

Finding Life's Meaning "Under The Sun"

Lesson 6

The Monologue (1:12 – 12:8)

Trusting God & Living Joyfully In An Uncertain World (8:16 – 12:8)

Introduction

Solomon has shared with us the failed results of his search for life's meaning (1:12 – 2:23). Though a firm believer in God as Sovereign, he has also confessed "perplexities" in life (3:1 – 5:20). He has offered practical wisdom in applying God's plan despite life being filled with "injustices" (6:1 – 8:15).

Koheleth will now complete his main discussion by educating us toward finding happiness and doing right in an "uncertain world" (8:16 – 12:8). Just because life doesn't always present "fixed certainties" doesn't mean other unalterable truths are not still in force, and that man does not have responsibilities before God and his fellow man. Even though there is some "uncertainty" re: life, Solomon concludes his presentation by reminding us of the "certainty" that awaits every man...death (Heb. 9:27).

An Uncertain World Should Not Prevent Us From...

...Enjoying Its Blessings (8:16 – 9:9)

- 1) Even though we trust in God, how does Koheleth emphasize life is "uncertain" enough so as to provide "mysteries?" (8:16-17) To attempt uncovering the answers might lead one to what condition? (8:16b)

- 2) What does he conclude? (8:17; cp. 1:15; 7:13)

- 3) Where is the answer to be found? (9:1a; cp. Deut. 29:29) Will man know how God views him simply from observing life's circumstances? (9:1b) What do you think is meant by "love" and "hate?" (cp. Mal. 1:2-3)

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- 4) How does Solomon further illustrate man's circumstances in life are not a good indicator of Divine approval or disapproval? (9:2-3; cp. 2:14-15; 3:19; 6:6; 7:2)

- 5) Those who are alive have what? (9:4a) How is this further illustrated proverbially? (9:4b-6)

- 6) Despite all that seems "negative & gloomy" how can the believer know that God indeed loves and cares for him? (2 Tim. 1:10; 2:19; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; Heb. 13:5-6; Rom. 8:28)

- 7) To what mindset does Solomon encourage in 9:7-9? (cp. 2:24-26; 5:18-20; 8:15)

...Working Honorably (9:10-12)

- 8) What kind of work ethic does Solomon encourage? (v. 10a; cp. Col 3:23-24) Why? (v. 10b; cp. Jn. 9:4)

- 9) How does he show that "honorable labor" will not make an uncertain world more certain? (v. 11) What can, and often does, happen? (v. 12) How does this teach us re: where we are to put our trust...in ourselves or in God? (Psa. 118:8; 1 Cor. 2:4-5)

- 10) What activity is being described in v. 12?

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...Appreciating Wisdom (9:13-18)

- 11) Once again, Koheleth praises wisdom. How does he do it in vv. 13-15a?

- 12) Yet, what sad truth tempers wisdom's value? (v. 15b) Why? (v. 16)

- 13) What conclusions does Solomon offer based upon this observation? (vv. 17-18a) What is equally true? (v. 18b)

...Shunning Foolishness (10:1-20)

- 14) With what "proverb" does Solomon open the next discourse on foolishness? (v. 1)

- 15) Toward what manner of life will foolishness direct a person? (vv. 2-3)

- 16) How is "wise composure" praised when one is faced with "authoritative foolishness?" (v. 4; cp. Mt. 10:17-20; Acts 4:13-16)

- 17) How does Solomon show that foolishness at times might make ill-advised appointments? (vv. 5-6) What illustration does he offer as proof? (v. 7) Do you think Esth. 6:1-12 might serve as another example?

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- 18) What should be considered before taking any action? (vv. 8-9) How might foolishness be involved in either success or failure?
- 19) How does one show wisdom or foolishness in the activity described in v. 10?
- 20) How does show wisdom re: knowing the right time to act in a matter? (v. 11)
- 21) How is foolishness illustrated re: man's words? (vv. 12-14a; cp. Lk. 4:22; Mt. 6:7) What truth does the fool forget that should have guided him before speaking? (v. 14b)
- 22) How else is one exposed as a "fool?" (v. 15)
- 23) What sort of "land" (*kingdom*) is to be pitied? (vv. 16-17) How does this continue Solomon's illustration of "foolishness?" Do you think the "house" in v. 18 is literal or the "house of state?"
- 24) How did this "house" come to be in such disrepair? (v. 19) *Thought question*: do you see any lessons for our current "national house?"
- 25) In view of such a broken down "house," some might be tempted to express their disgust. How does Solomon advise against this? (v. 20) Rather, what is the answer? (1 Tim. 2:1-4)

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...Being Active (11:1-6)

- 26) Even though "uncertain days" might encourage inactivity, how are we to busily apply ourselves and live industriously? (v. 1) Be able to define "*Cast your bread upon the waters...*"
- 27) What is the admonition in v. 2?
- 28) Even in an "uncertain world" how are life's "certainties" emphasized? (v. 3) Since man can neither control nor calculate the future, what can he do?
- 29) Can a man be too cautious in an "uncertain world?" (v. 4)
- 30) How does Solomon portray man's ignorance? (v. 5a) How does he relate this to man's responsibilities in life? (v. 5b) What is the admonition? (v. 6)

...Enjoying Being Alive (11:7 – 12:8)

- 31) How does Solomon say we should feel about being alive? (11:7) What truth should we never lose sight of while living? (11:8) What do you think are these "days of darkness?"

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- 32) What admonitions does he give the young? (11:9a, 10) Though the young may be the group that thinks the least about it, what should never be forgotten? (11:9b)
- 33) What other ways does Koheleth encourage the young? (12:1a) Why the need for such an admonition? (12:1b)
- 34) In 12:2-6, Solomon further describes these "evil days." We believe he poetically describes the aging process. In the space below, write down what you think each description refers to.
- 35) What is the end? (12:7; cp. Gen. 2:7; 3:19b)
- 36) How does Solomon end his monologue? (12:8) How does it compare with his opening observation? (1:2)