

Old Testament Lessons

OT Stories That Teach Us About God and Faith

October 11, 2020

I. Introduction

A. The book of Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon after spending many years using the wisdom God gave him to satisfy his curiosity about many things in this world and in people's lives.

1. In writing Ecclesiastes, Solomon is not discrediting or discounting Godly wisdom or the godly use of wisdom. Rather, he is pointing out the emptiness and uselessness of pursuing the varied things, life experiences, and wisdom the world has to offer when we don't make God, knowing God, and living for God more important than anything else.
2. Therefore, it is best to read Ecclesiastes from the viewpoint that raising anything or anyone above the importance of God, knowing God, and living for God is vanity and striving after wind.

B. Today we are going to look at the seven times Solomon makes the case that pursuing things we deem more important than God or as if there were no God – is equal to striving after wind. And to prepare us for these seven cases I will read **Ecclesiastes 1:2-11**,

1. "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity." (*I want to point out that not everything in life is vain or empty or not worth it. Yet anything that we allow to replace God or to rise above the importance of God in our thinking, attitudes, and living becomes vain or empty.*)
2. [3] What advantage does man have in all his work which he does under the sun? (*Whatever is gained is confined to life on the earth and in most cases is temporary – even if it lasts a thousand years.*)
3. [4] A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. [5] Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; and hastening to its place it rises there again. [6] Blowing toward the south, then turning toward the north, the wind continues swirling along; and on its circular courses the wind returns. [7] All the rivers flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again. (*The point here is that life is a repetitive cycle. We humans come and we go, and the next generation with similar needs, desires, and flaws takes our place. In essence, nothing changes except the people living at that time. Therefore, even if we were able to make a significant difference in our generation, it*

rarely produces a change that lasts more than a generation or two because the flawed side of human nature wins out. So then even the process of coming to God, learning the ways of God, and living according to the will and word of God must start over.)

4. [8] All things (*that is, all striving for what the world deems vital or what they measure as success is*) wearisome; man is not able to tell it. (*The reason such pursuits are wearisome is because they can only give you temporary things – such as power, possessions, pleasure, or happiness – which means you must keep striving after them if you want to keep experiencing these things.*) The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing. [9] That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun. [10] Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new"? Already it has existed for ages which were before us. (*Solomon is not saying there are no new inventions or new ways of doing things, but that there are no new things. For example, transportation is still transportation whether by foot, horse, camel, car, or rocket ship. Entertainment is still entertainment whether telling stories around a fire, listening to music, drinking alcoholic beverages, watching actors on a stage or on a big screen, playing jacks or playing video games. In other words, nothing is new. Each generation is simply repeating the same cycle of life. It is only a genuine faith in God and living according to the word of God that this mundane, wearisome cycle gains value and meaning.*)
5. [11] There is no remembrance of earlier things; and also of the later things which will occur, there will be for them no remembrance among those who will come later still. (*We live, we strive, we accumulate, we influence others, and some achieve greatness. Yet we all die, and in a generation or two, most of us are forgotten, and what we've done is forgotten. It is in this sense that all is vanity and striving after wind.*)
6. This honest assessment of life is not intended to discourage us or put us in a state of despair, but rather to show us the importance and value of striving after God and godliness. C.T. Studd said it well when he said, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last."
7. If you get nothing else from today's study, maybe you can gain some information and perspective useful for evangelism.

C. Pray