

Ecclesiastes 9:11-18

The importance of Godward work

Mystery must not prevent appropriate human effort—9:11-11:16

Removing Discouragements to God's Plan—8:16-12:14

- 1) Be faithful in your work, regardless—9:11-12
  - a) The irony of human ability—9:11 <sup>11</sup> *I returned, and saw under the sun that ...*
    - Bible examples suggested by Kaiser
      - i) *the race is **not** to the swift*, (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 2:22-23)
      - ii) ***nor** the battle to the strong*, (cf. Judges 16:19)
      - iii) ***nor** bread to the wise*, (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 11:1-25)
      - iv) ***nor** wealth to the discerning* (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 16:23; 17:5-14)
      - v) ***nor** favor to the men of skill*, (cf. Exodus 2:11-15; Acts 7:22)
      - vi) Commonalties for all
        - (1) *but time and events happen to all of them.*
    - b) The ignorance of man—9:12
      - i) Stated—<sup>12</sup> *For man does not know his time.*
      - ii) Trouble never comes at a good time—*Like fish that are taken in a treacherous net [matsod] and like birds that are caught in a snare, so are the sons of Adam ensnared at an evil time, when it falls upon them suddenly.*
- 2) The value of wisdom—9:13-18
  - a) Wisdom is illustrated—9:13-15
    - i) No guarantee of personal benefit—<sup>13</sup> *I also observed this wisdom under the sun, and it is significant to me: <sup>14</sup> there was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it and built great siege-works [matsod] against it. <sup>15</sup> Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man.* (cf. 2:16; 9:5)
  - b) Wisdom is compared—9:16-17
    - i) Wisdom is better than strength—<sup>16</sup> *So I said, “Wisdom is better than strength,*
      - (1) *But wisdom is not always heeded—though the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heeded.”*
    - ii) Wisdom is better than powerful status alone—9:17 <sup>17</sup> *The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.*
      - (1) *“Thus, the words of the wise spoken quietly or calmly possess value and ought to be taken seriously.”* (Barrick)
  - c) Wisdom can, at times, be thwarted by sin—9:18 <sup>18</sup> *Wisdom is better than weapons of war but one sinner can destroy much good.*