buildings that are made, comes down

Read Vs 11

1. Yet in our labors there's a sense of beauty in the cycles described in vss 1-8...for a time
2. “God has set eternity in our hearts” – God's given us an awareness that we're made for things bigger than this world
 - a. We were created in God's eternal image
 - b. That's why worldly goals are unsatisfying
3. “No man can find out the work of God” – We can't discover in the world the breadth of God's creative majesty

#2 – This world has some justice, but it's not complete enough (Chap 3:12-22)

Read Chap 3:12-13

1. ‘To do good’ is what every moralist resorts to
 - a. What good can “I do” making life “better”
 - b. Under the sun it's the only source of happiness
 - i. But happiness fades based on happenings

Read Vs 14-15

1. Solomon briefly escapes his ‘under the sun’ thinking to declare there is a God
 - a. A God that’s eternal AND effective
 - b. A God whose plans are secure
 - c. A God that will take an account of us

Read Vs 16-17

1. In this life there will not be perfect justice
2. Solomon says, almost hoping, that God will judge rightly in the end

Read Vs 18-21

1. Solomon thinks we’re no better than the beasts b/c death takes them AND death takes us
2. He thinks “all go to one place” but this is false
 - a. God knows what His plan is for animals but they have no eternal spirit
 - b. People enter eternal life OR eternal death

Read Vs 22

1. There’s only 1 “work” to possibly rejoice in
 - a. But you have to rise above the sun to see it (Read John 6:29)

#3 – This world has relationships, but never close enough (Chap 4)

Read Chap 4:1-3

1. Considering the **oppressed**; Solomon believes they would be better off dead than alive

Read Vs 4-6

1. Solomon says work & **labor** isn't worth going to great lengths

Read Vs 7-8

1. Why labor if there's no one to inherit it

Read Vs 9-12

1. Work & labor companions are good, but many people are alone and that is empty

Read Vs 13-14

1. **Political success** in vain for your successor may be vain & lead nation right back to poverty

Read Vs 15-16

1. World population keep increasing & it's all vain

#4 – This world has its promises, but they’re not all kept (Chap 5:1-7)

Read Chap 5:1-3

1. **False worship** can happen by our own words to God – it’s like making a false promise to God
2. ‘Sacrifice of fools’ is a ‘quick to speak’ mouth
3. Close your mouth and open your ears

Read Vs 4-7

1. Our mouth can turn pure religion into false religion when we make it depend on us
2. Prov 12:23 – Just b/c we know something doesn’t mean we have the ability to do it & keep our word

#5 – This world has its powers, but not enough peace (Chap 5:8-17)

Read Chap 5:8

1. Oppression is at every level of power

Read Vs 9

1. Even with wealth for some and oppression for all, we still all depend on the farmer's field

Read Vs 10-12

1. With much **increase in wealth** comes much increase in work and stress about it

Read Vs 13-17

1. So the evil of hoarding riches & possessions
 - a. We say they have sentimental value
 - i. But not real value
 - b. We say 'oh these will be valuable in future'
 - i. But that's not right thinking
2. Then disaster comes & takes what we do have leaving us nothing to pass on to next generation

The conclusion under the sun (Chap 5:18-20)

Read Chap 5:18-20

1. His conclusion: 'enjoy the reward of your labor'

Conclusion

So, this world will never meet our expectations

1. **It has its beauty, but not lasting enough**
2. **It has some justice, but not complete enough**
3. **It has relationships, but never close enough**
4. **It has its promises, but they're not all kept**
5. **It has its powers, but never enough peace**

Can we have our expectations met?

When we rise above the sun & are living *in the Son* –
Jesus meets ALL our expectations!

1. Read Psm 27:4 – His beauty endures forever
2. Read Isa 9:7 – His justice endures forever
3. Rev 21:3 – Our relationship endures forever
4. II Cor 1:20 – His promises are always kept
5. Rom 15:13 – He gives us peace thru the power
of the Holy Spirit