

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

"Some More Better Things"

Ecclesiastes 7:11-29

Introduction

1. The best that man's common sense can provide is given in this book. Solomon, the king of Israel, is the writer. It is not the result of divine revelation, but rather the essence of what man apart from divine intervention can offer.
2. The first chapters of this book (1-6) have proved the futility of life and its services. It is all vanity and a striving after wind (bubbles). The second section of the book is much more philosophical and attempts to give an explanation for living at all.
3. Earlier in this chapter (vv. 1-10), a series of proverbs has been provided. With the use of the Hebrew word for "good" and the auxiliary preposition "min" it has been shown that there are certain "better things" in life. This study continues. Much is disconnected, but it is basic human common sense (which is not very common!). Consider the continuing list of items:

1. WISDOM--WEALTH vv. 11, 12.

It is all right to have wisdom and wealth. Both provide a defense or protection in life. However, if a choice had to be made, it would be better to have wisdom than the wealth. Wisdom keeps one in life and allows one to be fresh and sound. If this were to be personified as in Proverbs 8, then the importance of knowing the Lord over wealth would be superabundantly advised!

2. RESIGNATION--INDIGNATION vv. 13, 14.

It is important to recognize the government of God in all that is done. No creature can change what God has already done. There are days of good fortune and days of ill fortune. In the former, enjoy it. In the latter, take time to consider what God is saying. The whole alternate situation of good and evil is designed that man might experience everything in this life. Why? So he won't be in arrears when he leaves this life. He will have had all experiences. Hence, resign yourself to the will of God and leave it there.

3. MODERATION--INTEMPERANCE vv. 15-18.

A difficulty is raised (v. 15). Just people perish in

their righteousness and wicked people flourish in their wickedness. What do you do with this? The answer is provided in the following verses (vv. 16ff.). The idea of hitting a "happy medium" is advanced. Enjoy yourself but avoid excesses. To be either way in an extreme is incompatible with the fear of God. If an extreme is encountered, it will bring about death (v. 17). When one fears God, he avoids the evil of extreme false righteousness and bald wickedness. The via media is the best.

4. WISDOM--SIN vv. 19-22.

Although one must not seek to be overly wise, one must certainly endeavor to possess wisdom. It is to be highly valued. Indeed, wisdom is so to be desired that it is just like a powerful decemvirate of a city (cf. Prov. 24:5a). Even with wisdom, there is none on earth among the species of man (Hebrew: "Adam") who is sinless. Even wisdom cannot hinder this. Solomon spoke these same words when the temple was dedicated (1 Kings 8:46). This leads Solomon to mention gossip. He instructs not to rely on it, but rather to avoid it. The reason one should not even listen to his servant bear tales is that even the hearer of gossip knows he has carried tales himself (v. 22)! Not a bad argument!

5. MAN--WOMAN vv. 23-29.

This is a rather modern comment for the day. As Solomon wrote it 1000 B.C., it has applicability today. He endeavored to be wise, but never fully realized the total horizons of wisdom. The solution to the difficult problems of life never came to him (cf. Job 28:12-22). So he confesses limitations to his wisdom (v. 24). However, he did give an honest search for practical wisdom (v. 25). In doing this, he concludes that wickedness is as folly and folly is as madness or rage. Getting at the foundation of things, this is what he has found. But more than that. He has discovered that in searching into good and bad, he has come to the bitterest of all--woman (v. 26). He is serious about this for he notes that a "sinner" gets caught by her. In taking into account 1000 men, he only found one worthwhile. But in taking into account 1000 women, he found not one! No wonder he wrote Proverbs 31!

Conclusion From the Creator's hand, man was upright, having moral integrity and obeying God. But he sought numerous calculations and inventions. He followed refined degeneracy. Since woman was first in the transgression (1 Tim. 2:14), she was the leader. It has been aptly stated, "woe is the age whose leader is a woman." This is borne out in the harlotry of the last days (Rev. 17, 18). Turn to our blessed Lord.