

ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE
BIBLE STUDY, 15/08/2007

STUDY 3

GOD'S WAY: INEXPLICABLE

Solomon having shown the vanity of studies, pleasures, and business, and made it to appear that happiness is not to be found in the schools of the learned, nor in the gardens of Epicurus, nor upon the exchange, he proceeds, in this chapter, further to prove his doctrine, and the inference he had drawn from it, That therefore we should cheerfully content ourselves with, and make use of, what God has given us, by showing, I. The mutability of all human affairs (v. 1–10). II. The immutability of the divine counsels concerning them and the unsearchableness of those counsels (v. 11–15). III. The vanity of worldly honour and power, which are abused for the support of oppression and persecution if men be not governed by the fear of God in the use of them (v. 16). For a check to proud oppressors, and to show them their vanity, he reminds them, 1. That they will be called to account for it in the other world (v. 17). 2. That their condition, in reference to this world (for of that he speaks), is no better than that of the beasts (v. 18–21). And therefore he concludes that it is our wisdom to make use of what power we have for our own comfort, and not to oppress others with it.

1. The changes of human affairs

Ecc. 3:1-10; Ecc. 1:17; Heb. 9:27; Rom. 12:15; Psalm 126:2; Joel 2:16; I Cor 7:5; Amos 5:13; Luke 14:26; Ecc. 1:3,13; James 3:6; Psalm 39:2; 44:9; Phil. 4:12; Mat. 10:37-38
To expect unchanging happiness in a changing world, must end in disappointment. To bring ourselves to our state in life, is our duty and wisdom in this world. God's whole plan for the government of the world will be found altogether wise, just, and good. Then let us seize the favourable opportunity for every good purpose and work. The time to die is fast approaching. Thus labour and sorrow fill the world. This is given us, that we may always have something to do; none were sent into the world to be idle.

2. The Divine counsels unchangeable

Ecc. 3: 11-15; Gen. 1:31; Rom. 11:33; Ecc. 2:24; 5:19; Jam. 1:17; Ecc. 5:7; 1:3; 3:9, 22; 1:9; 6:10; Deut 32:4; Ezek. 1:18; Psalm 31:7; Rom. 11:33
Every thing is as God made it; not as it appears to us. We have the world so much in our hearts, are so taken up with thoughts and cares of worldly things, that we have neither time nor spirit to see God's hand in them. The world has not only gained possession of the heart, but has formed thoughts against the beauty of God's works. We mistake if we think we were born for ourselves; no, it is our business to do good in this life, which is short and uncertain; we have but little time to be doing good, therefore we should redeem time. Satisfaction with Divine Providence, is having faith that all things work together for good to them that love him. God doeth all, that men should fear before him. The world, as it has been, is, and will be. There has no change befallen us, nor has any temptation by it taken us, but such as is common to men.

3. The vanity of worldly power

Ecc. 3:16-22; Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6-8; II Cor. 5:10; II Thes 1:6-7; Ecc. 3:1; Psalm 73:22; Ecc. 9:12; Gen. 3:19; Ecc. 12:7; 2:24; 5:18; 6:12; 8:7; 10:14; Psalm 49:14,15, 20; 9; 37:13; Job 24:1; Jer. 22:19; Gal. 6:4; II Cor. 1:12; Luke 12:19; Job 14:21; Psalm 17:14

Without the fear of the Lord, man is but vanity; set that aside, and judges will not use their power well. And there is another Judge that stands before the door. With God there is a time for the redressing of grievances, though as yet we see it not. Solomon seems to express his wish that men might perceive, that by choosing this world as their portion, they brought themselves to a level with the beasts, without being free, as they are, from present vexations and a future account. Both return to the dust from whence they were taken. What little reason have we to be proud of our bodies, or bodily accomplishments! But as none can fully comprehend, so few consider properly, the difference between the rational soul of man, and the spirit or life of the beast. The spirit of man goes upward, to be judged, and is then fixed in an unchangeable state of happiness or misery. It is as certain that the spirit of the beast goes downward to the earth; it perishes at death. Surely their case is lamentable, the height of whose hopes and wishes is, that they may die like beasts. Let our inquiry be, how an eternity of existence may be to us an eternity of enjoyment? To answer this, is the grand design of revelation. Jesus is revealed as the Son of God, and the Hope of sinners.