

Ecclesiastes Chapter 9

Ecclesiastes 9:1 "For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, [are] in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred [by] all [that is] before them."

Man cannot know God's disposition by observation since the same calamities strike both the wicked and the righteous.

Without God, man does not even have the power to tell the difference between love and hate.

Everything that man is, God created him to be.

Solomon is wise, because God gave him wisdom.

Even the breath that we take is by permission of God.

Even the little we do understand is by the Holy Spirit of God revealing it to us.

Solomon had searched the world over to find out what life is.

He came back to the conclusion he started with.

God is all in all.

There are no solutions aside from God.

Solomon is a thinker, and he has come to the end of his earthly wisdom, no smarter than when he began.

We are like sheep that must have a Shepherd to lead us.

There will be no inequities in the final judgment of the righteous or the wicked, because God remembers both in perfect detail.

Ecclesiastes 9:2 "All [things come] alike to all: [there is] one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as [is] the good, so [is] the sinner; [and] he that sweareth, as [he] that feareth an oath."

This is like the statement, "It rains on the just and on the unjust".

Certain things happen to all of us.

We are all born.

We all die.

These things are alike for the sinner and for the righteous.

On this earth, it pretty much appears that similar things happen to all of us.

That is true, until God's wrath comes, and then, those who are not righteous in the sight of God, have terrible trouble.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a very good example of the wrath of God being poured out on the wicked.

The flood in Noah's time was another example of God's wrath.

In that particular time, the people had sinned so greatly that God was sorry He had made man.

Nearer our time, the Black Plague killed many, because the wrath of God had fallen.

In our generation, I believe the disease AID's. was the wrath of God on the earth.

Sometimes when the wrath of God comes, innocent people are injured, because of their close proximity to the sinners.

The only thing that stops the wrath of God is true repentance.

In many instances, when the wrath of God falls, He saves a few, like He did with Noah's family.

God does make a separation, but the natural man cannot see it.

We must remember in all of this that Solomon is looking at world conditions.

Ecclesiastes 9:3 "This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead."

There is one fate for both the righteous and the unrighteous and that is death because of universal depravity.

"Sons of men":

This is speaking of mankind in his sinful condition before he is saved.

When a person is saved, he becomes a son of God.

Unregenerate man does have a sinful heart.

If he does not repent and become saved, he will go to hell.

The following is a very good example of unsaved man.

Genesis 6:5 "And God saw that the wickedness of man [was] great in the earth, and [that] every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually."

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:"

These are describing a man born of the flesh.

Ecclesiastes 9:4 "For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion."

The hope of all men is to stay alive.

The lion was highly regarded but the dog was despised; nevertheless, a living dog is better than a dead lion because with life comes knowledge, reward (verse 5), and continued activity on earth (verse 6).

As long as a person is alive, there is hope for him.

As long as there is a breath in the body, he can repent and be saved.

The dog was thought of as a useless animal, and the lion was thought of as being the bravest.

A dead lion has less courage than a live dog, regardless of how useless the dog is.

Ecclesiastes 9:5 "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."

This is not a pessimistic statement about life after death; rather it affirms that life on earth is the only arena of opportunity for accomplishment and reward.

The wicked and the righteous realize that they will die.

The dead do not know anything.

Their spirits have left their bodies.

The living is usually trying to accomplish something, before they die.

Those that die are soon forgotten.

All of this is speaking of the flesh man.

This is speaking of death of the flesh.

The spirit of man lives on.

Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

Ecclesiastes 9:6 "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun."

All of these things are speaking of those living in the flesh on this earth.

When their bodies die, they stop feeling love, hate, and envy.

All of their feelings that manifested themselves in their lives on the earth are gone when they die.

They have no more effect on the earth.

Ecclesiastes 9:7 "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works."

For the first time in the passages on enjoyment, the key words of the exhortation are put into the imperative mood; eat, drink, live, and so on.

Also a new motivation is expressed:

“God now accepteth thy works”:

Meaning clearly that God approves of the enjoyment of life.

His will is that men enjoy life.

Man's labors on the earth give him the right to enjoy the food and drink he has earned.

Food and wine, here, are spoken of as his daily foodstuff.

Wine was drunk with meals, and this is not speaking of getting drunk.

They lived for the time on earth.

The last part of the verse above, is offering salvation through God for them.

Jesus Christ makes us acceptable to the Father.

Ecclesiastes 9:8 "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment."

The idea of enjoyment is further reiterated (in verse 8), with two directives.

White garments on the body and ointment on the head made life more comfortable in the torrid Near Eastern climates; they serve here to symbolize purity and the enjoyment of life.

The garments being always white speaks of being clothed in righteousness (white).

White speaks of purity, and righteousness.

In the 23rd Psalm, we read "thou anointest my head with oil".

Ecclesiastes 9:9 "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that [is] thy portion in [this] life, and in thy labor which thou takest under the sun."

Another command concerns the enjoyment of life with one's wife.

The reasons for these commands are: It is man's portion in life and there is no work in the grave as we will see in (verse 10).

In chapter 7 of this book, it appeared that Solomon thought all women to be evil.

As we can easily see here, that is not what he believed at all.

The women he had married were from tribes forbidden to intermarry.

Solomon had taken these women as wives in form only, because he did not want war with their fathers and brothers.

The worst thing about this, was the fact that they brought their false gods with them.

They brought idol worship into the country, and Solomon built them temples for their false gods.

A good wife is more precious than rubies.

Notice, I said wife, not wives.

The best arrangement is for one man and one woman to become one flesh and live that way, until one of them dies.

This is a peaceful, contented life.

Colossians 3:19 "Husbands, love [your] wives, and be not bitter against them."

Ecclesiastes 9:10 "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do [it] with thy might; for [there is] no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

I truly believe to have a happy life, mankind must work.

It is wonderful to be loved and wanted, but it is much more wonderful to be needed.

There is a feeling of accomplishment that comes from a job well done.

We are the happiest, when we are the busiest.

Then we do not have time to worry and fret.

When we are in the grave, all activity stops.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race [is] not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

Wisdom cannot guarantee good outcomes because of what appear to be so many unpredictable contingencies.

(In verses 11-12), we see five statements of unexpected results, followed by an explanation.

Man's ability cannot guarantee the results because of the equalizing effects of time and chance.

We find that Solomon is using his own experience to explain this.

The fastest runner who ever ran a race, could not win with a sprained ankle.

The battle is not always won by the largest number of well trained troops either.

Gideon is a very good example of that.

He took 300 men, and whipped thousands of the enemy.

It is not always the wise who make money either.

You may go into a business venture that ordinarily would be sound, and have unavoidable circumstances that cause you to fail.

You could be the most skillful person who ever worked, but if the materials you were working with were poor, the finished product would be defective.

Circumstances enter into our success or failure.

I prefer to say, God is blessing when everything works smoothly.

We must take advantage of opportunities that arise.

We must do our best and pray for God to bless.

Then we might succeed.

Ecclesiastes 9:12 "For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so [are] the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

"His time":

The time of his misfortune, especially death.

This is saying that mankind has no idea how long he will live.

We might start to town to work, and be killed before we get there.

Some die very young.

It is sometimes an accident, and other times a disease that strikes when we least expect it.

Dealing with the loss of a loved one is harder when they die suddenly.

We should not say, tomorrow, I will do something.

We may not be alive tomorrow.

We should say "if God be willing, I will do that tomorrow".

Ecclesiastes 9:13 "This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it [seemed] great unto me:"

Again, Solomon has looked throughout the earth and come to the conclusion that something or someone, had control of this.

Mankind must live within the circumstances he finds himself.

God controls everything.

Wisdom may not receive its due in this life.

Ecclesiastes 9:14-15

"[There was] a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:"

"Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man."

This is a parable.

Solomon could be speaking of any small town.

In that city, was found a wise man that was poor.

The people would not listen to him, because he was poor.

Even though he saved their city, they soon forgot that he had saved them.

This could be a type and shadow of all the wonderful miracles that Jesus did for them, being soon forgotten just before the crucifixion.

He was their Savior, and yet, they did not even receive Him, until after His resurrection.

At one point, the Bible says, all forsook Him.

Matthew 13:57 "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house."

Ecclesiastes 9:16 "Then said I, Wisdom [is] better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom [is] despised, and his words are not heard."

This is true because he lacks status and position.

Most people would listen to the wise man, if he was wealthy.

They have no respect for the poor.

They possibly believe if he is so wise, why is he not rich?

Generally speaking, the words of a poor wise man are not heeded.

They were heeded long enough to save them in verse 15 above.

Wisdom is better than strength.

Wisdom brings the necessities of life to the wise.

The story teaches that, in spite of the value of wisdom, it often goes unheeded.

Ecclesiastes 9:17 "The words of wise [men are] heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools."

This is just saying that a quiet man who speaks the truth through wisdom from God will be heard.

A fool shouting will not be received.

You would shut off your hearing from the fool.

He has nothing of profit to say.

Even if the fool is a king, those who hear him, will not receive his message.

Ecclesiastes 9:18 "Wisdom [is] better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good."

Solomon practiced this very thing.

During his 40 year reign, there were no wars.

He was known as a man of peace.

He used the wisdom God had given him to stay out of war.

This was the very reason he married so many women.

All the weapons of war might not bring peace, but wisdom can.

God would destroy countries that turned away from Him in sin.

Hebrews 12:15-16

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and thereby many be defiled;"

"Lest there [be] any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."

Be wise unto salvation.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 9 Questions

1. Whose hand are the righteous and the wise in?
2. Everything man is, _____ created him to be.
3. Where does wisdom come from?
4. What had Solomon searched the world over to find?
5. We are like _____ that must have a _____ to lead us.
6. It rains on the _____ and on the _____.
7. What are some things that happen to all of us?
8. When does the sameness of God's dealing with mankind stop?
9. Who are good examples of God's wrath on the wicked?
10. What is a sign of God's wrath on our society today?
11. Why are innocent people sometimes hurt by the wrath of God on the wicked?
12. Who did God save in the great flood?

13. Who is the expression "sons of men" speaking of?
14. When a person is saved, he becomes a _____ of _____.
15. Where do evil thoughts come from?
16. As long as you are living, there is _____.
17. In verse 5, who knows they will die?
18. What is verse 6 saying about love, hatred, and envy?
19. Verse 7 says, man's labors give him what right?
20. What do white garments speak of?
21. Where do we read "thou anointest my head with oil"?
22. Who is Solomon saying to live with all the days of your life?
23. Why was Solomon not happy with his 700 wives?
24. A good wife is more precious than _____.
25. What does the author believe makes a happy life?
26. The race is not to the _____.
27. _____ and _____ happeneth to them all.
28. Give some of the examples about time and chance affecting our lives.
29. What is the life of man compared to in verse 12?
30. Solomon found that _____ controls everything.
31. What is verse 14 and 15.
32. What did the poor wise man do in verse 15?
33. _____ is better than strength.
34. The poor man's wisdom is _____.
35. Wisdom is better than _____ of _____.
36. Be wise unto _____.