

WHAT'S THE POINT?

the gospel according to Ecclesiastes

*“The Injustice of Life”
Ecclesiastes 3:6-4:3*

Years ago, I remember reading the story about a Russian Christian named Vanya. Being in a communistic country, Vanya was persecuted for following after Jesus. He was sentenced to nights outside in the dead of winter – wearing his summer uniform. Even that was miraculous since he should have died within the first night. Miracles took place in this man’s life, sending a message to the fellow soldiers and persecutors that there is a God to be followed and a Savior to trust. But eventually, Vanya died, more-than-likely being killed by the persecutors.

What was Vanya’s crime? Did he do anything morally wrong? No. Yet the government persecuted him for loving Jesus and wanting others to love him, too. Of course Vanya is not the only story of the persecution of Christians. Subscribe to *Voice of the Martyrs* or *Open Doors*, and you will receive constant updates on professing Christians being persecuted around the globe – being beaten and tortured and killed for their faith.

When we read these stories, I think it’s only natural for us to wonder *why*. This is somewhat the question that Solomon is asking in the text we’re going to be studying this morning. But he broadens the question to include not only injustices against the godly, but injustices in general. And this is where I find the text to be so applicable for us even today. I think about the suicide bombings in Israel or the shootings in America. I think of the rising tensions between cops and the black community. I think of corrupt leaders and corrupt rulings even within these United States of America. I can wonder, “Why, Lord?” And then my heart calls out, “Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!”

Recently I heard a story of a man who when he was a child was away for a little while and before he returned home, he was told that his parents got into a fight and his dad shot and killed his mother. The story went on and he said that his dad was 13 years in prison. Now some of you here might think that’s a fair sentence, but to me I was shocked! Here in this country, someone can get 20 years for pedophilia, but only 13 years for murder? I’m not trying to limit pedophilia. All I’m saying is, “Where are the scales of justice?” Here’s a man who lost a mother, a father, a family.

And there are so many other injustices in this world when we think of sex trafficking, violation of the rights of the poor because the wealthy have more power. Just turn on the television and watch the news. It’s an endless cycle of one bad things after another. Seriously, if you want to get depressed, turn on the news.

How are we to look at all of these injustices? Honestly, if we only look at them from Solomon’s “under the sun” perspective – meaning, looking at them from a viewpoint that is devoid of God – then all we can do is despair. But Solomon has been revealing to us that there’s more to the story than what we can see. In the text we studied last week, Solomon expressed that there are two vantage points to evaluate what we see. There’s the perspective of God and then there’s our perspective. If we look at things from our perspective, we’re limited because we only can see what we can see. But God, on the other hand, is

in control of time. He's over time. He can do whatever he wills. And from his vantage point, he's making everything beautiful in its time. Even though we might only see chaos, God is in control of all things and is weaving everything together for his glory – which is best.

Think of it this way. One pastor illustrates this point by talking about a tapestry on a loom. He writes, "From the vantage underneath, little is visible but snarls and knots. But above, the beautiful pattern of the work on the loom can be seen. As Solomon as shown, we live our lives under the loom, and everything we see is vanity." (as quot. in O'Donnell, p. 74). If we evaluated someone's work based on what we see under the loom, we might say, "You need to get out of this business!" But in reality, we're the ones missing it. So, just as we'd be wrong to judge the weaver on what we see under the loom; so Solomon says we're wrong for judging God based on our "under-the-sun" vantage point.

From a spiritual perspective, Solomon is saying that there's an "under the sun" perspective and there's an "above the sun" perspective. We only see the one side of the cross-stitch (so to speak), but God is stitching things together to perfection! And this is how we are to view the injustices around us, too. Solomon's essential premise is **God makes all things beautiful in its time**. And then he moves into these verses to test that premise. When we hear that God is in control of all and will work all things together for good for those who love God, we can tend to say, "Yeah but what about this scenario?" That's exactly what Solomon is doing here. Does God make all things beautiful in its time? Well, let's look at the topic of injustice to see.

So, on that note, open your Bibles to Ecclesiastes 3, and I'll begin reading in verse 16. Before I read though, let me ask you to pray silently – asking God to reveal his truth to you and to our congregation as a whole.

*¹⁶ Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness. ¹⁷ I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work. ¹⁸ I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. ¹⁹ For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. ²⁰ All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. ²¹ Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth? ²² So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him? **4** Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. ² And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. ³ But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun. ¹*

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 3:16–4:3.

God makes *everything* beautiful in its time? What about the injustices we see? How can God possibly be good and allow these things to happen? You're telling me he's still in control? Why doesn't he stop it? To these questions, many people in our day (and throughout the ages) will say, "What's the point?" They recognize the vanity around them, but then they sadly decide that there must be no point. But Solomon is going to argue for something different. Instead of giving up and giving into the pressure of the vanity, he's going to reveal how we ought to respond. With resolute confidence in the midst of a realistic outlook on this vain world, Solomon affirms that truly God makes everything beautiful in its time. So, let's start with Solomon's test-case of injustice. Injustice is the problem and would seem to negate God's sovereign and good control.

Before we get into the problem, I did want to say that I'm going to be taking this text a little out of order this morning, but I don't believe I'm changing God's message by doing so. I hope it helps to solidify God's truth in our mind. So now let's dive into the text.

The Problem: Injustice

Look at verse 16 and 4:1 with me: ¹⁶Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness.² Verse 1: Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them.³

Solomon looks around and sees that in the courts, there's injustice and wickedness. Of all the places that there should be justice, there isn't. He sees that that scales of justice have been broken. So he cries out unfair! This desire for justice is innate within all of us because God created humans in his image and God himself delights in justice and abhors oppression. In Amos 4, we read about God punishing those who "oppress the poor." In Proverbs 14:31, we read, "**Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.**"⁴ In Isaiah 10:1-2, God speaks through Isaiah to talk more specifically about the oppression and who often gets hurt by oppression. Isaiah writes, "**Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, ²to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!**"⁵ The widow and the orphan and the poor.

This was a problem then and it's still a problem in our day. We can't simply close our eyes to the problem and say to others, "Try harder and you'll be like me." As long as we live in a fallen world (which we do), there will be injustices. And we should be burdened by this – like David, Solomon, Amos, Ezekiel, Isaiah and so many others were burdened. Burdened so much so that we would long for the oppressed to be comforted.

Notice that Solomon uses the word "comfort" twice in 4:1. He's not just angered at those who bring the injustice, but he's burdened for those who are oppressed. He has a heart of compassion and empathy for them. He gets into their life so-to-speak and says they're crying and there's no one by their side. The

² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 3:16.

³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 4:1.

⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Pr 14:31.

⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Is 10.

powerful oppress and there's no one by the victim's side. Get this picture. Solomon is not wrong in being mournful over this!

We need to take this to heart, Ventura. In the political sphere where sides are lobbing bombs at one another, Christians of all people should be concerned for souls and concerned for the hurting. Whether or not it was their sin that got them there in the first place – we of all people should remember that we were lost in our sins and yet God had compassion on us because of Christ. In addition, in a spiritual sense, many times the words that describe us as Christians are “poor,” “weak,” “sinful,” “needy.” Therefore, we should have a heart for these types of individuals to give a picture of the gospel message to the world.

In many places around the world, justice is represented with a sculpture of Lady Justitia. She's blindfolded with balanced scales in her right hand and a sword in her left hand. This represents impartial, fair evaluation and swift judgment. But as one man named Sean O'Donnell puts it, Solomon is stating here that “the blindfold is off, the scales off-balanced, and the sword stolen” (O'Donnell, p. 83). Here's the problem; and Solomon's heart aches. And so should ours. This is a genuine problem. Looking at this from *under the sun* (or, under the loom) we just see problems and knots. How can God be in control of *this*?

So we see in this text how we could react to this. I want to focus on this first because I want us to see that there are actually two parts of response in the midst of injustice. One negative (and by that I don't mean it's all bad, but some of it is). The other response given, which we'll talk about later is positive. But I don't want to get to the positive just yet. So, let's look at

The Reaction: Despair

Look at verse 19 with me first: ¹⁹For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. . . .⁶ Now look at verse 2 of chapter 4: ²And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. ³But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.⁷

Verse 19 is part of a larger argument that we'll get to in just a little bit, but what we do see is Solomon saying that life is vanity – meaning that it's vaporous. Here are people working hard to get what they want the way they want it – and they're going to die! They're taking advantage of people, doing sinful, unjust actions, to what end? They're not taking any of it with them once they're in the grave.

But the picture gets bleaker when you look at chapter 4. Solomon goes to the side of the victim and realizes that if he evaluates just from “under the sun,” what's their hope? They get misery heaped upon misery with no comfort. He says that in one sense, it'd be better off if they were dead because then at least they wouldn't experience the injustice. But even better than that, it would have been better if they were never born.

Now again, remember that Solomon is evaluating from a purely secular viewpoint. So, in one sense, he's looking at life from an agnostic or atheist's perspective. If there is no God and there is nothing but bad

⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 3:19.

⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 4:2–3.

happening in your life and it's never getting better, why exist? It probably would have been better for you to have not existed. By the way, Solomon's not the only one who has thought this. The writer, Ernest Hemingway once wrote, "**Life is just a dirty trick from nothingness to nothingness**" (as quot. in O'Donnell, p. 87). One man by the name of Somerset Maugham wrote, "**If one puts aside the existence of God . . . one has to make up one's mind as to the use of life. If death ends all, if I have neither to hope for good nor to fear evil, I must ask myself what I am here for, and how in these circumstances I must conduct myself. Now the answer is plain, but so unpalatable that most will not face it. There is no meaning for life and [thus] life has no meaning**" (as quot. in Ryken, p. 105).

If there is no God, the oppressor and the oppressed, the victimizer and the victim receive the same end. And if there is no God, we might as well despair in these thoughts. But Solomon doesn't keep us in despair. Instead, he helps us to understand the beautiful tension. He causes us to stare at the bottom of the loom – recognizing the sadness; but he also takes us above the loom to show us reality.

The Reality: 1) God judges perfectly and 2) God is exposing people's finiteness.

Look at verse 17 and we'll see the first point Solomon gives to settle our minds in the fact that God is making all things beautiful in its time: ¹⁷I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.⁸

By the way, this verse does not negate the injustices in this world. As I said earlier, we're taking verses in a different order here, but I think it's important to note that Solomon first gives a positive answer to the cry of injustice and then he moves into sorrow in chapter 4 over the injustice. Clearly someone who follows God can have mournful hope or a hope-filled mourning. We don't just go up to suffering people and say, "Everything will be better in the end." We sorrow with them *while* we point them to God. And this is what I believe Solomon does in this text. As he has been saying God is in control of everything, he recognizes one of the greatest problems to unite to the truths of God's sovereignty is the problem of injustice. Almost miraculously, Solomon's first response to this isn't despair. His first response is to essentially say, "Since God is real, I must see things from his perspective."

So, Solomon confesses that God judges perfectly. But notice how he states this. He says, "I said in my heart." I love how practical this statement is. Often we struggle with certain things and wonder, "How can God be just?" We can become angry at God for his sovereign ways. Read the psalmists like David and Asaph and you hear their desperation before the Lord. But like David and Asaph, Solomon follows in their footsteps and says, "I have to preach the truth to myself." There was one 20th century preacher named Martyn Lloyd-Jones who once said,

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: 'Why art thou cast down'-what business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself: 'Hope thou in God'-instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy

⁸ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 3:17.

other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: 'I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God'. (Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cures, p. 2)

This is what Solomon is doing here and this is what we all need to do. Do you have doubt that God is wrong? Preach to your soul. Say to yourself what the truth is. I know some here could say, "I try to tell myself what is true, but I keep struggling." Defy yourself! Preach, preach, preach to yourself and, by grace, stand on the promises.

I love Solomon's confession here. He might be tempted to waver, but he believes God judges perfectly. And this affirms what he already said, there's a time for everything in its time and the time is perfect timing. Those who think they're going to get away with it completely have perfect judgment waiting at the perfect time.

Preach this truth to your soul because it is sure! But then there's another point Solomon wants to make. If God is making all things beautiful in its time and to everything there is a season, then God isn't merely waiting for the future. He must also be doing something right now. And that's where Solomon goes. He says that God is exposing people's finiteness.

Read verses 18-21 with me again: ¹⁸I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. ¹⁹For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. ²⁰All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return. ²¹Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?⁹

God is *testing*. The idea of the word "test" means to reveal something. It's like if someone were to test gold to see what karat it is. Or it's like when you take a test in school. It's supposed to gauge how much information you have within you. This is somewhat the idea here. God, in the midst of the injustices, reveals to human beings who they really are. In reality, he exposes us as something we don't want to admit: we are finite and weak.

Solomon says that we are "but beasts." This might not sound very biblical actually. Aren't we created in the image of God? How can we be "but beasts?" Well, I don't think Solomon is saying that in every way humans are just like animals. Instead, he clarifies what he means by this. We, like animals, are granted life and also subject to death. Verse 19 says that we all have the same breath, which refers to the life given to us by God. Think back to the garden of Eden. God breathed into the nostrils of man. But God also gave life to every living thing. Psalm 104:29 talks of creation saying, "²⁹When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust."¹⁰ God gives life and he also takes it away – whether you're a human or a beast. Psalm 49:12 says, "**Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.**"¹¹

⁹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 3:18–21.

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ps 104:29.

¹¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ps 49:12.

Why the comparison with animals? Because it's a very humbling analogy. From a purely physical vantage point, the beauty queen and the hog will both turn into dust. The real estate mogul and the rat will both contribute to this earth by fertilizing it. The oppressor and the lion will accomplish the exact same nothingness once they die. All are from dust and to dust they shall return!

At this point, people try to fancy up the thoughts about death and make themselves feel better than they ought to (in order to justify their sins). They try to say, "No, I'm going to make out better than the animal. My works and my accomplishments matter!" But Solomon says that if you're just living life under the sun – without reference to God – then you have no assurances. In verse 21, he says "Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?" Solomon isn't saying that he doesn't know if there's life after death. Clearly he believes there's a judgment after death. But what Solomon is saying is that people who don't live for God and his fame, people who live for themselves first, have no guarantees of anything whatsoever. Stop speculating about the afterlife and go to God in your weakness!

You see, in the midst of the injustices, God is causing people to see themselves. Even in the midst of the injustices, God is calling people to recognize their finiteness – the reality of their death. As they victimize and oppress others, God himself is calling people everywhere to repent. The decay of the grave affirms that the grave isn't the end. There *is* a day of complete, perfect and swift judgment.

What's the point of living for yourself and oppressing others? Remember Adam and Eve. They took that fruit in defiance against God, wanting to be gods themselves. What good did that do for them? The same is true for all of us. Death awaits, and God's going to judge. In the end, if you live as though there's no God, you prove your foolishness.

But for those who are oppressed, listen to the hope in these words, too. There is a judgment. God is revealing who we are. And, by the way, that includes the oppressed, too. We are all going to die and we're told that after that, there's judgment (for everyone). The question is whether or not you're going to trust God or reject him. He makes everything beautiful in its time and he's weaving a story that's beyond what we can see. Whether you're oppressed or the oppressor, Solomon is calling all of us to trust God and seek to live for him. If we don't live for him, there's no point to living. But if we live for him, we have eternal hope, and even in the midst of oppression and pain of this fallen world, we can endure.

So, we see in this text the problem of injustice, the reaction of despair, the reality of God's perfect timing, and now let's see how we ought to respond.

The Response: Trust and Enjoy Life

Read verse 22 with me: ²²So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?¹²

OK, hold on a second. How does Solomon get to this conclusion? Injustice *in this world around us*. Injustice *in our town!* Injustice that leads us to sorrow and to wish for the comfort of others. And yet it almost sounds like Solomon is saying "plug your ears to the problem and say 'I'm not listening!'"

¹² *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Ec 3:22.

Well, obviously Solomon isn't saying that because right after he talks about enjoyment, he goes into chapter 4 talking about his anguish over the lack of comfort for those hurting. But again, before Solomon recognizes the sorrow again, Solomon reveals that we have to have a grounded trust in God. We need to rely on him in the midst of the injustices because he is in control of all and is making all things beautiful in his time. When I know this to be true, and when I know humans will be judged, and when I know that God is calling men to see who they really are; I can trust him and still enjoy the gifts given to me.

I can realize that even though there's much vanity, God is making all things beautiful – even my work. Everything matters – including my labors and what I do in a given day. If God brings all things into judgment – including our words – then don't waste your time. And don't waste your time judging God and what he's doing. Solomon says, "Who can bring him to see what will be after him?" The idea I think Solomon is getting at is that sometimes we try to make ourselves feel better about our current circumstances by telling us what's to come. We say something like, "It's going to be all better in the end and this person's going to change." Or we say, "Well, I will rise above and that person will finally see I'm right and they're wrong." But even more than that, people try to project things about their life after death. They think they're going to get more than someone else because they were more in-the-right. They presume that certain things are going to pan out the way they want it after death, so they endure – even though they reject God. I often find it sad when I hear people talk about non-Christians and say, "Oh, I'm sure Aunt So-and-So is looking down on us now," but the aunt never wanted to trust and follow Jesus. Aunt may have been nice, but she didn't see her finiteness and sin. She didn't realize she needed to go to God for forgiveness for her sins (which is injustice). And as a result, she didn't ever want to live with God forever. And if she didn't want to live with God, what makes the people think she's "looking down?"

Solomon says that all of these types of speculative counsel falls flat on its face. You have *no idea* what's going to happen in the future. So instead of gaining comfort from your fanciful imagination, trust God who alone gives security and promises of judgment and promises of making everything beautiful in its time. But I imagine we've all struggled at points to trust God, and it's at this point, I want us to run to the gospel of Jesus. When Solomon says, "Who can bring him to see what will be after him?" I think we have to run to Jesus because in Christ we get more answers than Solomon even had about the future and about eternity future. And in Christ, we gain even more reason and resolve to trust God in this fallen world.

I think of 1 Peter 2:22-23 which says of Jesus that **"²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."**¹³ If we looked at Jesus, from a purely earthly perspective, we ought to cry out *unfair!* The blindfold of impartiality was taken off. The scales were trashed. The sword thrust against an innocent man. But not only that, he is the Son of God! No sin. No deceit. Yet how did Jesus respond? He continued to entrust himself to the one who judges justly.

What?! Where is the Father in all of this? How can Jesus trust the Father? He's allowing horror to take place! Oh, but there's so much more. Peter goes on to say, **"²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**

¹³ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), 1 Pe 2:22–23.

²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”¹⁴

In eternity past, God decreed to save human beings – all of whom are sinful. We are unjust in our ways. We hurt people. We lie. We cheat. We steal. We manipulate. We try to make ourselves look better, but God continues to reveal to us the bent of our hearts. And God reminds us of real judgment to come. Revelation 21:8 says, “⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”¹⁵ This would be all of our fate, but in real space and real time, the Father sent Jesus to this world to take the punishment that sinners deserved so that he, the Just Judge, might be able to declare “not guilty” over sinners. How?! Because Jesus welcomed the sins of humans on himself and submitted to the punishment that sinners deserved. As a result, now all who trust him are forgiven and set free and brought back to God – the God who is just and forgiving and loving. The eternal God who gives eternal life.

As a result of this, we also now have promises like that of Hebrews 11:35 which tells us that those who have trusted in Jesus will “rise again to a better life.”¹⁶ This isn’t mere wishful thinking. This is the promise of God. Oh, people on this earth might give platitudes that “it’ll all be ok,” but God gives us promises that when the believer dies it is gain and for all eternity future there are pleasure forevermore (see Phil 1:21, Ps. 16:11). In light of the great grace of Jesus and his suffering for us, the apostle Peter says, “. . . Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”¹⁷

We can endure injustice because we see in Christ that God makes all things, even the worst injustice of the cross, beautiful in its time. We can praise God even in our toil and suffering because he takes dust and transforms us from one degree of glory to another – separating us from the beasts and making us children of God!

This is the gospel according to Ecclesiastes.

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¹⁴ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), 1 Pe 2:24–25.

¹⁵ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Re 21:7–8.

¹⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Heb 11:35.

¹⁷ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), 1 Pe 2:21.