

THERE IS A COMMON DESTINY FOR ALL

MARCH 26, 2006 - ECCLESIASTES 9:1-18 - Lesson 10

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for

INTRODUCTION

Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes towards the end of his life. He was facing his own mortality and was communicating his conclusions regarding the vanity of "life under the sun." There is no sugar coating in chapter nine as he faces the realities of life and death head-on. The basic conclusions he arrives at in this chapter are that life is often unfair and death is unstoppable. In processing these realities, he determines there is no solace to be found in earthly things. Instead, our focus should be on the giver of life Himself and the gift He has given us of the day before us. This gift is filled with pleasures, beauty, the satisfying enterprise of work and the amazing presence of God overseeing it all. We should enter each day with a thankful and joyful attitude, trusting in the promises, mercies, grace and faithfulness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

- 1. In verses 1-3, what does Solomon conclude concerning the destiny of all people?***

- 2. What kind of hope does Solomon offer in verses 4-6?***

- 3. In verses 7-10, to what actions does Solomon exhort us to take? What attitudes does he encourage us to have in regards to this life?**

- 4. What explanation is offered for the apparent contradictions in verse 11? How does this relate to “evil times” in verse 12?**

- 5. What two morals does Solomon derive from the story in verses 13-16? How do these two morals relate to the proverbs communicated in verses 17-18? What conclusions regarding wisdom can you make from these verses?**

OUR WALK WITH GOD

- 1. Why do most people have a hard time coming to grips with death? How can a proper perspective toward death affect your priorities and values in life?**

- 2. Why do so many people get caught up in living the “rat race” of life? Describe in your own words what the “rat race” of life looks like. Have you gotten caught up in living this type of lifestyle? Based on the truths brought in this study, what are some specific steps you can begin doing to change the “rat race” style of living?**

3. *Given the unexpected nature of life (verses 11-12), how do you prepare yourself for such disruptions? How can you help others deal with these types of situations?*

GOING DEEPER

1. *Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-58. What does this passage reveal to you regarding the importance of Christ's resurrection to us as Christians? How do these verses encourage you to stand firm in your daily walk of faith and not to fear your own death in this life?*

2. *Read Galatians 6:9-10; Philippians 3:7-14; Hebrews 12:1-3. What do these verses reveal to you about having a proper perspective in this life?*

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK

“Death is the mighty leveler. He spares no one. He will not tarry till you are ready. He will not be kept out by moats, and doors, and bars and bolts. The

Englishman boasts that his home is his castle, but with all his boasting, he cannot exclude death. An Austrian nobleman forbade death and the smallpox to be named in his presence. But, named or not named, it matters little, in God's appointed hour death will come."

J.C. Ryle, 19th Century Anglican Bishop

"Your husband or wife should be looked upon as a treasure from heaven, prepared for your joy, to serve and be served. There are moments of irritation and seasons of discontent, but remember those are days and seasons we have but once. Why not let each day be as joyful as your honeymoon? Marital fulfillment is a choice, so choose to live and love joyfully."

David Jeremiah, "Searching for Heaven on Earth"

"Imagine someone rising in the morning to say, 'Thank You, Lord! Another day to use the gifts and the strength and the mind You have given me - to apply them to fruitful enterprise. What a gift You have given me, that I may work and serve.' That mind-set will add years to your life and life to your years. It will also bring you success, promotions and glory for God."

David Jeremiah, "Searching for Heaven on Earth"