

'All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.'
2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

The Book of Ecclesiastes

Chapter 9



Kerrville Bible Church

Fall Semester 2023

Ken Johnson

FROM LAST WEEK



Ecclesiastes

The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

¹⁶When I gave my **heart** to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night),

¹⁷and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, "I know," he cannot discover.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER – Mystery (8:15 – 17)
- ❑ Solomon concludes that Godly wisdom is of much value to the person who wants to get the most out of life:
 - It can't explain every mystery
 - It can't solve every problem
 - But it can help us exercise discernment in our decisions



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

1For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred; anything awaits him.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10)
- ❑ Solomon is summarizing everything he has taken into his HEART
- ❑ Those who FEAR GOD are “in the hand of God”
- ❑ The events yet to come in one’s life are unknown
 - Will future events be blessed (love)?
 - Or not blessed (hate)?
- ❑ The righteous and wise will rest in the confidence that God controls what happens – He is **Sovereign!**



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

2It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear. 3aThis is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10)
- ❑ Ultimately our earthly destiny is the same for all – Death!
- ❑ Solomon contrasts righteous and wicked
- ❑ No matter ... all have that same destiny
- ❑ This one fate for all men – Death – is an “evil”

- ❑ The question in this chapter is: “How do we deal with the subject of Death?”



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

3bFurthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10) – Escape Reality
- ❑ “Furthermore” ... not only is Death evil
- ❑ “hearts ... of men ... are full of Evil and Insanity”
- ❑ When men see no consequences ... evil increases
 - Whether I’m good or bad, I will die and it’s over
 - I might as well be bad
- ❑ Afterward ... to the dead!
- ❑ Abrupt, merciless, final ...



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

4For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10) – Endure Life
- ❑ This verse takes the argument that “hope” is only found in staying alive ... to the extreme
- ❑ Two extremes of power and weakness
 - The majestic, proud, mighty Lion
 - The 900BC scrounging, cringing, cowering dog
- ❑ “Surely” a live 900BC dog is “better than” a dead lion
- ❑ *Is that always correct?*

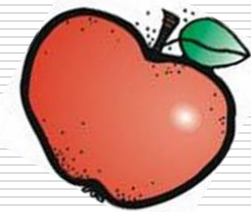


Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

5For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. 6Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10) – Seize Life Now
- ❑ Death will end our opportunities on this earth
 - No more participation in this wonderful gift of life “under the sun”
 - No more chance to get right with God
- ❑ Seize those opportunities while we live
- ❑ Make the most of your apple today!
- ❑ Stop worrying about the past or blindly hoping for the future



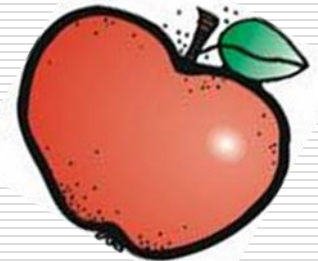


Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

7Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10) – Enjoy Meals
- ❑ Solomon concludes:
 - Death is coming ... fast
 - Not a morbid thought ... just reality
 - Get on with living! Grab that apple!
- ❑ **Enjoy** leisurely meals ... with fellowship of good friends and family ... basking in God's approval



"Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife" (PROV 17:1)



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

8Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10) – Enjoy Occasions
- ❑ Life was hard in 900BC, but every family knew how to enjoy special occasions:
 - White garments – symbol of joy and purity
 - Anointed themselves with expensive perfumes
- ❑ Live **AS IF** every day was important and festive
- ❑ Like unspoiled children, delight in the simple activities of life
- ❑ Start the celebration now!!!

*"Rejoice in the Lord always; again,
I will say, rejoice!" (PHIL 4:4)*



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10) – Enjoy Marriage
- ❑ “Enjoy” is Hebrew for “see it” ... slowing down and taking time to savor this gift of life under the sun
- ❑ Woman you love ... your reward
- ❑ Great joy is in the life of the man and woman who love each other and are faithful to their marriage vows.

“For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” (GEN 2:24)



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

- ❑ DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE (9:1 – 10) – Enjoy Work
- ❑ Find satisfaction in your labor ... for God's glory
- ❑ Do your very best ... for as long as you have strength
- ❑ Once you are in the grave, you can do nothing more "under the sun"

- ❑ Summary: If we Fear God we will accept death is coming but not try to escape it or merely endure life
- ❑ We will seize life and enjoy it as a gift from God!



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

11I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all.

- ❑ LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE (9:11 – 18)
- ❑ Death is Certain and Life Cheats!
- ❑ Surprise! Human abilities do **not** ensure success.
- ❑ Just when you think you have all under control, it can all fall apart
- ❑ “Time and Chance” overtake them all
 - Bad luck? Karma? Astrology?
 - Hendiadys!



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 - Hendiadys! God’s Sovereignty at work



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

12 Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.

- ❑ LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE (9:11 – 18)
- ❑ God works all things together for good (Romans _____)
 - Don't boast in success (James 4:13-17)
 - Don't collapse in failure (Phil 4:6-7)
 - Don't "own" either of these – Why not?



Ecclesiastes

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- ❑ LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE (9:11 – 18)
- ❑ For Believers:
 - All RESULTS are
 - God's Providence
 - combined with your preparation
 - to produce a Result
 - For His Purpose and ultimately your Good
- ❑ STOP trying to control results ... it **WILL** drive you crazy!



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

13Also this I came to see as wisdom under the sun, and it impressed me. 14There was a small city with few men in it and a great king came to it, surrounded it and constructed large siegeworks against it. 15But there was found in it a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man. 16So I said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the wisdom of the poor man is despised, and his words are not heeded.

- ❑ LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE (9:11 – 18) – The Poor Wise Man
- ❑ Situation is dire – odds against small city – hopeless ...
- ❑ Poor man found ... his wisdom delivered the city ...
- ❑ No one remembered him ... no recompense ... no honor
- ❑ Solomon observes: Wisdom is better than strength
 - Although he served well, as a poor man his wisdom is despised ... even though it saved them
 - His words are not heard



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

17The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools. 18Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

- ❑ LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE (9:11 – 18)
- ❑ The shouting of a ruler (a fool chosen by fools) sways the crowds
- ❑ Even though the words of the wise man spoken quietly are of more value
- ❑ Wisdom ... from God ... is better than any weapon
- ❑ Sadly, it is often ignored



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

17The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools. 18Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

- LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE (9:11 – 18)
- “One sinner destroys much good” is a truth illustrated throughout the whole of Scripture:
 - Adam and his disobedience to God (GEN 3)
 - Achan sinned and brought defeat on the army of Israel (JOSHUA 7)
 - Absalom’s revolt led the nation into civil war (2 SAM 15)
 - David’s sin brought trouble to Israel (2 SAM 24)



Ecclesiastes

The Certainty of Death (9:1 – 10:20)

- ❑ Jesus Christ has conquered Death
- ❑ Because He is alive, and we live in Him, life is not "Vanity of vanities"
- ❑ Instead, we say:

“... but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 COR 15:57-58)

The Book of Ecclesiastes



"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10"
