

Ecclesiastes 6:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

Analysis

That which hath been is named already (מִתְּהִשְׁמִין כִּי־בָּרְךָ יְהוָה שָׁמָוֹן)—To 'name' something in Hebrew thought is to determine its nature and destiny. Everything that comes into existence was already predetermined by God. **And it is known that it is man** (wě-nōda' āšer-hū' ādām)—humanity's identity as mortal dust (ādām from ādāmā, 'ground') is fixed.

Neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he—Job learned this lesson (Job 40:1-5). Man cannot argue with his Creator. Yet Romans 9:20 uses similar language: 'who art thou that repliest against God?' The difference: in Christ, we approach God not as adversaries but as adopted children (Rom 8:15).

Historical Context

The concept of predetermined divine naming appears throughout ancient Near Eastern texts, where deities assigned names and fates. In Genesis 2:19-20, Adam names the animals, exercising delegated authority. Here, Solomon reverses the image: we are the named, not the namers.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does accepting your God-ordained identity as creature liberate you from futile self-assertion?
2. Where are you tempted to 'contend with' God's sovereign purposes in your life?

Interlinear Text

מָה	כִּכְרָה	שָׁבֵן הַ	נִקְבָּה אֵ	שָׁמֵן וְ	יְכִינֵן עַ
H4100	H1961	already	That which hath been is named	H8034	and it is known
	H3528		H7121		H3045
אֲשֶׁר	הַ	אֵיךְ	לֹא	יְכַל	לְדַעַת
H834	H1931	that it is man	H3808	neither may	he contend
	H120		H3201		H1777
וְ	מִתְּפִיק	בְּ	מִתְּפִיק		
with him that is mightier	H4480				
	H8623				

Additional Cross-References

Job 9:32 (Parallel theme): For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

Job 40:2 (Parallel theme): Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Job 33:13 (Parallel theme): Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

Jeremiah 49:19 (Parallel theme): Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for

who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?

Ecclesiastes 3:15 (Parallel theme): That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

Psalms 39:6 (Parallel theme): Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org