

LIFE UNDER THE SUN



STUDIES IN ECCLESIASTES

20 January 2019

הַבַּיִת

“Everyone I know goes away in the end...”

- Johnny Cash, *Hurt*

Ecclesiastes Part 16 - “The Importance of Lifelong Worship”

Introduction: The life and music of “the man in black.”

Honor God Throughout the Days of Your Life — Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

A Final Exhortation (12:1)

Eccl. 12:1—Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, “I have no pleasure in them...”

1. The Teacher calls for all to recognize God’s *authority* and to *submit* themselves to Him while they are young.

“remember”—זָכַר (zä’kar) — To mark (so as to be recognized), i.e. to remember; by implication, to mention. The word carries the idea of pricking or implanting.

2. It is important to do this before we come into the latter stage of life where the days become progressively more difficult to *enjoy*.

“evil”—רָע (rab) — Bad or (as noun) evil (natural or moral):—adversity, affliction, calamity, displeasure(-ure), distress.

Key Point: Mankind should be marked at an early age by _____ and _____ God because there will come a time in life when that will be the only real source of joy.

The Harsh Realities of Aging (12:2-5)

The Imagery: The progressive decay of a large _____

Eccl. 12:2—before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain

⇒ This imagery here seems to set the tone of the passage, describing the fading of _____ and the ominous arrival of a season of _____.

Eccl. 12:3—in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed...

“the keepers of the house”

“the strong men”

“the grinders”

“those who look through the windows”

Eccl. 12:4—and the doors on the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—

⇒ Much of what is referenced in this verse appears to refer to the loss of _____.

⇒ The imagery of light or fitful _____ also appears to be in view.

Eccl. 12:5—they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire (the caper-berry tree) fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

⇒ This verse describes the loss of _____ that occurs with age.

⇒ There is also a double use of tree imagery: (1) An almond tree →

(2) A caper-berry tree →

Key Point: The breakdown of our bodies is intended to remind us of the _____ that we are all on in life.

The Harsh Reality of Death (12:6-8)

The Visual Imagery

Eccl. 12:6—before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern,

⇒ There are two images in view that illustrate the loss of life:

(1) The extinguishing of _____

(2) The inability to obtain _____

The Biblical Imagery

Eccl. 12:7— and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

⇒ The language used here alludes to two key events in Genesis 2-3

(1) The _____ of mankind.

Gen. 2:7—then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

(2) The penalty of _____ pronounced upon mankind.

Gen. 3:19—By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

The Final Refrain

Eccl. 12:8—Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity.

Key Point: It is incredibly _____ and _____ to realize that the strength of our youth has or will desert us and that the lives that we cling so tightly to will be taken from us.

The Only Hope for Men & Women of Dust

It wasn't until messages of the prophets came that an understanding of a resurrection of some kind was revealed to God's people (Dan. 12:2; Ezek. 37:4-6).

Jesus Christ lived His life in perfect, worshipful service to God the Father, fully confident in His eventual resurrection.

John 2:19—Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

The NT gives us clear revelation about the nature of our resurrection so that we might live with assurance and confidence (1 Cor. 15:42-49).

Our Earthly Body

What is sown is *perishable*

It is sown in *dishonor*

It is sown in *weakness*

It is sown a *natural* body

Adam

He became a *living being*

He was from *the earth*

He was the man of *dust*

Our Resurrected Body

What is raised is *imperishable*

It is raised in *glory*

It is raised in *power*

It is raised a *spiritual* body

Jesus

He became a life-giving *spirit*

He is from *heaven*

1 Cor. 15:48-49—⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.