

Ecclesiastes

Part Three

Ecclesiastes 3:9-10 [New King James] *“What profit has the worker from that in which he labours? I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied.”*

What was the original God-given task that humans were given?

Genesis 2:15-17 [New King James] *“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”*

The first human beings were linked closely to the physical environment.

The saying that *“we are closer to God in a garden than anywhere else”* is very true.

Romans 1:18-22 [New King James] *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools,”*

The environment that God has placed humans in can open our eyes to the very power and character of our Creator God.

Humans were commanded to do two things within the environment in which God placed them –

Tend – the Hebrew word used is *“âbad”* which means to serve to the extent of being a bondservant of the soil which produces our food.

Keep – the Hebrew word used is *“shâmar”* meaning to hedge about, protect, attend to, observe and preserve.

[Please download and study our article ‘*Why The Environment Matters*’ listed under the sub-heading ‘*Agriculture And The Environment*’.]

Satan influenced the first humans to reject God’s way of life that caused them to be forced out of the Garden of Eden and hence out of the presence of their Creator God, [**Genesis 3:22-24**].

From that moment problems mounted in the lives of human beings and eventually the first murder took place, [**Genesis 4:3-8**] and the work involved in producing food, essential for life, became more difficult, [**Genesis 4:11-14**].

Look around to see just how far humans have strayed from this original God-given environment and how problems have increased as a result.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 [New King James] *“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.”*

In spite of being distant from their original environment, crowded in towns and cities that are centres of crime and pollution, we still desire continued life.

Yet whatever our environment we cannot imagine not existing for God has given this powerful desire for life.

Our existence is so brief, [James 4:13-14] there is no way we can understand the work of an Eternal Creator God.

Having this desire for eternal life also means that we can never be completely satisfied with physical pleasures and pursuits.

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 [New King James] *“I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.”*

The conclusion that Solomon comes to in his God-given wisdom is the same as James, to use our limited life to do good and enjoy the product of our labour.

James 4:15-17 [New King James] *“Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

Unless we are willing to use our time and resources to help those in need, God considers that we have sinned, because we have **not** rightly used the gifts and opportunities He has given us.

Ecclesiastes 3:14 [New King James] *“I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him.”*

God being eternal and all powerful creator can accomplish everything He sets His hands to do.

Such knowledge should cause us to fear Him. The Hebrew word translated “fear” is “yâre” meaning to revere, be in reverence of Him to the extent of worship, for who He is and what He is, giving Him first place in our lives.

Ecclesiastes 3:15 [New King James] *“That which is has already been, and what is to be has already been; and God requires an account of what is past.”*

When we apply this to human nature, each generation has been influenced by the “god of this age” Satan, [2 Corinthians 4:4] and the Creator God will allow this to continue until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, this time to take over rulership of the world, [Revelation 20:1-3].

Then the Creator God will require an account of what every human being who has existed, has done with the life He has given them, [2 Corinthians 5:10].

Ecclesiastes 3:16 [New King James] *“Moreover I saw under the sun: in the place of judgment, wickedness was there; and in the place of righteousness, iniquity was there.”*

Every aspect of “judgement” on a human level is infested with corruption, where bribery and money prevails, where the “rights” of the criminal seems to be more important than justice for the victim.

Ecclesiastes 3:17 [New King James] *“I said in my heart, ‘God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.’”*

As Solomon reflects on this situation of lack of true justice and righteous, he can see **no** human solution.

Solomon looks forward to a time in the future when God's Personal intervention will bring a solution. That is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ who will restore right judgement and justice.

Isaiah 9:6-7 [New King James] *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”*

As well as world peace, under the rule of Jesus Christ, humanity will for the first time experience true justice and judgement.

Ecclesiastes 3:18-20 [New King James] *“I said in my heart, ‘Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals.’ For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.”*

The major difference between a human being and an animal is the “human spirit” that gives a human being intellect.

Daniel 4:24-37 [New King James] *“this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump and roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity. All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, ‘Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?’ While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: ‘King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.’ That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws. And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honour and splendour returned to me. My counsellors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.”*

The key to understanding what happened in this incident is found in **verse 36** and the Hebrew word translated “reason” which is “*manda*” meaning intelligible and consciousness, knowledge and thought.

This Hebrew word has the same meaning as the word Hebrew words used in **Job 32:8**.

Job 32:8 [King James] *“But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”*

“*Spirit*” is the Hebrew word “*rûwach*” meaning a rational being including expression and function.

“*Inspiration*” is the Hebrew word “*nshâmâh*” meaning intellect.

What turned the King Nebuchadnezzar from an intellectual human being into a beast was the loss of this “*human spirit*” which was returned to him after humble repentance.

When a human being gives over their mind or “*human spirit*” to an evil spirit, like Satan, by the use of drugs or anger, they can very easily begin to act like beasts towards other human beings.

Only with the influence of the Holy Spirit working within their “*human spirit*” can such evil action be averted.

1 Peter 5:5-8 [New King James] *“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*

We need to humble ourselves before our Creator God, even as Nebuchadnezzar did so that God does not have to “*resist*” us. The Greek word used is “*anthistêmi*” meaning to stand against, oppose, withstand.

James 4:7-10 [New King James] *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”*

When we draw near to our Creator God through prayer and the study of His Word, the Christian Bible, we are resisting the influence of Satan.

Ecclesiastes 3:21 [New King James] *“Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?”*

The Creator God in His Word, the Christian Bible, does give us guidelines to actually know what does happen to the human spirit at death.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 [New King James] *“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”*

The “*human spirit*” will return to the Creator God and be preserved until our resurrection or change, when it will enter a new spiritual body, [1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17].

Ecclesiastes 3:22 [New King James] *“So I perceived that nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for that is his heritage. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?”*

There is no way we can see what will happen to the result of all our work after we die, so God tells us to rejoice in it now, our work not just what it produces physically.