

LIFE UNDER THE SUN



STUDIES IN ECCLESIASTES

13 January 2019

הביל

“To stand up straight with your shoulders back is to accept the terrible responsibility of life, with eyes wide open...It means adopting the burden of self-conscious vulnerability, and accepting the end of the unconscious paradise of childhood... It means willingly undertaking the sacrifices necessary to generate a productive and meaningful reality (it means acting to please God, in the ancient language).”
- Jordan Peterson, *Twelve Rules for Life*

Ecclesiastes Part 15 - “Living with Courage & Wisdom”

Introduction: Making Decisions

In the process of making decisions in life, we are prone to err in one of two ways:

1. _____ →

⇒ Because of this tendency, God’s Word repeatedly calls for His people to be _____! (Deut. 31:6; Phil. 1:20)

2. _____ →

⇒ Because of this tendency, God’s Word repeatedly calls for His people to be _____! (Psa. 19:7; Rom. 16:9)

Key Point: In Qohelet (the Teacher), God has given to us someone who shared these sinful tendencies and who _____ us to live our lives of courage and wisdom, trusting God and living according to His Word.

The Joyous Venture of Life—Ecclesiastes 11:1-10

Another Poem (11:1-4)

1. Life should be characterized by *investment*.

Eccl. 11:1—Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

2. Life should be characterized by *generosity*.

Eccl. 11:2—Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

3. Life has a *Cause/Effect* character to it.

Eccl. 10:3—If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth, and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.

4. In life, the *temptation* towards inaction is always present.

Eccl. 11:4—He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.

Key Point: The poem exhorts us to _____ ourselves to the various tasks of life rather than _____ them.

God’s Ways are Beyond Us (11:5-6)

1. There are things in life that we simply cannot *understand*.

Eccl. 11:5—As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.

2. We must therefore devote ourselves to the tasks of life, *trusting* God for the results.

Eccl. 11:6—In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

Key Point: _____ in God should be the basis for our courage to make decisions and then act upon them.

A Balanced Perspective (11:7-8)

1. The ability to enjoy life is God’s *gift* to us.

Eccl. 11:7—Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun.

2. To be wise is to recognize that both *joyful* and *difficult* times lie ahead of us.

Eccl. 11:8—So if a person lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity.

Key Point: The brevity of life means that _____ minimizes both our effectiveness and experience of joy.

Enjoy the Days of Your Youth (11:9-10)

Eccl. 11:9—Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

1. It is good that the young *rejoice* in the youthful season of life.

“rejoice”—שמח (*sä'makb'*)—To rejoice or exult. Literally, to brighten up. To cheer up, to make glad, to cause to be joyful.

2. Those who are young should pursue their *desires*.

⇒ This exhortation appears at first contrary to his prior instructions given in light of his own _____ (1:12-2:26)

3. The reality of God's *judgment* should influence the ways in which these desires are pursued.

“judgment”—מִשְׁפָּט (*mish-pät'*)—A verdict pronounced by a judge, especially a sentence or formal decree. The imagery is related to the function of a king in judging the actions of those who serve him.

4. To find joy in life, a person must not be overcome by *cynicism* or *despair* in the face of life's difficulties.

Eccl. 11:10—Remove vexation from your heart, and put away pain from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are vanity.

Key Point: To live wisely during the days of our youth we must _____ that our lives belong to God for His _____!

Looking Backward, Looking Forward “...youth and the dawn of life are *hebel*.”

- The first usage of the term *hebel* in Scripture is in Genesis where it is rendered as the proper name, _____.

⇒ The ultimate sacrifice that Abel offered to the Lord was not from his flock, it was His _____.

Heb. 11:4—By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

- It is through Jesus that all who believe are delivered from a life that is only ever *hebel*.

⇒ *His death delivers us from the _____ of our sin* (1 Cor. 1:8)

⇒ *His resurrection secures new _____ for us* (Rom. 6:5)

⇒ *His Spirit _____ us to live with courage* (John 16:33)

⇒ *His Word _____ us to live with wisdom* (Eph. 5:15-16)

Heb. 12:22-24—²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.