

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105

August 19, 2007

Ecclesiastes: A Powerful Testimony

Paul Earnhart

To affirm that Solomon wrote **Ecclesiastes** is to affirm by necessity something unrecorded in Scripture, that David's son at last repented of the grievous folly of his latter life. Yet we believe that to be the great likelihood and this great book a reflection of it. **Ecclesiastes** is certainly not the work of a young man or of an impenitent one. Though certainly not conclusive, if Solomon did die in apostasy he represents the only known apostate whose writings appear in the Bible. More importantly, what a powerful testimony to the vanity of life under the sun would come from the likes of Solomon. Who could understand that great truth more profoundly than he?

The fall of Solomon from the devout faith of his early reign is almost inexplicable. First, because of what he had been. How could a man once so earnest and faithful take such a moral and spiritual plunge? It was a wise and humble young Solomon who chose wisdom over riches when God invited him at Gibeon to ask for whatever he would (1 Kings 3:9). And there is not a more deeply spiritual prayer than that of Solomon at the dedication of the temple. *“May the Lord our God be with us ... that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances ... that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God” (1 Kings 8:57,58,60).*

Then, there is what he had seen. God had revealed Himself at least twice in open vision to Solomon, first at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:5) and then in Jerusalem where he saw the glory of the Lord fill the newly built temple (1 Kings 8:10).

Finally, there is what he had written, such powerful exhortations in the Proverbs that seem to strike right at the heart of his own later failure: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (3:5,6).* *“Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life” (4:23).* *“Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (16:18).*

Solomon was the wisest of all men and yet his wisdom did not save him from the ultimate stupidity; the worship of man-made gods. He was not deceived into actually believing that God was made of lifeless stone or metal. At the dedication of the temple he had asked and answered *“Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!” (1 Kings 8:27).* Solomon's undoing was not intellectual but affectional. Simply put, *“King Solomon loved many foreign women...concerning which the Lord had said to the sons of Israel, ‘You shall not associate with*

them, neither shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods'” (1 Kings 11:1-4). He abandoned God to please his wives!

In spite of all his wisdom he was brought down by his feelings. This should be a very sober warning to those who think themselves too well-informed to be caught by the devil. Satan captures more people with emotions than with argument. A lot of intelligent people have gone to hell knowing full well their course was intellectually indefensible.

Solomon blundered and blundered in epic proportions and for this very reason his testimony about the meaning of life would be especially powerful (unlike that of some pseudo-Solomon). He had been there and done it; not simply in the ordinary measures available to most of us, but in the immense proportions his great wealth, wisdom and power made possible. Therefore when Solomon speaks of the emptiness of life under the sun we are compelled to listen. His capabilities to plumb the depths of any peace and joy to be found in wealth, wisdom or pleasure are forever beyond us. If Solomon never found it, there is no hope for us. As he himself asks, *“For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I?” (Ecclesiastes 2:25)* and, *“For what can the man do who succeeds the king?” (2:12).*

This is the challenge that confronts us in this great book, the studied results of an experiment in the meaning of life carried out by one whose ability will forever exceed our own. Solomon's conclusions are sometimes startling, almost incredible, but if he is heard carefully and well the absolute accuracy of all that he says of life under the sun will be increasingly clear. The truths Solomon presents in Ecclesiastes are all stated elsewhere in the Bible but never so powerfully as in this remarkable and challenging book.

“I will sing of mercy and justice; to You, O Lord, I will sing praises.” –
Psalm 101:1

Family News

Connie Cobern is in CCU at Hendersonville Medical Center with congestive heart failure. She went there yesterday.

Elmo Ferrell remains in room 101A at NHC. He seems to be doing worse mentally.

Nancy Read is suffering from a sore throat.

Ame White is having physical therapy on her shoulder three days a week.

Remember especially our elderly members during the hot weather. Most of them are doing OK but have to stay inside to stay cool.

New Reports from men we support: None known.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: Robert and Candy Jenkins (Centerville), Allen and Cindi Malone (GA).

Note – If you have any news for the bulletin (out of town, sick, etc.), then please let me know. I will be printing it most weeks on Saturday night, so please get the news to me by then. Thanks! – Troy

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).