



Biblical Literacy

Scripture • Substance • Spiritual Passion

Lesson 42.1

Old Testament Survey: Ecclesiastes

Outline for Class

- Welcome
- Theme Today
What is the reason for doing anything beyond securing your own enjoyment in life and that of others you care about? Does not that (and most any other activity) seem to be vain and without real profit? These questions and issues are not new. They are ones that have probed the thoughts of people going back at least 2500 years. In the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes, we have a reference to life's vanity and futility for matters "under the sun."
- Prayer for Fulfillment
- Video (32 minutes)
- Discussion & Points for Home

Points for Home

- ❖ "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2).
There is something profound here that we miss reading simply the English or even the Hebrew Old Testament. The Jewish scholars translating this passage into Greek used the Greek word *mataiotes* for the Hebrew *hevel*. The Greek conveys the idea of futility, but is especially important in the Christian understanding because of its use by Paul. Paul reflects back into the teaching of Ecclesiastes in Romans 8, using the Greek equivalent of *hevel*. Paul wrote:

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility [*mataiotes* / *hevel*], not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved (Rom. 8:18-24).

There is a life under the sun that is futile, that makes no sense, that seems both out of control and corrupt. Yet there is a life under the Son that carries glory and redemption. This is our hope, nothing less. The futility of this life does not end with death. This life opens the door to eternal glory with the Father.
- ❖ "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).
Wisdom is nice; wisdom is helpful. It gives insight and helps one navigate this life in God's direction and care. But we are not required to figure out God's big picture. He does not show us life beyond the sun so we can walk by sight. He charges us to fear him, to keep his commandments, and to trust him with the big picture. This means we walk by faith, not by sight. Pick out an area of your life that has you anxious or frustrated with what has happened or what is coming. Set this before God and choose to fear him and keep his commandments. Then watch him work your crises out for your good and the good of his kingdom.
- ❖ "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Eccl. 9:10).
This was a memory verse for me in Middle School. Commit it to memory! It does not guarantee you a trouble free-life. It does not guarantee you success in all you do. But it is good wise counsel that will help you walk in the center of God's will. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might! Do it to God's glory!

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