

STUDIES IN ECCLESIASTES

TOPIC: Solomon Experiments With Philosophy

SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 3

MEMORY VERSE: Ecclesiastes 3:1

LESSON 3

ECCLESIASTES 3

INTRODUCTION: The wise Solomon is trying to find answers to explain the mysteries of life on this earth. He now turns to a field of science called "*philosophy*" to see if it holds any answers as to what on earth makes man lastingly happy. PHILOSOPHY is a system of beliefs that seeks to explain the causes or nature of things that happen to man upon the earth. Solomon tests three forms of philosophy that are still found in man's thinking even today: 1) *fatalism* 2) *cynicism* and 3) *egotism*. This chapter records the results as **SOLOMON EXPERIMENTS WITH PHILOSOPHY.**

I. SOLOMON EXPERIMENTS WITH FATALISM v 1-15

- A.** Solomon tries the philosophy of "*fatalism*" to prove that this belief brings no lasting joy to man v 1-9
FATALISM-"*the belief that all things are predetermined or subject to fate*"
The fatalist is a person that believes that God has planned out his entire life without giving that man any freewill to follow or not to follow God's plan. This person would believe that he can do nothing to change his fate in life. Therefore, prayer would be useless because it would not change anything. The fatalist would have the viewpoint that "*If it's not God's will for me to be saved, then I won't get saved.*" This is the false belief of those today called "*Calvanists*". NOTICE THE THINGS THAT THE FATALIST BELIEVES ARE PREDETERMINED:
- 1) "*a time to be born, and a time to die*" (v 2) - birth and death --- Fatalism is not true because a man can end his life before it is time. (Ecclesiastes 7:17; Psalm 55:23; Proverbs 10:27)
 - 2) "*a time to plant, and a time to pluck up*" (v 2) - sowing and harvest
 - 3) "*a time to kill, and a time to heal*" (v 3) - killing and healing
 - 4) "*a time to break down, and a time to build up*" (v 3) - tearing down and building up
 - 5) "*a time to weep, and a time to laugh*" (v 4) - crying and laughing

- 6) *“a time to mourn, and a time to dance”* (v 4) - mourning and dancing
- 7) *“a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones”* (v 5) - casting away and gathering
- 8) *“a time to embrace, and a time to refrain”* (v 5) - embracing and refraining
- 9) *“a time to get, and a time to lose”* (v 6) - getting and losing
- 10) *“a time to keep,, and a time to cast away”* (v 6) - keeping and casting away
- 11) *“a time to rend ,and a time to sew”* (v 7) - ripping and sewing
- 12) *“a time to keep silence, and a time to speak”* (7) - silence and speaking
- 13) *“a time to love, and a time to hate”* (v 8) - love and hatred
- 14) *“a time of war, and a time of peace”* (v 8) - war and peace

Solomon realized that *“fatalism”* destroyed any reason for man to work. (v 9) a man could decide to be lazy and simply blame his laziness upon God saying that since he was lazy, God must have chose him to be that way. (Ecclesiastes 1:3; James 1:13; I Thessalonians 4:11)

- B. Solomon concludes that fatalism brings no lasting joy to the heart of man
v 10-15

If every detail of a man’s life was already predetermined, and that man had no choice about it, then man’s life would only be a drudgery. If he did not like his situation, there would be nothing he could do about it. If fatalism were true, then each man could only do what it was already planned for him to do. Man would be nothing more than a *“robot”*. But this belief of fatalism is not true for God has given man a free-will. (Ezra 7:13; Acts 7:51; Revelation 22:17)

II. SOLOMON EXPERIMENTS WITH CYNICISM v 16-21

- A. Solomon tries the philosophy of *“cynicism”* to prove that this belief brought no lasting joy to man v 16-21

CYNICISM-*“the belief that nothing in the world can be trusted; doubt in the sincerity of men’s motives.”*

The cynical person believes that nobody can be trusted, and everything in the world is bad. The cynic sees that men die just as animals die, so he reasons that man is no better than an animal. However, Solomon realizes the difference between man and beast: man’s spirit goes upward (v 21) while the spirit of the beast goes downward to the dust. (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Genesis 1:26-28)

III. SOLOMON EXPERIMENTS WITH EGOTISM v 22

- A. Solomon tries the philosophy of “*egotism*” to prove that this belief brings no lasting joy to man v 22**
EGOTISM-” *the belief of judging everything by its relation to one’s personal interests; love of self*”
The egotist only values things that bring him pleasure, he reasons that since he is only here for a short time, then he should just “*eat, drink, and be merry for*

Lesson 3 page 2

***tomorrow we die.*” Egotism is another false philosophy of life. Lasting joy for man can only be found in submitting oneself to God’s will and following the Lord Jesus Christ. (James 4:7; John 13:17)**

TEACHER TIP: BAD MEN EXCUSE THEIR FAULTS; GOOD MEN ABANDON THEM

NEXT MEMORY VERSE: Ecclesiastes 4:9

Lesson 3 page 3