

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

"Solomon's Epilogue"

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

Introduction

1. There is an end of all things. This is it for the Book of Ecclesiastes. The final chapter has come.
2. Solomon has gone the gamut in his study. He has shown that nothing in this materialistic world will bring satisfaction (chaps. 1-6). There is nothing but bubbles in the world! Furthermore, he has studied the question of the worthfulness of living at all (chaps. 7-12). That too has ended with vanity, bubbles (12:8).
3. Is there anything more to write? Not much, but there is the final comment to be made. This is it. So, in summary, Solomon provides it. There is no reason to believe that this section is written by another than the one who wrote the first portion--Solomon, king of Israel in Jerusalem (1:1, 12). Study his concluding thoughts. They include:

1. THE GREAT SEARCH vv. 9, 10.

That Solomon is a wise man is not to be disputed. But beyond his wisdom, there is more to say. He:

a. Taught The text notes that he gave some learning in knowledge. In other words, he did not keep to himself all that was his of learning.

b. Pondered This is the sense of the phrase "gave good heed." It suggests he pricked up his ears, he weighed things, and gave full consideration to them.

c. Explored Solomon was a careful student of the affairs of men. He searched them out and examined carefully the situations at hand.

d. Arranged Solomon was a man of order. Apparently, this is a direct reference to his Book of Proverbs.

Now, it must be noted that all of the above was:

a. Truth as matter This means that Solomon did not propagate false things, but felt that he advanced what was true.

b. Beauty as manner Solomon sought to make his observations and comments in a delightful manner. He wrote sincerely.

2. THE SENSE vv. 11, 12.

The wise sayings which have been advanced are to be seen in this light:

a. As compared

1) To goads This means they are intended to excite intellectually and morally.

2) To nails Because these are fastened, it suggests

that they are ranged together and introduced as oases affording refreshment in the milieu of the earth's nothingness.

b. As provided They are given by the masters of the assemblies. That is, those in leadership have provided the wise comments.

c. Sourced If the shepherd is the Lord, then it notes that all comes from God. In any case, if not God, then it comes all from Solomon.

d. Admonished No matter what, the man who listens to what is in this book is being warned. He can never say he was not told. Other books there are, indeed an endless variety, but it is best to listen to this one Solomon has written. Furthermore, much study merely exhausts the body without truly furthering the mind. In the context, therefore, these words imply that to seek further than this book is useless.

3. THE SOLUTION vv. 13, 14.

There is a summary of it all. The end of the entire discussion should be heard. It will be this.

a. Fear God

There has been an undercurrent of this all through the book. Now it is forcefully stated. An atheist will find little comfort here.

b. Obey commandments

This is to be expected in an Old Testament context. All they had (in view of progressive revelation) was the Torah or Five Books of Moses. This is a huge call, for there are 613 of them!

c. Expect judgment

Even the concealed things of life will come to judgment. While some may teach there is no final judgment, Solomon knew the contrary (cf. Job 19:25-27). The synagogue lesson repeats v. 13 so that v. 14 will not be the last in the book. Men do not like a judgment sound to be the last. But God does! His warnings are good (cf. Rev. 22).

Conclusion This book has served to show the emptiness of this life without God, Christ, the Spirit, and the full Word of God. Salvation by grace in Christ gives life its total meaning. We know from where we have come, where we are going, and what we are doing here--through the Word and a proper relationship to God through Christ. Turn to Him now (John 1:12, 13).