

"THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES"

Chapters 7-9

September 4, 2024

Chapter Seven

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

1. To understand what makes for "better living" in this vain world
2. To appreciate the limitations of wisdom in providing answers

SUMMARY: In the first six chapters the Preacher has shared with us his search for meaning (1:1-2:24) and observations gleaned during the course of his search (3:1-6:12). He has repeated his conclusions time and again.

- **Life "under the sun" is vanity - 1:2,14; 2:11**
- **Yet there is good that one can do, provided one is blessed by God - 2:24-26; 5:18-20**

In the remaining six chapters the Preacher shares his counsel through a mixture of proverbs and narration. He imparts wisdom designed to make the most of life "under the sun". In other words, while life under the sun is "vanity", how then should we live?

The first half of chapter seven offers "**counsel for better living**" with a series of comparisons. For example, honor is better than luxury, your day of death is better than your day of birth, a funeral is better than a party, etc. His estimation of what is better may often sound strange, but it comes from who has learned from both experience as well as inspiration (1-14).

The second half of the chapter offers "**counsel for balanced living.**" There are challenging and difficult statements which should be understood in their context, and in the context of the Bible as a whole. It appears the Preacher is mainly warning against extremism, and against the presumption that one can find the answer to every question in life (15-29).

Chapter Eight

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

1. To glean wisdom for enduring evil and oppressive governments
2. To note the similarity between the Preacher's conclusion and the book of Job about the inability of man to discern all of the work of God

SUMMARY: Among the "vanities" in life is living in circumstances over which we have little control. Such as the kind of government ruling the country in which we live. The Preacher observed that evil men are often in positions of power and offers his counsel for enduring such "vanity."

Wisdom is helpful, capable of softening one's countenance (so one is not overly troubled?). Submitting to governing authorities is important, especially in view of the power wielded by those in authority. There will be

times when the wicked rule, bringing misery. Be patient, while judgment against such evil may be delayed it will come in its own time and the wicked will soon be forgotten after their demise. In the meantime, it is best to fear God (1-13).

Another "vanity" is how the righteous sometimes suffer while the wicked prosper. The Preacher reiterates his conclusion that it is best to seek to enjoy what good God gives in one's labor under the sun. Even the wisest man is unable to discern all that God is doing, no matter how hard he tries. A lesson similar to the one taught in the book of Job (14-17).

Chapter Nine

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THIS CHAPTER

1. To reflect upon the inevitability of death, and the uncertainty of life
2. To consider how time and chance happens to all
3. To appreciate the importance of a joyful, diligent life, and heeding the words of the wise

SUMMARY: The Preacher continues to share counsel gleaned from observations on life made during his search for meaning. He noted that all things come alike to all, it matters not that you are righteous or wicked. One thing that certainly happens to all is death, after which one is soon forgotten and has no share in this life (things done "under the sun"). Should one therefore despair? No, the Preacher again encourages us to live joyfully, especially with the wife of our youth, and to work diligently in what time we have in this life. Once you die, you won't be able to continue your efforts in the grave. This is our portion in life, and God has already accepted our works (1-10).

The Preacher also observed that time and chance happens to all, and that evil times come suddenly. The uncertainty of life can be softened with the aid of wisdom, which the Preacher praises as better than strength and the weapons of war. Thus the words of the wise should be heard, even when spoken softly, or coming from a poor man (11-18).

Next week: September 11th (2 Cor chapter 12) - 9-11 Remembrance

Reflections: What particular verses on chapters 7-9 speak to you? Why?

Pick a "wise saying" and rewrite in your own words

What is your life application for this study?

Notes: _____
