

ECCLESIASTES

Ecccl. 9:11-18



Eccl. 9:11 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.

12 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.

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.

16 Then said I, Wisdom *is* better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard.

17 The words of wise *men are* heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

This evening, we continue on a wonderful, spiritual journey through the Book of Ecclesiastes, known also as “The Preacher.”

I. THE PREACHER’S SUBJECT, 1:1-11

A. The Preacher, 1:1

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- (3) The Inescapability of Death, 9:3
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 - (4) Enjoy Your Work While You Can, 9:10

4. Life's Falseness, 9:11-10:15

a. The Triumph of Fate, 9:11-12

(1) The Unattainable, 9:11

(a) Choice: The Great Inequity of Life,
9:11a “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...”

- From the earthly perspective, things do not always turn out the way they are anticipated to happen:
 - “...the race *is* not to the swift...” – The tortoise and the hare.
 - Asahel was fast and could “run like a deer;”

2 Sam. 2:18 And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and **Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe...(v. 23)...Asahel fell down and died...**

- “...nor the battle to the strong...” – David conquering Goliath. (1 Sam. 17)
- “...neither yet bread to the wise...” – Elijah and the raven. (1 Kings 17)
- Micaiah, against Ahab (1 Kings 22:7-28)

1 Kings 22:8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is yet one man, **Micaiah** the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: **but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.*** And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? ...

27 And say, Thus saith the king, **Put this *fellow* in the prison, and **feed him with bread of affliction** and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.**

28 And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

- “...nor yet riches to men of understanding...” – The Apostle Paul
- “...nor yet favour to men of skill...” – The mariners in Jonah 1.

(b) Chance: The Great Inevitability of Death, 9:11b “...but time and chance happeneth to them all.”

- Est. 4:14 “...and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom **for such a time as this?**”

- Being in the right, or wrong, place at the right, or wrong, time makes all the difference in life's outcomes.
- Edward Harrison was playing golf in Washington state in 1951 when his driver snapped, and the shaft lodged in his groin. He staggered about 100 yards before bleeding to death.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/tomphillips/incredibly-weird-deaths>

- Dorothy Fletcher had a heart attack on a flight to Orlando in 2003. When an attendant asked if any doctors were on board, 15 cardiologists stood up. They were en route to a conference. Needless to say, she survived.

<https://www.neatorama.com/2017/08/31/10-People-Who-Were-in-the-Right-Place-at-the-Right-Time/>

- Ruth was in the right place at the right time – Ruth 2.

“Duties are ours; events, God’s.” – John Quincy Adams

<https://www.patriotacademy.com/duty-is-ours-results-are-gods/>

(2) The Unavoidable, 9:12

(a) Life’s Limitations, 9:12a-b

i. Indicated, 9:12a “For man also **knoweth not** his time...”

- Solomon’s paranoia regarding death is further exemplified in verse 12.

ii. Illustrated, 9:12b “...as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare...”

- The path of life is full of “snares” or traps:

Eph. 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, **that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

1 Tim. 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he **fall into** reproach and **the snare of the devil.**

2 Tim. 2:26 And *that* they may recover themselves out of **the snare of the devil**, who are taken captive by him at his will.

(b) Life's Liabilities, 9:12c "...so are the sons of men **snared in an evil time**, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

1 Tim. 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he **fall into** reproach **and the snare of the devil**.

1 Tim. 6:9 But they that will be rich **fall into** temptation and **a snare**, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Psa. 106:36 And they served their idols: which were **a snare** unto them.

Prov. 18:7 A fool's mouth *is* his destruction, and **his lips are the snare of his soul.**

Prov. 29:25 **The fear of man bringeth a snare: but** whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Heb. 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; **lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.**

b. The Triumph of Forgetfulness, 9:13-18

(1) The City, 9:13-15

(a) The Size of the City, 9:13-14b

i. No Outward Significance,
9:13-14a “This wisdom have I
seen also under the sun, and it
seemed great unto me: 14
There was a little city ...”

ii. No Inward Strength, 9:14b
“...and few men within it...”

- The implication is that there is a correlation between strength and masculinity – vulnerability due to “few men within it.”

(b) The Siege of the City, 9:14c “...and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:”

- From the earthly perspective, the situation was near hopeless – “a little city...few men...a great king against it and besieged it...great bulwarks against it:”

(c) The Savior of the City, 9:15

i. Their Ignorance of Him, 9:15a
“Now there was found in it a
poor wise man, and he by his
wisdom delivered the city;

Prov. 21:22 A wise *man* scaleth the city of the mighty,
and casteth down the strength of the confidence
thereof.

- “The Art of War” – Sun Tzu

ii. Their Ignoring of Him, 9:15b
“...yet no man remembered
that same poor man.”

- There will be countless pastors, missionaries, and church members that the world will consider “poor” and not remember, but who are precious in the eyes of God.

Psa. 34:6 **This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him***, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Isa. 66:2 For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but **to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.**

(2) The Cynic of the City, 9:16-18

(a) And the Despised Man, 9:16

Eccl. 9:16 Then said I, Wisdom *is* better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard.

- Appreciation is too often connected to “celebrity” and overlooked from humble origins.

Prov. 1:5 **A wise man** will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Prov. 24:5 **A wise man** *is* strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

(b) And the Deluded Man, 9:17

Eccl. 9:17 The words of wise *men are* heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

- The solitude of contemplation provides effective soul-searching of truth.

(c) And the Dangerous Man, 9:18

Eccl. 9:18 **Wisdom is better than weapons of war:** but one sinner destroyeth much good.

- Wisdom is effective when received by reasonable and responsible leaders.
- However... much good is destroyed by one sinner:
 - Judas
 - Origen
 - B. F. Westcott
 - F.J.A. Hort
 - Charles Darwin
 - Karl Marx
 - Sigmund Freud
 - Adolf Hitler (Lenin, Stalin, Mao)
 - Pope Pius XII
 - John Dewey

Conclusion

2 Tim. 2:21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, **he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.**

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that **call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And *that* they may recover themselves out of the **snare of the devil**, who are taken captive by him at his will.