

CHAPTER 3:1-15

Lesson 5

KEY VERSE(S)—

OUTLINE—

- I. **OBSERVATION:** To Everything There is a Time (3:1-11)
 - A. Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven (3:1-8)
 - B. God's Purpose for Man Under Heaven (3:9-11)
 - 1. Occupy Himself with Eternity (3:9-11)
 - 2. Be Satisfied Without Having Answers (3:11)
- II. **INSTRUCTION:** Rejoice in the Good Which God Gives (3:12-15)
 - A. Nothing Better Than God's Gift of Life (3:12-13)
 - B. Nothing Can Hinder God's Work (3:14-15)

KEY WORDS (Themes)—

SUMMARY—

The Preacher, having concluded that whatever happiness there is in life is dependent on God, next observes that even the most minute details of life have been ordered and set in motion by God. They have not been foreordained, but they work within the sphere of God's control (3:1,17).

He then cites 14 contrasting issues of life (3:2-8). The implication is that man's happiness and greatest good is found from operating within the laws of God and not by trying to control these things ourselves—something we are powerless to do anyway. Since there is a distinguishable system to everything, the conclusion is that this must also be true of man, even though it cannot always be seen or fully comprehended.

Man is created for eternity and his innermost yearnings cannot be filled with temporal, earthly things (3:9-11). Acceptance of God's works and gifts brings man his greatest contentment (3:12-13). Much of man's frustration in life comes from trying to control that which is beyond his control. God does it this way so we will fear Him and recognize our dependence on Him (3:14-15).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Summarize this passage in one sentence.*
- 2) *In a book which many people consider to be fatalistic and skeptical, how is God's providence illustrated in 3:1-8?*
- 3) *Explain the phrase "He has put eternity in their hearts" (3:11).*
- 4) *How must we respond to those works of God that we cannot comprehend (2 Corinthians 5:7)?*

5) *Since it is obvious that man can neither accelerate nor retard God's work in this world, how should man respond to God (3:14-15)?*

ASSIGNMENT—

Quickly reread the Book of Ecclesiastes and identify some of the statements made about the vanity and folly of what man does, and about the permanence of what God does. Record them, along with the verses where you find them, in the chart below.

Works Of Men The Vanity Of Man's Works	Verse	Works Of God The Permanence of God's Works	Verse

Underline or circle the word "God" in your Bible every time you read it in this book. How many times did you find Him mentioned? What does that tell you about one of the themes of this book?

READING SCHEDULE—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday
 Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday
 Saturday