

Ecclesiastes 4-5

God Is Sovereign

Ecclesiastes: An Overview

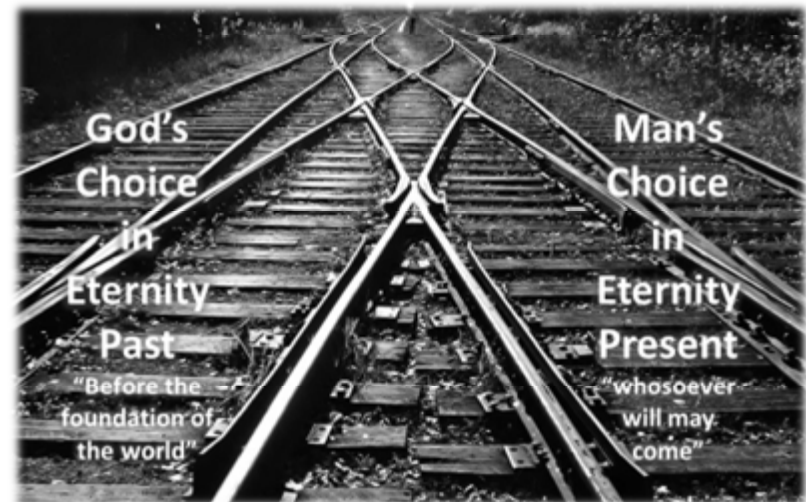
- The Problem (1:1-11)
- The Quest (1:12- 3:13)
- Objections (3:14- 7:29)
- Practical Advice (8:1- 11:10)
- Conclusion (12:1-14)

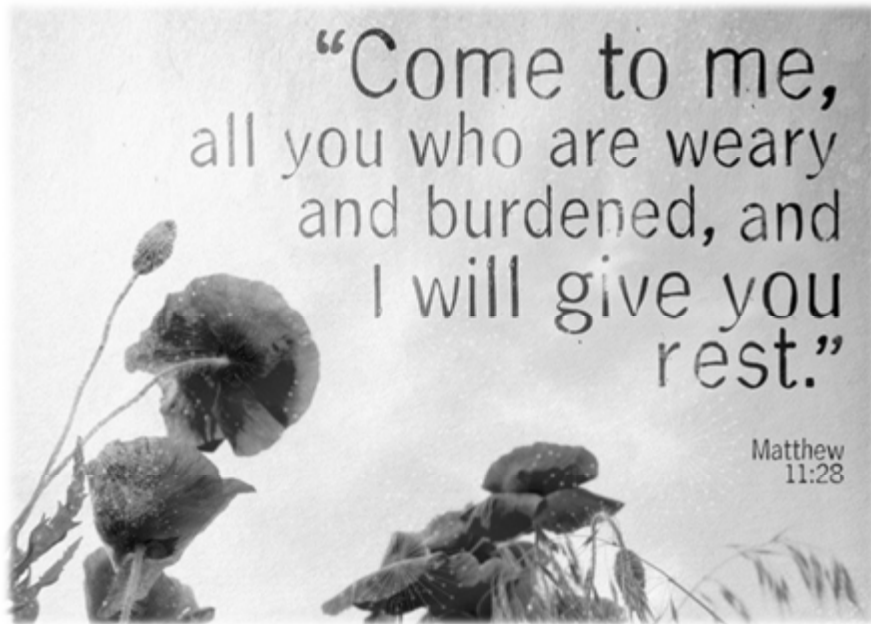
John Currid

What is God's Sovereignty?

- A sovereign is a ruler.
- God is the ultimate ruler of all.
- God is on the throne of the universe
“work[ing] all things according to the counsel of His will” (Eph. 1:11).
- Yet He allows us to make choices and holds us accountable for them.

Mysterious Paradox





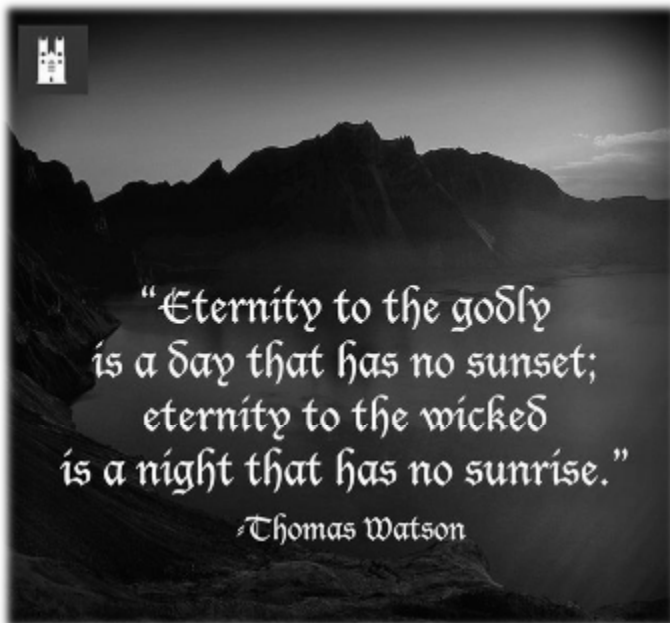
Psalm 73 (Asaph wrote)

3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

16 When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight

17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end.

26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.



Objections to God's Sovereignty

- Injustice (3:16-17)
- Humans as Mere Animals (3:18-22)
- Oppression (4:1-3)
- Jealousy (4:4-6)
- Loneliness (4:7-12)
- Inconsistent Popularity (4:13-16)

Advantages to Having a Partner

- May have an heir (4:8)
- Can accomplish more & earn more (4:9)
- Can lift the fallen (4:10)
- Can keep each other warm (4:11)
- Can protect each other (4:12)—
even better with three!

Daniel 4:34b-35

“For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”

Solomon’s Answers to Objections

- Know your place! “God is in heaven and you are on the earth” (5:2). You are finite, & He is infinite. See Daniel 4:34b-35.
- Approach God with reverence and humble silence (5:1).
- Don’t lecture God (5:2).

Romans 9:20

“But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’” (ESV)

Proverbs 17:28

Even a fool is considered wise when he keeps silent—discerning, when he seals his lips (CSB).

About Vows

- It's better not to vow than to vow and fail to keep it.
- Don't let your foolish words and daydreams cause you to sin.
- Once you've vowed, you can't get out of it even by saying it was a mistake.
- God will punish you for not keeping your word to Him.
- Fear God in advance and don't vow.

Wealth

1. is addictive & unsatisfying (5:10).
2. attracts human leeches (5:11)
3. can become an idol (5:11)
4. promotes insomnia / worry (5:12)
5. may lead to harmful hoarding (5:13)
6. may not last (5:14)
7. will disappear at death (5:15)

Six Refrains that Focus on God's Grace

Eat, drink, & enjoy your daily life as a gift from God.

1. 2:24-26
2. 3:12-13
3. 3:22
4. 5:18-19
5. 8:15
6. 9:7-9

Lessons

- "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker!" (Is.45:9).
- Don't isolate yourself from others.
- Approach God with reverence & humble silence.
- Take vows seriously.
- Don't idolize money.
- Learn from the past, but don't live in it.