

Meaning in Life in a World that is Not Fair

Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:3

1. The problem: This world is riddled with injustice. (v. 16)

2. The solution: God is a just, final judge. (v. 17)
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

3. The problem: How do we know God is just if we die before justice is seen? (vv. 18-21)
 - a. Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

4. Solomon's advice: Make the most of your work now before it is too late. (v. 22)

5. The problem: There is no one who can stop oppression. (4:1)

6. The solution: Anything to avoid seeing the constant oppression. (4:2-3)

LOOKING AT LIFE BEYOND THE SUN:

- We agree with Solomon that God is the final judge.
 - Psalm 7:11 God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.

- We now know that Jesus stands as final judge.
 - John 5:22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,
 - Acts 17:30-31
 - Revelation 20:11-15

- The resurrection not only qualifies Jesus as judge, but also as our assurance that there is more than just this life.
 - Revelation 1:18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.
 - John 14:2-3

- Jesus gives us hope for tomorrow, but also shows us how to live today.
 - Jesus cared for the oppressed.
 - Luke 4:18-19
 - Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
 - Jesus fought oppression.
 - Mark 11:17 And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

- Final words:
 - To the oppressor: repent and live in fear of God.
 - Proverbs 22:22-23
 - To the oppressed: trust God to bring justice.
 - Romans 12:17-21
 - To everyone: imitate God by caring for the oppressed and seeking justice as you wait for the judge to return.
 - James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.
 - Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do right; seek justice and correct the oppressor. Defend the fatherless and plead the case of the widow."
 - Luke 18:1-8