

Life-Study of Ecclesiastes – Review

Vanity of Vanities

Ecclesiastes in Hebrew is *Qohelet*, meaning “preacher” (or “teacher”), one who gathered and spoke to an assembly of the children of Israel.

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. In his conclusion, **this is all vanity of vanities and a chasing after wind to the human life of fallen mankind**. 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. **Today everyone is actually not living by 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.

Ecclesiastes 1:12–6:12 is a lengthy section concerned with Solomon’s experiments. The first experiment is in **wisdom and knowledge**. The second experiment is in **pleasure**, in particular of enjoyment, drinking, building and planting, possessions, silver and gold, music, and the delights in concubine after concubine. Chapter 2 verses 12 through 26 describe the experiment in **being a wise man or a fool**. In 3:1-15 we have a word regarding the experiment in **fate under God’s sovereignty**. Then in 3:16-4:16 is a word concerning Solomon’s experiment in **ranks and classes in human society**. Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 describes the writer’s experiment in **contacting God**.

In all his experiments Solomon encouraged, according to God’s economy, the fallen men under the sun to **enjoy what God has given** to them that they may exist and afford God the opportunity to **carry out His eternal purpose** in choosing and predestinating them for the issue of the Body of Christ and to maintain the fallen man of God’s old creation to be the provision for God to bring in His new creation in Christ out of the old creation. Here we should note that for us **to live a life that we may testify Christ and minister Christ** to others to glorify God, we need the **material things** and **physical matters**. But **we should not be attracted, captured, and usurped by them**.

Eventually, we come to a section where we see Solomon’s searching and testing. Solomon searched and tested all things of the fallen human life under the sun. All things under the sun are vanity of vanities. Proverbs were produced out of Solomon’s searching and testing. Solomon searched and tested what God is to man and concluded that God gives man a portion in human life for him to enjoy and exist that God could have an opportunity to call out some for the carrying out of His eternal selection and predestination for the accomplishment of His eternal economy. Solomon also searched and tested what man should be to God. Man should fear and repent to God and receive the Redeemer whom God has prepared for him. Man should also **enjoy God’s provision** for his living and the marriage life for man’s existence and multiplication to replenish the earth that it may be possible for God to save some of them **in order to produce the church**—the Body of Christ—which will issue in the New Jerusalem as God’s eternal enlargement and expression according to God’s eternal economy.

In Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 we have the concluding word. The writer’s intention is to lead men to **fear God** that God may eventually show them His New Testament economy concerning **the producing of His church**, the Body of Christ, which consummates in the New Jerusalem as God’s eternal enlargement and expression.

(Life-Study of Ecclesiastes)