

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 208 – In The Hand Of God Through One Sinner Destroys Much Good (Ecclesiastes 9:1-18)

1. In whose hands are the righteous, the wise, and their works?

God's: *"For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them"* (**Ecclesiastes 9:1**).

- It would appear that the beginning of this verse is about how the works of goodness are held onto by God (**John 10:27-29**, **II Timothy 1:12**, and **Hebrews 6:10**).
- The meaning could also be, as is consistent with the end of the verse; that without God there is no wisdom, righteousness, good works, love, or hatred (**Psalms 119:104** and **Proverbs 2:6**).

2. What event happens to all?

Death: *"(2) All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. (3) This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead"* (**Ecclesiastes 9:2-3**).

- **II Samuel 14:14**, **Psalms 89:47-48**, **Psalms 90:10**, **Ecclesiastes 3:19**, and **Hebrews 9:27**.
- There were two exceptions to this rule (**II Kings 2:9-11** and **Hebrews 11:5**).
- Additionally, anyone alive at the coming of Christ will not see physical death (**I Thessalonians 4:13-18**).

3. What remained with the living that was gone with the dead?

Hope: *"(4) For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. (5) For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. (6) Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun"* (**Ecclesiastes 9:4-6**).

- Remember that, under the Old Law, hope was a whole different subject in that there was really no spiritual hope (**Ephesians 2:11-17**).
- There was hope while they were living (**Isaiah 38:18**).
- In death, hope was over (**Luke 16:19-31**).
- Now, we have a living hope in Christ (**I Peter 1:3-9**).

4. Should you enjoy life on this earth while you have it?

Yes: *“(7) Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. (8) Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. (9) Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. (10) Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:7-10).*

- In your labors (**Ecclesiastes 2:24-26**, **Ecclesiastes 5:18-20**, and **I Timothy 6:17**) and even your marriage (**Proverbs 5:18-19** and **I Corinthians 7:32-34**).
- We do not have to be all about learning (**Ecclesiastes 12:12**).

5. Can you have enough strength, wisdom, or money to avoid what chance and time can do to a person?

No: *“I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all” (Ecclesiastes 9:11).*

- You cannot get any plainer than that!

6. Can we always know when something bad is coming upon us?

Yes: *“For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:12).*

- **Genesis 27:2**, **Proverbs 27:1**, and **James 4:13-16**.
- Sometimes those who will bring bad upon us are supposedly with us (**Jeremiah 5:26**).

7. Can a wise man defeat a strong man?

Yes: *“(13) This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: (14) There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: (15) Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man” (Ecclesiastes 9:13-15).*

- **Joshua 8:1-29**, **Judges 7:1-23**, **Proverbs 10:29**, **Proverbs 21:22**, **Proverbs 24:5-6**, and **Ecclesiastes 7:19**.

8. Though wisdom is greater than strength, do people always listen to the wise?

No: *“Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard” (Ecclesiastes 9:16).*

- Not if the person giving that wisdom is not highly esteemed (**Mark 6:3-6, Acts 4:13, and Acts 27:1-11**).

9. Are the words of the wise heard in quiet better than the cry of a ruler among fools (Note: The KJV is not very clear in wording in this verse)?

Yes, though the KJV is not clear in wording. Notice two versions here:

KJV: *“The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools” (Ecclesiastes 9:17).*

ASV: *“The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the cry of him that ruleth among fools” (Ecclesiastes 9:17).*

- People tend to draw crowds around foolishness while the voice of wisdom is not so popular (**Isaiah 30:12 and John 12:43**).
- Yet, those few who listen to wisdom (**Matthew 7:13-14**) have found the true value of words (**Proverbs 3:13 and Proverbs 16:16**).

10. How many sinners does it take to destroy much good?

One: *“Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good” (Ecclesiastes 9:18).*

- **Joshua 7:1-20, I Samuel 14:28-29, I Corinthians 5:1-8, Galatians 5:7-9, I Timothy 2:13-15, II Timothy 2:16-18, and Titus 1:10-11.**
- The Bible is full of examples of those who did things right and set a good example to be followed. For example, we have Noah (**Genesis 6-8**), Abraham (**Genesis 22:18 and Galatians 3:18; 29**), Joseph (**Acts 7:9-15**), Moses (**Acts 7:35**), David (**Acts 13:22**), Elijah (**I Kings 18**), Micaiah (**II Chronicles 18**), Josiah (**II Kings 22:1-23:25**), John the Baptizer (**Matthew 3:1-12**), Philip the Evangelist (**Acts 8:25-38**), Phebe (**Romans 16:1-2**), Epaphroditus (**Philippians 2:25-30**), and Epaphras (**Colossians 4:12**) who serve as good examples. Many more could have been listed (cf. **Hebrews 11:1-40**).