

All Return to Dust
Ecclesiastes 3:18-22

1556

Theme: Death

Aim: To show that death ends it all is God doesn't exist.

1. Question: "Please explain Ecclesiastes 3:18-22.
2. Romans 15:4. What is it God wants us to learn from this passage?

I. First. Let's understand the verses.

A. Who wrote these verses and why?

1. Solomon, Ecclesiastes 1:1-2.
2. Why did he write them? Ecclesiastes 1:12-18, 12:9-12.
3. Solomon seeking the meaning to life, what is it that is the "whole of man?" Ecclesiastes is the record of that search.

B. No one more qualified to address the issue than Solomon.

1. 1 Kings 3:5-14. Notice all that God gave him.
2. The wisdom is illustrated in 1 Kings 3:16-28, 10:1-7, 10:34.
3. But due to Solomon's wealth and position as King, he was able to explore all options, Ecclesiastes 2:1-11.

C. The key to understand the record of Solomon's search is found in a couple of oft repeated phrases.

1. "Under the sun..." Ecclesiastes 1:3, et al. Phrase occurs 29 times in the book.
2. When you look at life from a strictly horizontal perspective, it is "vanity of vanities." Phrase occurs 3 times, but "vanity" occurs 37 times.
3. And a "grasping for the wind." Phrase occurs 9 times.
4. BUT, put God in the mix (put the vertical perspective in) and it all changes, and the conclusion changes. With God in the mix, the whole of man (what makes him complete) is keeping His commands.

D. Given all that what does Ecclesiastes 3:18-22 mean?

1. Solomon has already affirmed that one event happens to all, Ecclesiastes 2:12-16.
2. But if under the sun is all of reality, who knows what happens to man? Verse 21. Note marginal rendering. Note also ASV, NASV, NIV rendering of the verse.
3. Who comes back to see what remains? Verse 22.
4. It is a rhetorical question used to show the futility of life if only the horizontal perspective is considered.

II. Here is the reality, man is body, soul, and spirit, 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

A. Man is dust, Genesis 3:17-19.

1. Dust becomes a euphemism for death, Psalm 22:12-15, 29.
2. Perhaps this explains the practice of throwing dust in mourning or placing dust on the head, Joshua 7:6, Isaiah 47:1.
3. Man's physical being will decay.

B. The spirit, however, will return to God.

1. That is what we are all looking for, John 14:1-6.
2. Matthew 25. Compare Luke 16:19 ff.
3. Revelation 20:11-15 tells of the judgment, Revelation 21 & 22 tell of the eternal abode of the spirit with God.

C. Deuteronomy 29:29. Compare 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

1. Oh, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

2. I am glad God has revealed what lies beyond the grave.

1. The answer to Solomon's rhetorical question? The body may back to the dust from which it came, but the spirit does return to the God who gave it!

2. Are you ready to receive God's great gift?

3. Where is your spirit headed?

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