

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JOB PROVERBS ECCLESIASTES, Week 12

The Vanity of Vanities, the Reality in Jesus, and the Revelation of the Sons of God

Scripture Reading: Eccl. 1:2-11, 14; 2:17, 22; 3:11; 12:8;
Psa. 39:4-6; Eph. 4:17-21, 24; 1 John 5:20; Rom. 8:19-22

- Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; / **Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.**
- Ecclesiastes 1:3 What advantage does a man have in all his work / Which he does under the sun?
- Ecclesiastes 1:4 A generation goes and a generation comes, / But the earth stands forever.
- Ecclesiastes 1:5 Also, the sun rises, and the sun sets / And hurries to its place where it rises.
- Ecclesiastes 1:6 Going to the south, then turning to the north, / Turning about continually, the wind goes on; / And following its circuits, the wind returns.
- Ecclesiastes 1:7 All the rivers run to the sea, / Yet the sea is not full; / To the place where the rivers run, / There they run again.
- Ecclesiastes 1:8 All things are wearisome; / No one is able to tell it; / The eye is not satisfied with seeing, / Nor is the ear filled with hearing.
- Ecclesiastes 1:9 What has been is what will be, / And what has been done is what will be done, / And there is **nothing new under the sun.**
- Ecclesiastes 1:10 Is there anything of which one can say, See, this is new? / Already it has been, in the ages that were before us.
- Ecclesiastes 1:11 There is no remembrance of those who were before; / And also those who will come to be afterward, for them there will be no remembrance / With those who come to be after them.
- Ecclesiastes 1:14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and indeed, **all is vanity and a chasing after wind.**
- Ecclesiastes 2:17 So I hated life, for the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me, because **everything is vanity and a chasing after wind.**
- Ecclesiastes 2:22 For what will a man have with all his labor and with the striving of his heart by which he labors under the sun?
- Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has **put eternity in their heart**, yet so that man does not find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.
- Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; **all is vanity.**
- Psalms 39:4 O Jehovah, cause me to know my end, / And the measure of my days, what it is. / **May I know how transient I am.**
- Psalms 39:5 Behold, **You have made my days as mere handbreadths**, / And my lifetime is as nothing before You; / Surely every **man at his best is altogether vanity.** Selah
- Psalms 39:6 Surely man goes about as a semblance; / Surely they bustle about in vain: / He heaps up riches yet knows not / Who will gather them.
- Ephesians 4:17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also **walk in the vanity of their mind,**
- Ephesians 4:18 Being **darkened** in their understanding, **alienated** from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the **hardness of their heart;**
- Ephesians 4:19 Who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness in greediness.
- Ephesians 4:20 But you **did not so learn Christ,**
- Ephesians 4:21 If indeed you have **heard Him** and have been **taught in Him** as the **reality is in Jesus,**
- Ephesians 4:24 And put on the **new man**, which was created according to God in **righteousness and holiness of the reality.**
- 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that **we might know Him who is true;** and **we are in Him who is true,** in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and **eternal life.**
- Romance 8:19 For the **anxious watching** of the creation **eagerly awaits** the revelation of the sons of God.
- Romance 8:20 For the creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it,
- Romance 8:21 In hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the **freedom of the glory of the children of God.**
- Romance 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now.

Day 1**I. "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity"—Eccl. 1:2b:**

The Contents

The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description by Solomon, after his falling away from God and returning back to God, concerning the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, which is in the corrupted world. He set his heart to seek and to search out all that is done under the heavens, and he observed that according to the natural phenomena all the things done in cycle remain the same, generation after generation, all wearisome and nothing new. In his conclusion, this is **all vanity of vanities** and a **chasing after wind** to the human life of fallen mankind. Such a conclusion of the wise king by his wisdom may be considered a history of the vain life of a fallen man. His conclusion in this book is like a dirge to a man whose end is in misery.

According to Ecclesiastes, human history, from its beginning to the present, is **vanity**. Because creation has been made subject to vanity and to the slavery of corruption, **everything under the sun is vanity**. Paul's word concerning this in Romans 8:20-21 corresponds to Ecclesiastes. Today everyone is actually not living but dying. We have been born to die; that is, we have been dying since the day of our birth. From this we see that human life under the sun is vanity of vanities. (*Life-Study of Ecclesiastes, chapter 1*)

A. In Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 we see that the theme of this book is **vanity of vanities**:

1. The central thought of Ecclesiastes is the vanity of vanities of human life under the sun in its **falling away from God**—v. 2.

Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; / Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 1:9 What has been is what will be, / And what has been done is what will be done, / And there is nothing new under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 1:14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and indeed, all is vanity and a chasing

2. The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description of the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, a **life in the corrupted world**—Eph. 2:12.
3. The teachings of Solomon in Ecclesiastes show that the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a **chasing after wind**—1:14.
4. According to Ecclesiastes, **human history**, from its beginning to the present, is **vanity**—12:8.
5. No matter how good, excellent, marvelous, and wonderful a thing may be, **as long as it is of the old creation**, it is part of the vanity of vanities under the sun—1:9; 2:11, 17, 22.
6. Only the **new creation**, which is in the heavens and not “under the sun” (1:9), is not vanity but is **reality**—2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24.

Day 2

B. In Psalm 39:4-6 David realized the **nothingness** and **vanity** of his life:

1. In this psalm David was brought by God to realize that he was nothing and vanity; he learned that **every man at his best is altogether vanity**—v. 5.
2. Our realizing that our condition is sinful (Psa. 38) and that our situation is one of vanity **opens the way for Christ** to crucify us

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has put eternity in their heart, yet so that man does not find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

2 Corinthians 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

and enter into us to replace us by living Himself through us and causing us to live together with Him in an organic union, as expressed by Paul in Galatians 2:20.

C. Man was created by God with the highest and most noble purpose, that is, to **express God** in His image with His divine life and nature—Gen. 1:26:

1. God's enemy, Satan, the devil, came in to inject himself as sin into the man created by God for His purpose—3:1-6; Rom. 5:18; 3:23; 1 John 3:4.
2. Through this fall of man, man and all the created things that had been committed by God to his dominion were made subject to **vanity** (Rom. 8:20-21); thus, human life in the corrupted world also became vanity.
3. The way for us to escape this vanity is to **come back to God** and take God in Christ as redemption, life, wealth, enjoyment, pleasure, and satisfaction so that we may still be used by God to fulfill His original purpose in creating man for the fulfillment of His eternal economy—Eccl. 12:13-14.

- D. Although the human life in the corrupted world is a vanity, a chasing after wind, we need to realize that **God has put eternity in man's heart**—3:11:
1. "Eternity" in Ecclesiastes 3:11 is "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but **God alone can satisfy**" (The Amplified Bible).
 2. God created man in His image and formed in him a spirit so that man may **receive** and **contain** Him and have a heart that **seeks** God Himself so that God can be man's satisfaction—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Zech. 12:1.
 3. Although man fell away from God, and sin through Satan came in to frustrate man from receiving God for his satisfaction, the desire for God, the seeking for God, still remains in man's heart—Eccl. 3:11.
 4. **Temporal things** can never satisfy man; **only the eternal God**, who is **Christ**, can satisfy the deep sense of purpose in man's heart—cf. 2 Cor. 4:18.

Day 3

II. In Ephesians 4:17-21 and 24 Paul presents the **reality in Jesus** for a walk that is no longer in the vanity of the mind:

- A. In Ephesians 4:17 Paul exhorts the believers to "no longer walk as the Gentiles also **walk in the vanity of their mind**":
1. The basic element in the daily life of fallen mankind is the **vanity of the mind**.

Ephesians 4:17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,

Ephesians 4:20-21 But you did not so learn Christ, If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

2. The Gentiles, the nations, are the fallen people, who have become vain in their **reasonings**—Rom. 1:21:
 - a. They **walk without God** in the vanity of their mind and are controlled and directed by their vain thoughts.
 - b. In the eyes of God and of the apostle Paul, whatever the people in the world think, say, and do is nothing but **vanity**.
 3. The nations who walk in the vanity of the mind are **darkened** in their understanding because of the **hardness of their heart**—Eph. 4:18:
 - a. When the mind of fallen people is filled with vanity, their understanding is darkened in the things of God—Psa. 94:11.
 - b. The hardness of fallen man's heart is the source of the **darkness in his understanding and the vanity of his mind**—Eph. 4:17-18.
- B. In Ephesians 4:17 and 21 there is a contrast between the reality in Jesus and the vanity of the fallen human mind:
1. In the godless walk of **fallen man** there is **vanity**, but in the **godly life of Jesus** there is **reality**.
 2. The reality in Jesus is "the reality" of the new man mentioned in verse 24:
 - a. The **deceit** (v. 22) is the **personification of Satan**, and the **reality** (v. 24) is the **personification of God**; the deceit is the devil, and the reality is God.
 - b. God as the reality was exhibited in the life of Jesus—v. 21.

Day 4

No Longer Walking in the Vanity of Our Mind

Paul's exhortation is to "no longer walk as the Gentiles... walk in the vanity of their mind" (Eph. 4:17). The Gentiles are the fallen people, who become **vain in their reasonings**. They walk without God in the vanity of their mind, being controlled and directed by their **vain thoughts**. Whatever they do according to their fallen mind is vanity, **void of reality**. Moreover, Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:17 suggests that we the believers, who once walked in the vanity of the mind before we were saved, may continue to do so after we are saved. Even religious activities and practices among Christians which do not express God—such as Christmas and Easter—are **superstition, falsehood, deception, and vanity**. As believers, we should no longer walk in the vanity of the mind. Instead, we should **allow the new man to live out God**; every detail of the living of the new man must be God expressed in our living. This is to no longer walk in the vanity of the mind but to **live the life of the new man as the reality is in Jesus**. (*Conclusion of the New Testament, chapter 341*)

3. The reality in Jesus is the actual condition of the life of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels:
 - a. The human living of Jesus was according to the reality, that is, **according to God Himself**—Eph. 4:24.
 - b. The essence of the life of Jesus was reality; He **always walked in reality**.

c. Everything the Lord did in His human life was **God expressed** and therefore was reality.

Ephesians 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we might know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

4. The life of Jesus according to reality is the **pattern for the believers' life**—2 John 1-2, 4; 3 John 3-4:
 - a. We need to **learn** Christ and be **taught** in Him to live a life of reality—Eph. 4:20-21; 2 John 1; John 4:23-24.
 - b. As members of the Body of Christ, we should live a life of reality, as the reality is in Jesus—a life of expressing God.

C. We can live in the reality that is in Jesus because “**we are in Him who is true**”—1 John 5:20:

1. Him who is true refers to **God becoming subjective to us**, to the God who is objective becoming the true One in our life and experience.
2. To be in the One who is true—the true One—is to be in His Son Jesus Christ, for the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is the true God—v. 20.
3. The true One is the divine reality; to know the true One means to know the divine reality by **experiencing, enjoying, and possessing** this reality.

Day 5

III. Because creation has been made subject to vanity, the creation **eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God “in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the **freedom of the glory of the children of God**”—Rom. 8:19-22:**

Romans 8:19-21 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, In hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

- A. As a result of Satan’s injecting himself as sin into man, man and all created things were brought into the **slavery of corruption** and made subject to vanity—5:12; 8:20:
 1. Because creation has been made subject to vanity and to the slavery of corruption, **everything under the sun is vanity**—Eccl. 1:2; 12:8.
 2. At present the creation is enslaved under the law of decay and corruption; its only hope is to be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed—Rom. 8:20-21.
- B. The anxious watching—**watching with full concentration**—of the creation “eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God”—v. 19:
 1. Revelation is an unveiling or an appearing of something previously covered or hidden—Eph. 1:17; 3:5; Gal. 1:15-16; Rev. 1:1.
 2. At the Lord’s second coming, when we will be glorified and our bodies will be **fully redeemed**, the **veil will be lifted**—Rom. 8:18.
 3. The creation, which “groans together and travails in pain together until now” (v. 22), is **awaiting the revelation of the sons of God** (v. 19).
 4. This **revelation** will be the **consummation** of the process of designation that we are now passing through—cf. 1:4, foot- note 1.

Day 6

- C. Although the entire creation is presently held in a condition of vanity and corruption, God will **bring in His kingdom** to deal with the present condition—Rev. 11:15:
 1. The coming kingdom will be a kingdom of the glory of God, a kingdom composed primarily of the **revealed sons of God**—

Matt. 6:10, 13; Rom. 8:19.

Romans 8:22-23	For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now. And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.
Matthew 6:10	Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
Matthew 6:13	And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

2. God's glory [goes with His kingdom](#) and is [expressed in the realm of His kingdom](#)—Matt. 6:10, 13b; Psa. 145:11-13.
3. God has called us to enter into His [kingdom and glory](#)— 1 Thes. 2:12:
 - a. The **kingdom of God** is the sphere for us to [worship God and enjoy God](#) under the divine ruling with the view of entering into God's glory—Matt. 6:13b.
 - b. The kingdom is the realm for God to exercise His power so that He may express His glory—Rev. 5:10, 13.
 - c. The shining of the kingdom is for the glorification of the Father—Matt. 5:16.
4. The kingdom of God is God's manifestation in His glory with His authority for His divine administration; hence, to [enter into the kingdom of God](#) and to [enter into the expressed glory of God](#) take place as one thing simultaneously—Heb. 2:10; Matt. 5:20; 1 Thes. 2:12; 2 Thes. 1:10; Rev. 21:9-11; 22:1, 5.
5. The creation is [eagerly expecting and anxiously watching](#) for God's kingdom to come; at the time of the revelation of the kingdom, the whole creation will be [liberated](#), and the manifested sons of God will be delivered from vanity and "will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father"—Matt. 13:43.

The Revelation of the Sons of God in the Freedom of Glory

The creation is [eagerly expecting](#) and [anxiously watching](#) to see this [revelation of the sons of God](#), because "the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be [freed](#) from the slavery of corruption [into the freedom of the glory of the children of God](#)" (vv. 20-21). As we have seen, the entire creation is under vanity, bondage, and the slavery of corruption. Creation's only hope is to be freed from this slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed. Although the entire creation is [presently held in a condition of vanity and corruption](#), God will [bring in a kingdom to replace this present condition](#). The present condition is a condition of vanity and slavery of corruption; the coming kingdom will be a kingdom of the glory of God, a kingdom composed primarily of revealed sons of God. At the time of the revelation of this kingdom the whole creation will be liberated. The creation is eagerly expecting and anxiously watching for this kingdom to come. Thus, "the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now" (v. 22). [The universe is groaning and travailing in birth awaiting the revelation of the sons of God](#). Furthermore, we ourselves, "having the firstfruit of the Spirit," also groan as we expect sonship, the redemption of our body (v. 23).

In verse 24 *Paul says that "we have been saved in hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what anyone sees, why does he also hope?"* The hope mentioned in this verse is the hope of glory. Since none of us has ever seen this hope, it is a hope complete and genuine. Some hope is partial because we have seen a certain percentage of it. However, the hope of glory is a whole hope, for we have not seen any part of it. Hence, [we are waiting for that hope](#), ["eagerly expecting it through endurance"](#) (v. 25). (*Life-Study of Romans, chapter 21*)