

Ecclesiastes 8:16-9:6  
Mystery must not diminish our joy  
Removing Discouragements to God's Plan—8:16-12:14

- 1) We must recognize our incomplete understanding—8:16-17
  - a) The pursuit—8:16 <sup>16</sup> *When I applied my heart* (cf. 1:13, 17; 7:2, 21; 8:9, 16; 9:1) *to know wisdom and to see the business that has been done on the earth—even though no one sees sleep with their eyes in the day or in the night—*
  - b) The result—8:17 <sup>17</sup> *then I saw all the work of God, that a man is not able to find out the work that has been done under the sun.*
    - i) Despite relentless efforts—*Even though a man may toil to seek it, yet he will not find it.*
    - ii) Despite respectable claims—*Even though the wise man claims to know, he is not able to find it.*
- 2) We can have joy in the face of death—9:1-6
  - a) The sovereign providence of God—9:1a <sup>1</sup> *So I applied all this to my heart to examine it, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God.* (cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:19)
  - b) The ignorance of mankind—9:1b *Whether (God's) love or hatred, man does not know everything before them.*
    - i) We cannot always accurately interpret God's providence in our lives (or in the lives of others). Remember Job's friends!
    - ii) Five types of suffering: (Kaiser, 151-152)
      - **Educational**—Job 34:32; 35:11; 36:10, 15, 22; **Doxological**—John 9:1-3; **Probationary**—Habakkuk 1-3; **Revelational**—Hosea 1-14; **Sacrificial**—Isaiah 42; 49-50; 53
  - c) The sameness of mankind—9:2 <sup>2</sup> *Everything is the same to everyone; one event—to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and to the clean and to the unclean, to him who sacrifices and to him who does not sacrifice. As is the good man so is the sinner; and he who swears an oath as he who is afraid to swear an oath.*
  - d) The reality of death—9:3a <sup>3</sup> *This is an evil (misery) in all that has been done under the sun, that there is one event to everyone.*
  - e) The sin-filled, irrational heart of mankind—9:3b *And moreover the hearts of the sons of Adam is full of evil and insanity is in their hearts while they live, and afterwards they go to the dead.*
  - f) The benefit of life over death—9:4-6
    - i) The reality of hope and the significance of life—9:4 <sup>4</sup> *But to him who is joined with all the living, there is hope (certainty); for a living dog is better than a dead lion.*
      - (1) Why? # 1—9:5 <sup>5</sup> *For the living know they will die, but the dead do not know anything, and they have no further reward [sakar], for the memory [zeker] of them is forgotten.* (cf. John 9:4b)
      - (2) Why? # 2—<sup>6</sup> *Their love, and their hatred, and their envy (rivalry) have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.*
      - (3) “How sad it would be to have lost all opportunity to share in doing anything significant to the glory of God.” (Kaiser, 154)