

**ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD,
AKURE
BIBLE STUDY, 14/11/2007**

STUDY 9

ALL THINGS COME ALIKE TO ALL

Ecc. 9:1 – 18

Solomon, in this study, for a further proof of the vanity of this world, gives us four observations which he had made upon a survey of the state of the children of men in it: He observed that commonly as to outward things, good and bad men fare much alike (v. 1-3). That death puts a final period to all our employments and enjoyments in this world (v. 4-6), whence he infers that it is our wisdom to enjoy the comforts of life and mind the business of life, while it lasts (v. 7-10). That God's providence often crosses the fairest and most hopeful probabilities of men's endeavour, and great calamities often surprise men ere they are aware (v. 11, 12). That wisdom often makes men very useful, and yet gains them little respect, for that persons of great merit are slighted (v. 13-18). And what is there then in this world that should make us fond of it?

1. Mysteries in providence

Ecc. 9:1-3; Job 24:1; Jer. 12:1; Hab. 1:13; Psalm 83:1; Deut 33:3; John 10:29; Psalm 31:15; Jer. 1:38; Acts 26:11; Luke 15:17; Job 9:22; Ecc. 8:14; Job 21:7-18; Malachi 3:5, 15, 18

We are not to think our searching into the word or works of God useless, because we cannot explain all difficulties. We may learn many things good for ourselves and useful to others. But man cannot always decide who are objects of God's special love, or under his wrath; and God will certainly put a difference between the precious and the vile, in the other world. The difference as to present happiness, arises from the inward supports and consolations the righteous enjoy, and the benefit they derive from varied trials and mercies. As far as the sons of men are left to themselves, their hearts are full of evil; and prosperity in sin, causes them even to set God at defiance by daring wickedness. Though, on this side death, the righteous and the wicked may often seem to fare alike, on the other side there will be a vast difference between them.

The great difference that there is between the characters of the righteous and the wicked, which, in several instances, are set the one over-against the other, to show that, though all things come alike to all, yet that does not in the least confound the eternal distinction between moral good and evil, but that remains immutable. (1.) The righteous are clean, have clean hands and pure hearts; the wicked are unclean, under the dominion of unclean lusts, pure perhaps in their own eyes, but not cleansed from their filthiness, God will certainly put a difference between the clean and the unclean, the precious and the vile, in the other world, though he does not seem to do so in this. (2.) The righteous sacrifice, that is, they make conscience of worshipping God according to his will, both with inward and outward worship; the wicked sacrifice not, that is, they live in the neglect of God's worship and grudge to part with any thing for his honour. What is the Almighty, that they should serve him? (3.) The righteous

are good, good in God's sight, they do good in the world; the wicked are sinners, violating the laws of God and man, and provoking to both. (4.) The wicked man swears, has no veneration for the name of God, but profanes it by swearing rashly and falsely; but the righteous man fears an oath, swears not, but is sworn, and then with great reverence; he fears to take an oath, because it is a solemn appeal to God as a witness and judge; he fears, when he has taken a oath, to break it, because God is righteous who takes vengeance.

The little difference there is between the conditions of the righteous and the wicked in this world: There is one event to both. Is David rich? So is Nabal. Is Joseph favoured by his prince? So is Haman. Is Ahab killed in a battle? So is Josiah. Are the bad figs carried to Babylon? So are the good, Jer. xxiv. 1. There is a vast difference between the original, the design, and the nature, of the same event to the one and to the other; the effects and issues of it are likewise vastly different; the same providence to the one is a savour of life unto life, to the other of death unto death, though, to outward appearance, it is the same.

2. The consequences of death; the proper enjoyment of life

Ecc. 9:4–10; Job 10:22; John 6:27; I Cor. 6:13; Psalm 17:4; Deut 26:14; Acts 2:46; Deut. 28:47; Rev. 3:4; Matthew 26:7; Psalm 23:5; Prov. 5:19; Luke 12:19; Ecc. 2:3; Prov. 17:16; John 9:4; 12:38; Isaiah 63:16; Job 7:8–10; 14:21; Isaiah 26:14; Ecc. 8:15; 2:10, 24; 3:13, 22; 5:8; Luke 11:41; Acts 10:35; Job 21:13; Romans 12:11; Col. 3:13; Ecc. 11:6

The most despicable living man's state, is preferable to that of the most noble who have died impenitent. Solomon exhorts the wise and pious to cheerful confidence in God, whatever their condition in life. The meanest morsel, coming from their Father's love, in answer to prayer, will have a peculiar relish. Not that we may set our hearts upon the delights of sense, but what God has given us we may use with wisdom. The joy here described, is the gladness of heart that springs from a sense of the Divine favour. This is the world of service, that to come is the world of recompence. All in their stations, may find some work to do. And above all, sinners have the salvation of their souls to seek after, believers have to prove their faith, adorn the gospel, glorify God, and serve their generation.

3. The disappointment of hopes

Ecc. 9:11–12; Deut. 8:17–18; I Sam. 6:9; II Chro. 20:15; Psalm 76:5; Amos 2:14–15; Zech. 4:6; Jer. 9:23; Ecc. 8:7; Isaiah 24:18; Hosea 9:8; Luke 21:34–35; Prov. 29:6; I Thes. 5:3

Men's success seldom equals their expectations. We must use means, but not trust to them: if we succeed, we must give God the praise; if crossed, we must submit to his will. Those who put off the great concerns of their souls, are caught in Satan's net, which he baits with some worldly object, for which they reject or neglect the gospel, and go on in sin till they suddenly fall into destruction.

4. The benefits of wisdom

Ecc. 9:13–18; Ecc. 2:13, 16; Isaiah 5:8; Judges 9:7; II Sam. 20:16–22; Ecc. 7:12, 19; 10:12; Prov. 21:22; Mark 6:2–3; Joshua 7:1,11–12; II Kings 21:2 – 17; Hebrews 12:15–16

A man may, by his wisdom, bring to pass that which he could never do by his strength. If God be for us, who can be against us, or stand before us? Solomon observes the power of wisdom, though it may labour under outward disadvantages. How forcible are right words! But wise and good men must often content themselves with the satisfaction of having done good, or, at least, endeavoured to do it, when they cannot do the good they would, nor have the praise they should. How many of the good gifts, both of nature and Providence, does one sinner destroy and make waste! He who destroys his own soul destroys much good. One sinner may draw many into his destroying ways. See who are the friends and enemies of a kingdom or a family, if one saint does much good, and one sinner destroys much good.