

I. The Response of Man to the Providence of God (vv 9-15).

- A.** Restating the question of 1:3 and 2:22, but into a new context
- B.** The three-fold proper response of man
 - 1)** Be joyful — *Rejoice*
 - a)** What does this mean? (Phil 4:4)
 - b)** But how can I rejoice in the Lord through suffering and uncertainty?
 - c)** This joy begins with contentment for the sovereignty, immutability, and wisdom of God
 - d)** This joy ends with love for the goodness and beauty of God
 - 2)** Do good — *To do good in their lives*
 - 3)** Enjoy the gifts from God
 - 4)** This three-fold response occurs through neither fatalism nor pragmatism, but a true and lively faith (Eph 2:8)
- C.** Uses from the Text
 - 1)** Christians are to train themselves to rejoice (James 1:2-4)
 - 2)** Making good use of the Lord's Day, and particularly the Lord's Table (Mt 9:14-15)

II. The Grief of Wickedness (vv 16-17).

- A.** There are to be places of righteousness and justice in this world
 - 1)** The home
 - 2)** The church
 - 3)** The society
- B.** The reality and great grief of wickedness
 - 1)** The home
 - 2)** The church (WCF 25.5, 31.4)
 - 3)** The society
 - 4)** These cannot be our hope, for we need Christ.
 - 5)** A further comment: We must beware the tendency of our culture, which is to hold on to an identity of 'the victim'. The consequences of this are four-fold.
 - a)** This often cheapens our view of actual, heinous injustice.

- b)** This may at times be used as a cover from facing our own sins.
 - c)** This may at times be used as a cover from fulfilling our own duties.
 - d)** We may not neglect the grace of repentance and forgiveness.
 - C.** The times are an encouragement, for God has set a time of judgment
 - 1)** When shall this take place?
 - 2)** The judgment toward the righteous, who are united to Christ, which is all of grace (1 Cor 3:12-15; Psa 17:15)
 - 3)** The judgment toward the wicked (Amos 5:18-19)
 - D.** Uses from the Text (Luke 18:1-8)
 - 1)** The need for prayer
 - 2)** The need for perseverance
 - 3)** The need for patience
- III. Understanding the Death of All Men (vv 18-22).**
- A.** This is the time which comes upon all
 - B.** The five purposes of suffering and the reality of Death:
 - 1)** As a test (v 18)
 - 2)** As a humiliation (v 18)
 - 3)** As a curse (v 20; Gen 3:19)
 - 4)** As a perplexing riddle (v 21)
 - 5)** As a provider of perspective (v 22)
 - C.** How do we answer the questions of verses 21-22?
 - 1)** With the light of conscience and nature, which is shown in verse 11.
 - 2)** With the Resurrection of Christ, which is the answer and key to the book of Ecclesiastes.
 - D.** Uses from the Text
 - 1)** We must have the end before us in every providence (Col 3:1-4)
 - 2)** We have not only a future portion in the substance of the Kingdom of God, but the present experience of the essence thereof (Rom 14:17)