

“Perverted Persons” in the Temple

by Kyle Pope

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those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20). Our world may not yet have come to the point that the Israelites did, but with events such as this occurring and “religious” leaders twisting and ignoring Scripture to defend it, I wonder, how long will it be before our world reaches that point? *“All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.”* Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:24-25). May God’s people retain the courage and the love for the Lord and His word to cling to the truth no matter how far away from it our world turns.

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Hard Facts of Life from Ecclesiastes

by Wayne Goff

Ecclesiastes is written with an earthly view, *“life under the sun.”* Moreover, it philosophizes about that life apart from God. Solomon, the author, summarizes the “hard facts of life” for which there is no solution and which is a burden to those who live only for the here and now.

1: No Justice, 3:16-17. *“Moreover I saw under the sun: in the place of judgment, wickedness was there; and in the place of righteousness, iniquity was there”* (3:16). While government is better than anarchy, human government is often filled with corruption and injustice. This chafes the mind of the good man, and he knows there is no solution in this life.

2: No Hope, 3:18-21. *“All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust”* (3:20). Animals and people alike experience the same fate, inevitable death. From a purely earthly standpoint, one is no different from the other. This frustrates man because he is so much higher than the beast, but he cannot defeat death.

3: No Comfort, 4:1-3. *“Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: and look! The tears of the oppressed, but they have no comforter — On the side of their oppressors there is power, but they have no comforter.”* How often the poor and helpless have no benefactor! Life is not fair to those who have been born in a lowly station in life. There is no solution for the problem.

4: No Rest, 4:4-6. *“Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.”* Rather than appreciate the one who has accomplished much with his wisdom and hard labor, Solomon discovered that the neighbor’s envy ruins the pleasure one might derive from his work. Everybody is trying to “keep up with the Joneses” and there never is the satisfaction of having made the final “best.”

5: No Companionship, 4:7-12. *“Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun: there is one alone, without companion: he has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labors, nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks, ‘For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?’ This also is vanity and a grave misfortune”* (4:7–8). There is nothing worse than loneliness for the man who has accomplished much, accumulated wealth, and has no one to rejoice in it with him, and no one who will appreciate it when he is gone. Just the same, man goes on with his work as though he is accomplishing something permanent. It only has a vain end.

6: No Security, 4:13-16. Today’s king is tomorrow’s deposed ruler! People are fickle. They always want the next thing. Every ruler must look over his shoulder.

In this life, without God, everything is vain.

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