

Message #30

Ecclesiastes 9:1-6

Most things in life are unknown. In fact, the only real certainty we have is that we will die and because of the promise of the Rapture, we are not even certain of that.

SINCE GOD IS TOTALLY SOVEREIGN OVER EVERYTHING , THE KEY TO MEANING AND FULFILLMENT IN LIFE AND DEATH IS FOUND IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WHICH HE SOVEREIGNLY ORDAINED.

The conjunction “for” which begins **verse 1** connects us with the preceding idea that no man can possibly discover or uncover all of the sovereign work of God. Man doesn’t really know too much for certain except that God is the one calling the shots. Now, since death is a reality for all of us, barring the Rapture, the only wise way to live, the only meaningful way to live life is to keep our focus on God and enjoy what He has given us.

OBSERVATION #1 – The works of righteous wise men are in the hand of God . **9:1a**

In the O.T., “in the hand of” is an often used expression. It is used at least three ways: 1) To mean “under the supervision of” (Gen. 9:2); 2) To mean “at the disposal of” (Gen. 14:20; 16:20); 3) To mean “in the care of” (Job 12:10; Psalm 31:5).

It seems that Solomon lived with a constant awareness that even the works of the righteous and wise men were in the sovereign care of God. A righteous or wise man still has to face God who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Wise and righteous men keep their focus on God, realizing it is ultimately God who will judge their works. Just because one is classified as righteous or wise does not mean he automatically does everything that pleases God. Righteous and wise people continually keep their focus on the Word and will of God, knowing their works are monitored by Him.

OBSERVATION #2 – The outcome of a man’s works is known by God, but unknown by man. **9:1b**

The last part of **verse 1** has been interpreted in a variety of ways:

- 1) Some suggest it means man does not ever really know if he will be loved or hated by God.
- 2) Some suggest it means man does not know whether the circumstances God puts us in will cause us to be loved or hated by others.
- 3) Some suggest it means man does not really ever know how God views our works—whether He loves them or hates them.

4) Some suggest it means that man cannot determine by a man's external works whether God loves it or hates it and he cannot determine anything by what is happening externally.

We cannot tell by looking around at external things whether or not God loves or hates the deed.

The point is only God really knows what is in the heart and what is happening by the work. Man does not know!

OBSERVATION #3 – The outcome of a man's work is only known by God, regardless of how godly or godless the man. **9:2**

Judgment awaits everybody. God will sovereignly judge every thing regarding every one. The works of an individual will be evaluated by God. That is true for the one who conforms to God's standards and the one who doesn't. That is true for the one who is ceremonially clean and the one who isn't. That is true for one who is sacrificial and one who isn't. It is true of a good man and a sinner, the one who doesn't swear and the one who does.

Every human being will face God and will have their deeds evaluated by Him. If one is a believer and the works are good, he will earn rewards. If the works are bad he will lose them.

If one is not a believer and the works are good, his level of eternal damnation will apparently be different than if his works were bad. No unbeliever can do good works in the sight of God, because all works are as filthy rags. However, in a moral sense deeds can be judged for greater or lesser condemnation.

OBSERVATION #4 – The fate of all men is the same. **9:3**

The same kinds of things happen to all men. It makes no difference whether one is righteous or wicked.

And of course the one fate that is the same for all is that all die. This is a point that Solomon thought about time and time again in this very book—2:14-16; 3:19; 5:16; 6:12. No matter how wise or righteous, no matter how foolish or sinful, one by one they all die.

This fate is the same for everyone. Now of course the big difference is what happens when the person dies. If one is a believer, one goes to be with the Lord. If one is not, one goes to eternal condemnation.

The threat of death does not cause the wicked to repent—in fact, their hearts are evil and insane. Make no mistake about it; those who think lightly of God are out of their minds.

OBSERVATION #5 – The one God classifies as alive is far better than one dead. **9:4**

A dog in Solomon's day was not considered a pet or companion like it is in our day. In fact, the dog was loathsome and despicable (I Sam. 17:43; II Sam. 3:8).

The "lion" on the other hand, was a beast that was esteemed; it was considered to be great and powerful (Prov. 30:30).

Now we have already learned from chapter 8 that righteous people do not look too blessed in this world and that the wicked often look more blessed than the righteous (8:14).

The point of this verse is this—in view of the fact that God will judge all men, it is far better to be joined with those God classifies as alive (the righteous), even though one may look like a despicable loser on this earth, than to be classified by the world as a lion who will be the loser in eternity.

OBSERVATION #6 – The one alive considers God's judgment and the one who is dead doesn't. **9:5**

People alive to God develop a healthy fear of God and of His judgment. Whereas those who are spiritually dead do not give eternity a second thought. They live for here and now and they do not know as soon as they die, they are done and doomed. God will not give any reward and God won't ever remember their existence. Their works meant nothing.

OBSERVATION #7 – The one not right with God will never share in God's eternal blessings. **9:6**

One who was spiritually dead will never share the blessings of God. Such a one will never see the new heaven, the new earth or the new Jerusalem.

The love or hate or zeal they demonstrated in life means nothing.

The real key to meaning and fulfillment is to stand in awe of God—to love Him, to fear Him and to obey Him. This will give meaning even when facing death.