

# GOD OVER ALL

## ECCLESIASTES 3



*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

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**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

God Over All: Ecclesiastes 3  
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## Ecclesiastes 3: Introduction

Two perspectives contrast, collide, and interact throughout the book of Ecclesiastes. The first, “under the sun”, represents the secular or this-worldly view of things. In this view, man is the measure of all things, and all things are at his disposal to do with as he sees fit.

The second perspective, “under heaven”, refers to life as it is pursued with reference to God and His eternal will and plan. The main theme of Ecclesiastes is that life only makes sense, and people can only find meaning and true happiness, as they live “under heaven”, trusting in God and seeking to know and do his will.

The primary lesson of Ecclesiastes is that we must not succumb to the temptation to live “under the sun”, lest we come to the end of our days in vanity and meaninglessness. Ecclesiastes 3 argues Solomon’s theme and holds out the lesson for all to consider. Everything has its place in God, Who rules over all things. People are made for eternity, and we can know God and His plan truly, if only partially.

We are wise in this life to seek the Lord, and not to live as mere beasts, with no concern for heavenly matters.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 Everything in Its Place

*Pray Psalm 147.12-14.*

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;

He has blessed your children within you.

He makes peace *in* your borders,

*And* fills you with the finest wheat.

*Read Ecclesiastes 3.1-8.*

*Prepare.*

1. What is Solomon's point in these verses?

2. Why does he suddenly shift to poetry from the prose format he's been using?

*Meditate.*

His brief biographical reflection completed, Solomon now plainly declares his theme: everything has its proper place, and, thus, only makes sense, when it is received and used within the framework of the divine economy ("under heaven", v. 1).

It is significant that Solomon does not say that men can understand everything that happens to them (see on, v. 11), or all the events, processes, creatures, and situations of the vast cosmos. Solomon's theme is a declaration of faith, which he believes all his experience adequately confirms. These paired concepts are meant to take in every aspect of the human experience, things good as well as bad, things beneficial as well as hurtful, things permanent and those of little lasting value. He is not intending to be exhaustive, merely suggestive; the introduction (v. 1) states his case categorically; the examples that follow merely illustrate his point.

Solomon implies that everything in life has its place and purpose within the divine economy, in the sovereign hand of a good and loving God. His theme implies his lesson: cut yourself off from God and your life will be impossible to live in a coherent and meaningful way. This is the way of folly, vanity, and despair.

These verses are set up as a series of parallelisms, which is a device of Hebrew poetry designed to emphasize a common idea. Verse 1 is a regular parallelism: One thing is stated, then the same thing is stated in a different way. Solomon's point is that both life and death have their place in the divine economy. Verses 2-7 contain antithetical parallelisms within regular parallelisms. Solomon states something; then he states its opposite. Then he does it again: verse 2, bringing things into being, then having them pass away; verse 3, destruction and building, and so forth. The last verse (8) presents a change in the structure designed to indicate that the trope has reached its end. Here, instead of a regular parallelism, we find a chiasmic parallelism, in which the middle, or B, parts (hate and war) are joined, and the A parts (love and peace) serve as bookends. The selection of seven for the number of examples also indicates that these are meant to stand for the whole of human experience, since seven is a number of completion in Scripture.

Solomon's poem introducing this part of his testimony is meant to set the stage for all that follows: Life is complex and hard to understand, but "under the heavens", we can trust that it all makes sense.

Reflect.

1. What do these verses suggest about the sovereignty of God? Is He sovereign? Can we always understand the workings of His sovereignty? What should we conclude from these verses?
2. How does poetry work to help us remember important truths, or to experience them in a different way?
3. Should we be glad about there being a time for every purpose under heaven? Explain.

*Sow in good season, and gather together, and open your barns when it is the time to do so; and plant in season, and let the clusters be cut when they are ripe, and launch boldly in spring, and draw your ship on shore again at the beginning of winter, when the sea begins to rage. And let there be to you also a time for war and a time for peace; a time to marry, and a time to abstain from marrying; a time for friendship, and a time for discord, if this be needed; and in short a time for everything, if you will follow Solomon's advice. And it is best to do so, for the advice is profitable.* Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389), *On Holy Baptism, Oration 40.14-15*

*Let everything in my life be for me a summons to praise and thanksgiving, because I know, Lord, that...*

*Pray Psalm 147.1-5.*

There is a place for everything in the divine economy, and He works it all together for our good. Praise the Lord for His manifold wisdom and unfailing goodness.

*Sing Psalm 147.1-5.*

**Psalm 147.1-5** (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the Lord!  
With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The Lord builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.  
The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

The stars He counts, He knows the name of every chosen soul;  
His pow'r is great, and great His fame Who understands us whole.

## 2 Truth, but not Omniscience

*Pray Psalm 147.11, 12.*

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,  
In those who hope in His mercy.  
Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!  
Praise your God, O Zion!

*Read Ecclesiastes 3.9-11.*

*Prepare.*

1. How was Solomon feeling about what he had seen in life?
2. What kind of creatures are human beings?

*Meditate.*

The question Solomon raised in verse 9 reaches back to chapters 1 and 2. He's recalling "the burdensome task" assigned us by God (1.13, 14), as well as the mess he'd made of that task (ch. 2). He wants to bring his thoughts and work back to a proper "under heaven" perspective. In verse 13, he will answer the question he raised in verse 9.

In Ecclesiastes 1.13 and 14, Solomon launched into an "under the sun" section of his life. In our verses for today, he is telling us where he has come out: seeing life as God sees it. Solomon certainly strayed from the path of wisdom; however, here he indicates that, in his old age, he has returned ("I have seen..." v. 10).

From the perspective of God, and faith in Him, the world is laced with beauty; and people, who are made in the divine image ("eternity in their hearts") are able to see and appreciate the beauty of life. When we trust in God, we don't have to figure everything out; we can rest in the One Who knows perfectly, and trust in Him to do all things well. We cannot know *exhaustively*, so as to explain everything completely. But we can know *truly*, as long as God is our ultimate frame of reference.

In the divine economy we don't have to know all the answers to life's conundrums. Still, we have the God-given task of learning as much as we can. We can expect to encounter many difficulties, trials, and challenges. We must certainly try to understand these, as far as we are able. However, in the end, we accept by faith that God knows all things, has a place and purpose for everything, and is able to accomplish His purpose through any situation.

Our duty is to wait on Him and seek the wisdom He will give us to live for Him each day.

*Reflect.*

1. What evidence do you see that God has "put eternity" in the hearts of human beings?
2. Why can we not "find out the work that God does from beginning to end"? What is the role of faith in coming to know anything?
3. How would you answer the question Solomon posed in verse 9?

*Of all these things there is not one either idle or useless. Not even the meanest of them—the hair, or the nails, or such*

*like—is so; but all have their service to do, and all their contribution to make, some of them to the soundness of bodily constitution and others of them to beauty of appearance. For Providence cares not only for the useful but also for the seasonable and beautiful.* Dionysius of Alexandria (d. ca. 264), *Fragment 1.4*

*Everything in my life has a place in my calling to serve You, Lord. Help me to know the things and people in my life as You know them, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 147.6-13.*

Commit your day to the Lord, to knowing Him in it and serving Him through it in all you do, with all you have.

*Sing Psalm 147.6-13.*

**Psalm 147.6-13**(*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.

Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

He brings refreshing rain to earth and feeds the beasts so dear.

He puts in man's strength naught of worth, but loves those who God fear.

O praise your God, Jerusalem, O Zion, praise the Lord!

He strengthens those who trust in Him with blessings from His Word.

### 3 Life Is God's Gift

*Ecclesiastes 3 (3)*

*Pray Psalm 147.19, 20.*

He declares His word to Jacob,  
His statutes and His judgments to Israel.  
He has not dealt thus with any nation;  
And *as for His* judgments, they have not known them.  
Praise the LORD!

*Read Ecclesiastes 3.12, 13.*

*Prepare.*

1. From which perspective – “under the sun” or “under heaven” – is Solomon writing these verses?
2. In what sense are life and work gifts from God?

*Meditate.*

At the beginning of this section Solomon raised the question he had pondered “under the sun” in 2.18-22. Now, however, in the context of his primary theme – life “under heaven” – Solomon’s answer is much more hopeful.

Given the sovereignty of God (3.1-8), His granting men insight into His works (vv. 10, 11), and man’s having been made for eternity, Solomon counsels joy and good works as that with which a man should fill up his life. Life and its many vicissitudes are gifts from God; therefore, men are advised to receive life as such, to use the gifts God gives them as God intends, and to know the pleasure of the Lord in all the work they do all the days of their lives.

Such an approach to life is only possible “under heaven”, that is, looking to God, resting in His eternal and perfect wisdom, and seeking to discern His will for every area of life.

This is life as God intends it – joyful, pleasurable, filled with thanksgiving and good works (cf. Rom. 14.17, 18). This doesn’t mean that we won’t know trials and sorrow; nor does it imply that we will always be able to understand everything that happens to us. God alone is sovereign, omniscient, and all-wise. While people live on the earth they must rest in His goodness and sovereignty, seeking in all they do to discover how God intends for them to live before Him, according to the times and seasons of their lives.

This is the life of faith, of waiting upon the Lord, and of serving Him and His purposes in everything we do.

In these verses Solomon gives us a glimpse ahead to the lifestyle of the redeemed who, as they await the consummation of all things, look to God through Jesus Christ, and offer their lives up with gratitude in service to Him each day.

*Reflect.*

1. To “rejoice” has a *heavenward* orientation, while *to do good* is a more horizontal perspective. Explain.



2. In what sense is it true that “nothing is better” than these two things? Would someone living “under the sun” agree with this? Why or why not?

3. Does God really provide such ordinary, daily things as what we eat and drink? What other gifts does He give us daily? How should we respond to these?

*He means here that the beauty of the material world is temporal, not eternal. For, after cleansing, the one who is pure no longer needs to view material things only as a diversion of the mind. Rather, he can also use them in spiritual contemplation.* Evagrius of Pontus (345-399), *Ecclesiastes 15.3.10-13*

*Fill me with Your joy today, Lord, and send me forth to do good with all the gifts You provide, especially as I...*

*Pray Psalm 147.15-20.*

Praise God for the power and reliability of His Word, for by it He is making all things new. Where do you need more of His newness today?

*Sing Psalm 147.15-20.*

**Psalm 147.15-20** (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

His Word to earth runs to and fro to carry out His will;  
He brings the rain, He sends the snow, and none can keep Him still.

His Word He to His Church bestows – His promises and Law.  
No other nation God thus knows: praise Him with songs of awe!

## 4 Patterns in Eternity

*Pray Psalm 147.12-14.*

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!  
Praise your God, O Zion!  
For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;  
He has blessed your children within you.  
He makes peace in your borders,  
And fills you with the finest wheat.

*Read Ecclesiastes 3.14, 15.*

*Prepare.*

1. How does God encourage us to fear Him? Why?
2. How should we think about the patterns and routines of our lives?

*Meditate.*

Here is the capstone of Solomon's theme: God's work is perfect and eternal. His purposes and plans are unalterable, and no one can keep Him from fulfilling what He intends to do.

Thus, if we can learn to rest in God's purposes, receive His gifts, and take up our work according to His plan, we can do good and serve the purposes of eternity.

The fear of the Lord is integral in this, for by it we acknowledge His might and accept our place of humility in His sight. This is the only way to make sense out of life and to live in a purposeful and joyful manner. As Solomon previously declared in 1.1-11, the patterns and repetitions of life can lead to disillusionment and despair. Here, however, he insists that God orders our lives by such patterns and repetitions (The ESV marginal, "what has been pursued" is to be preferred at the end of v. 15).

Life does not have to be meaningless or monotonous, even though it's filled with a lot of the same-old-same-old. God uses the routines and patterns of life and the cosmos to accomplish His eternal purposes. They who fear and look to Him understand this, and find joy, pleasure, and satisfaction in trusting in the Lord.

Think of the many patterns and routines that characterize the world and our lives in it. Get up and go to work, eat three meals a day, watch the news, time with the kids; meanwhile, the earth keeps turning, the weather comes and goes, the vast cosmos expands. God is in all these patterns, and He is able to bring glory to Himself in them all (Ps. 19.1-6; 1 Cor. 10.31). The Word of God upholds the universe and everything in it (Heb. 1.3), pursuing patterns and ways that are so regular and reliable that people have come to regard them as "laws".

But what we who trust in the Lord experience in such patterns, and what we acknowledge, is the steadfast love of the Lord and His faithfulness in doing all things according to His good pleasure in their unique times and seasons (Ps. 136).

*Reflect.*

1. Why is it beneficial to know that God rules all the patterns and routines of life?

2. The laws of physics and the cosmos are really only descriptions of the faithful and wise work of God. Explain.

3. What does it mean to fear God? Why does God insist that we should fear Him? How does fearing the Lord benefit us?

*God has made creation so that human beings, through an outward picture of the greatness and beauty of created things, might [understand] that God exists. He himself manages the cosmos and looks after it so that we—while the whole cosmos is orderly guided by one commander and provider and ruler and charioteer and king—get the outward picture that there is someone who rules the cosmos. Didymus the Blind, (313-398), Commentary on Ecclesiastes 88.29*

*Thank You, Lord, for the evidence of Your faithfulness on every hand. Help me to acknowledge your faithfulness as I...*

*Pray Psalm 147.1-14.*

Praise God for the patterns and routines mentioned in these verses, and for any others that He brings to mind.

*Sing Psalm 147.1-14.*

**Psalm 147.1-14** (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the Lord!

With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The Lord builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.

The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

The stars He counts, He knows the name of every chosen soul;

His pow'r is great, and great His fame Who understands us whole.

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.

Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

He brings refreshing rain to earth and feeds the beasts so dear.

He puts in man's strength naught of worth, but loves those who God fear.

O praise your God, Jerusalem, O Zion, praise the Lord!

He strengthens those who trust in Him with blessings from His Word.

Around us He has spread His peace; our borders are secure.

His bounty daily shall increase; His grace to us is sure!

## 5 Yes, But...

*Pray Psalm 147.19, 20.*

He declares His word to Jacob,  
His statutes and His judgments to Israel.  
He has not dealt thus with any nation;  
And *as for His* judgments, they have not known them.

*Read Ecclesiastes 3.16, 17.*

*Prepare.*

1. What did Solomon observe happening “under the sun”? Is that still happening today?
2. Is God indifferent to this situation?

*Meditate.*

If it is the case that God is in the details – the patterns and routines of life – then why do we find wickedness where it ought not be?

Solomon does not deny that things aren’t what they’re supposed to be. This is a function of people living “under the sun” and apart from faith in God – as Solomon did for many years. But God takes note of those who transgress His purposes. His judgment will come in His way and time. Even wickedness, therefore, has its place “under heaven”, because it provides a foil against which the justice and might of God can be displayed.

So, Solomon says, don’t be surprised when you see wickedness having its season. The wicked may think they’re “getting away with it”, but God sees, and God will respond with judgment in His own good time (cf. Ps. 10).

The ongoing presence of wickedness in the world simply testifies to the reality and effects of mankind’s fall into sin. People know they have been made for God, but they rebel against Him, preferring their own way of life rather than His (Rom. 1.18-32). God gradually gives up sinners to their own wickedness, all the while striving by His Spirit (Gen. 6.3) to woo them back to Him.

People who choose to live in sin, knowing in their hearts that God has made them for good works (Rom. 2.14, 15), consign themselves to judgment, both in this life and in the life to come. The righteous understand the judgment of God and, looking in faith to Him, eschew everything that does not comport with His will, and seek to do that which they know will please and honor Him (cf. Eccl. 3.12).

*Reflect.*

1. According to Romans 1.18-32, what forms does the judgment of God take at this time?
2. Does the presence of wickedness and evil in places where justice and righteousness should be mean that God is not sovereign? Explain.
3. We know that the judgment of God both is now, and is coming. What place should this have in our presentation of the Gospel?

*Then there will be no person of our times who will be able at that judgment to find an excuse for unbelief when everyone shall call on Christ... Augustine (354-430), Letter 232*

*Thank You, Lord, for delivering me from judgment and wrath. Help to live and serve You today, so that others...*

*Pray Psalm 147.14-20.*

Pray for the world, for all who ignore God's Word and are thus subject to His judgment. Pray for lost people you know, and whom you might see today.

*Sing Psalm 147.14-20.*

**Psalm 147.14-20** (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Around us He has spread His peace; our borders are secure.

His bounty daily shall increase; His grace to us is sure!

His Word to earth runs to and fro to carry out His will;  
He brings the rain, He sends the snow, and none can keep Him still.

His Word He to His Church bestows – His promises and Law.  
No other nation God thus knows: praise Him with songs of awe!

## 6 Mere Beasts?

*Pray Psalm 147.5, 6.*

Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;  
His understanding is infinite.  
The LORD lifts up the humble;  
He casts the wicked down to the ground.

*Read Ecclesiastes 3.18-21.*

*Prepare.*

1. How are people like animals? How are they *not* like animals?
2. How would you answer Solomon's question in verse 21?

*Meditate.*

We know that Solomon is reflecting here from an "under the sun" perspective because of his reference to the children of men and to vanity. But note that God is sovereign even over those who refuse to acknowledge Him.

Why is there injustice in the earth? God is testing men, in order to show them that, apart from any absolute and eternal reference point, they are no more than beasts. If men are not made in God's image, then there can be no other explanation but that human beings are just a higher form of animal, as evolutionary theory insists. For our observations of men and beasts reveal that, whatever may be our differences, we are basically the same, and all are consigned to the same fate. If we do not have God's Word, telling us that we are His children and showing us how we ought to live, then we have no grounds for supposing ourselves superior to the beasts.

Thus God tests men in order to help them see the folly of trying to make sense out of their lives and experiences apart from Him.

It is interesting to consider that this is precisely where evolutionary and secular thinking leaves us: human beings are animals, differentiated from the other beasts only by our greater brain capacity. Might that be exceeded some day by another creature? Or might AI enable us to go beyond our animal limitations into some new form of *Übermensch*? What difference does it make?

Secular thinking consigns people to the realm of beasts; thus, we should not be surprised when people consistently act that way. In this time of redemption and restoration, God is testing humankind by allowing people to embrace flimsy and frivolous worldviews which, were they to examine them carefully, they would discover to be nothing more than vanity and feeding on the wind.

The duty of the redeemed, like Solomon seeking to warn his son, is to help those living "under the sun" to see the folly of their thinking and the futility of trying to make sense out of life apart from faith in God.

*Reflect.*

1. Why is it wrong to classify human beings as a form of animal? How does Psalm 8 teach us to think

about our relationship to animals? To God?

2. Evolutionary theory uses animal physiology, psychology, and sociology to draw conclusions relevant to human life. What's good about this? What's wrong with it?

3. Does God test people today? Does He test believers? Has He tested you? Why does He do this? What does He want us to learn?

*Animals are mortal beings without reason, angels are immortal beings with reason, human beings are mortal beings with reason. Regarding mortality the human being is grouped together with beings without reason. Regarding reason [the human being] is grouped together with the immortal beings, since angels also have reason. Regarding its senses ... the human being is of the same kind as the beings without reason. But the human being is receptive to something to which no other mortal being is receptive: its soul can become perfect, as far as this can be achieved, and become like God, as far as it is possible.... Didymus the Blind (313-398), Commentary on Ecclesiastes 99.1*

*Whatever test You put me through today, Lord, let me pass with flying colors, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 147.1-7.*

Pray for any unbelievers you will meet today, that God will enable you to show them the kind of dignity, respect, love, and concern that they deserve as His image-bearers.

*Sing Psalm 147.1-7.*

**Psalm 147.1-7** (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the Lord!

With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The Lord builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.

The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

The stars He counts, He knows the name of every chosen soul;

His pow'r is great, and great His fame Who understands us whole.

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.

Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

## 7 Seize the Day

*Pray Psalm 147.11, 12.*

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,  
In those who hope in His mercy.  
Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!  
Praise your God, O Zion!

*Read Ecclesiastes 3.22.*

*Review Ecclesiastes 3.*

*Prepare.*

1. For whom is there “nothing better” than what Solomon mentions here?
2. Can we know the future? Who can “bring” us to know it?

*Meditate.*

Here Solomon returns to the conclusion of his theme about how to live “under heaven”: men should rejoice in their work and their lot (NKJV, *heritage*), because this is all they have in this life (3.12, 13). They should “seize the day” and not consign themselves to depression and disappointment by spending too much time thinking about what happens when they die.

Life “under the sun” is meaningless and offers no abiding hope. Thus, all a man has “under the sun” is the day before him and the work of his hands; if he doesn’t learn to rejoice in such simple things, he will know nothing of happiness in this life.

Of course, Solomon knows full well that people are not so easily satisfied; his own experience is proof of that. He probably anticipates Rehoboam saying in response to this verse, “No way!” But he at least wants to take his son to this logical conclusion of what life is like when we’re trying to live apart from God. If you can’t rejoice in your portion or lot in life, then why go on? They who live “under heaven” can actually do what Solomon counsels, for their joy is in knowing that all of life, death, the future, and eternity are in the hands of God, Whom they trust.

This complex chapter is the heart of Solomon’s argument. He insists that people are made for eternity and that they can only bear up under the pressures, vicissitudes, and uncertainties of life by resting in the sovereign care of God and trusting in His wisdom and power. “Under the sun” life has no meaning. But “under heaven” people can find joy, happiness, and meaning in even the most mundane and routine of tasks.

This is the message believers must boldly declare to our secular age. Like Solomon counseling his wayward son, we must engage our unbelieving neighbors in good faith, winsomely, with respect and passion, in order to lead them to trace out their unbelieving worldviews to their logical and tragic conclusions.

But how can lost and hopeless (Eph. 2.12) people break free of the confines and blinders of their false worldview? Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to deliver people from death to life (Rom. 1.16, 17).



Reflect.

1. What does it mean to rejoice in your own works? Which works? Why should Christians especially engage in this?
2. “Under the sun” no one can know the future. What about “under heaven”? How should what we *can* know about the future affect how we *should* live today?
3. The NKJV word *heritage* in this verse is better translated *lot* or *portion*. For the person who lives “under heaven”, of what does that portion or lot consist (cf. Ps. 16.5, 6)?

*Ecclesiastes, instructing us through enigmas, guides us to the other life.* Olympiodorus (early 6<sup>th</sup> century),  
*Commentary on Ecclesiastes 3.21*

*You are my Portion, O Lord, and my Lot, and this means that today I can...*

*Pray Psalm 147.1-20.*

We can know the future because God and His promises are there. Thank and praise the Lord for the ways He will unfold His future for you today.

*Sing Psalm 147.1-20.*

**Psalm 147.1-20** (*St. Ann: Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the Lord!

With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The Lord builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.

The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

The stars He counts, He knows the name of every chosen soul;

His pow’r is great, and great His fame Who understands us whole.

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.

Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

He brings refreshing rain to earth and feeds the beasts so dear.

He puts in man’s strength naught of worth, but loves those who God fear.

O praise your God, Jerusalem, O Zion, praise the Lord!

He strengthens those who trust in Him with blessings from His Word.

Around us He has spread His peace; our borders are secure.

His bounty daily shall increase; His grace to us is sure!

His Word to earth runs to and fro to carry out His will;

He brings the rain, He sends the snow, and none can keep Him still.

His Word He to His Church bestows – His promises and Law.

No other nation God thus knows: praise Him with songs of awe!

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. How does it help us to know that God is sovereign over everything that exists and all that happens to us?
2. How does knowing this affect our attitude toward our *portion* or *lot* in life?
3. Human beings are a kind of “in between” creature. Explain. What are the implications of this for our lot in life?
4. Why is it unwise for people to regard themselves as only a higher form of animal?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from Ecclesiastes 3? How are you putting that lesson to work in your Personal Mission Field?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.