

March Madness

by Wayne Goff

This time of year has been termed **“March Madness”** in honor of the college basketball playoffs. People love watching this tournament because of the **desperation** it creates among college teams. One loss and you’re out! Lower-seeded teams often upset the higher-seeded teams. Teams that would otherwise never meet sometimes meet. It’s a real thriller for sports fans who like drama.

March can also be the month of **“madness”** when you consider the weather in North America. “In like a lion, out like a lamb” has certainly been true this year. Already the violent change from winter to spring has spawned tornadoes, strong winds, and brought destruction to some around us. Now it only remains to be seen if it will go out like a lamb. Weather is so unpredictable in Missouri!

The Bible also has something to say about *“madness.”* The previous two thoughts led me to consider the question: **“What does the Bible say about madness?”** The most solemn thought came from Solomon in Ecclesiastes 9:3 — ***“This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.”***

Of course this led me to ask what Solomon meant in this passage by *“madness.”* I think I walked into a “hornet’s nest” because the commentators all have different viewpoints, and it’s going to be difficult to figure out exactly what Solomon had in mind. The word *“madness”* (Heb., **holelah**) appears elsewhere in Ecclesiastes 1:17; 2:12; 7:25. One thing is certain. There are about five Hebrew words translated *“madness”* in the Old Testament and none of them are good. They all refer to a *kind of insanity* which leads me to think that Ecclesiastes 9:3 is pointing out that mankind tends to *ignore*, or *block out* the inescapable meeting with eternity in order to live the empty lives they choose here on the earth. Much like Paul’s reference to a *“veil”* which covers the Jewish mind regarding the true meaning of the Old Testament, 2 Corinthians 3:14-16. It can only be *“taken away”* when one realizes that Christ is the fulfillment of the Law. Likewise, when one stops blundering around in life with *“trivial things”* and considers eternity and the meaning of life, then he will cease his *“madness”* and live life as it should be lived. He will *“redeem the time”* (Eph. 5:16). But Solomon states the sad truth that man will **ignore** his eternal fate, live for his heart’s *“evil,”* and then die.

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