

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does “vanity” actually mean in these chapters?
2. Success and prosperity should make a person happy, but it does not. Why?
3. Where should man search for happiness and enduring satisfaction in this life?

SUMMARY:

Solomon in all his glory, wealth and majesty came one day to realize that he must go as all men and all his possessions would go to someone else. All of his pleasures of life soon became empty things. How subtle the evil one leads men to seek out these things only to see later how shallow they are in satisfaction. The conclusion that Solomon reached is that if God has preeminence in our lives we have joy, peace and contentment no matter in what strata of society we may be living. The earlier in life we make this decision the fuller our lives can be.

NOTES:

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Bible Lesson #13

September 28, 2003

Third Quarter

THE EMPTY LIFE

LESSON TEXT: *Ecclesiastes 1:1 through 3:22*

LESSON SETTING: Written By King Solomon probably in Jerusalem.

TIME: Approximately 980 B.C.

- I. WITHOUT GOD, LIFE IS MEANINGLESS.** Ecclesiastes 1:1-18
 - A. God’s Creation is Meaningful (vs. 5-7) Genesis 1:31
 - B. God’s Creation from the Beginning (vs. 9-10) Revelation 1:8
 - C. Man’s Labor’s are Vain (vs. 3-4)
 - D. Vanity of Worldly Wisdom (vs. 18) Romans 1:22;
1 Corinthians 3:19-20
- II. WITHOUT GOD, PLEASURE IS DISAPPOINTING.**
Ecclesiastes 2:1-26
 - A. Unprofitable (vs. 1-11) Luke 8:14; 12:19
 - B. Wise and Foolish must die (vs. 12-16) Psalm 49:10; Hebrews 9:27
 - C. Contentment found only in God (vs. 24-26) Romans 5:1; 14:17
- III. WITHOUT GOD, THE FUTURE IS HOPELESS.**
Ecclesiastes 3:1-22
 - A. All Blessings Come from God (vs. 9-14) Malachi 3:10;
Matthew 6:30-33
 - B. God shall Judge Man (vs. 15-22) Matthew 16:27;
2 Corinthians 5:10

GOLDEN TEXT: *LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES UPON EARTH, WHERE MOTH AND RUST DOTH CORRUPT, AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK THROUGH AND STEAL.* Matthew 6:19

NEXT SUNDAY LESSON: Ecclesiastes 11:9 through 12:14

SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES: Psalm 119-1-56

QUARTERLY THEME: Life and Writings of Solomon

TOPIC: THE GOAL OF LIFE

INTRODUCTION:

The best time to begin serving the Lord is early in life when the heart is filled with zeal and the flesh is strong and capable of accomplishing work for the Lord. When a person becomes older the physical endurance diminishes and work may fail in being accomplished because of a lack of strength.

Also, the longer a person waits, the more a life becomes encumbered with sins and fruitless activities which become stumbling stones of regret and remorse. Even when a life is finally surrendered, there is always this expression, "If only I had come sooner."

Solomon said, in essence, that young people do live to their own satisfaction - but - that for all of these things God will bring them into judgment. He knew all the excuses given by young people for putting off this most important decision of life. He knew that men and women would justify themselves in procrastinating. May we establish the goal for ourselves of pleasing God and serving Him.

CENTRAL TRUTH: Pleasing God and living for His glory should be the main goal of living.

GOLDEN TEXT: *FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS;
FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.* Ecclesiastes 12:13

Too often we hear people, young and old, tell how they want to live "their lives." All is based on a self-centeredness and self-satisfaction as if this is all life is about. Even Solomon, the man of wisdom, evidently lacked in true wisdom for it is apparent in the living of his life that he had come near the end of life before he realized that there was more to life than just living for himself. At least, if he had had any such knowledge in his early years, he had forgotten it until later.

The lesson for us that Solomon laid on the hearts of all people is to see the real purpose of our creation. We are not on this earth to please ourselves. We can never say that the purpose of our creation is obscure. We must realize that our purpose is to serve God and obey Him. He wants to have fellowship with us but cannot do so unless we are walking with Him in uprightness and all holiness.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF Sept. 29 - October 5

- M. The Vanity of Life. Ecclesiastes 6:1-12
- T. How to Live Successfully. Ecclesiastes 9:1-10
- W. The Practical Value of Wisdom. Ecclesiastes 9:11-18
- T. The Curse of Folly. Ecclesiastes 10:1-9
- F. The Blessing of Wisdom. Ecclesiastes 10:10-20
- S. *A Sure Harvest. Ecclesiastes 11:1-10
- S. *Man's Greatest Purpose. Ecclesiastes 12:1-14