

## ECCLESIASTES 5:18-20

### The Book of Ecclesiastes Chapter Five (Part Four)

Dr. Luther Smith Jr.

#### **Review of Qoheleth's Conclusions (Ecc. 5:10)**

*Qoheleth mentioned to the congregation of Israel that the type of people who love silver (money) or seek the abundance that comes from gain or revenue as the answer to the question "why do I exist?" and "What is my purpose?" will never be satisfied with this, which makes this overall perspective empty (i.e., without value).*

*Qoheleth makes a contrast between the working man's sleep (which he describes as "sweet") and his physical appetite (little or much), and the rich man's appetite, and his sleep. The point is the rich man cannot sleep because he is concerned about the money he possesses.*

*Qoheleth continued discussing the rich man his riches from the previous verse and how his riches were lost through a "bad occupation" (or business), and he fathered a son, and there was nothing to support (lit. "hand") his son.*

*Qoheleth mentioned informs the congregation of Israel concerning what the rich man in his perspective does not get: That a person cannot take all the "silver" with them. It will remain here. As a result of this there is no advantage (or profit) for the rich man to guard his wealth.*

*Qoheleth informed the reader that if a person who is wealthy has this perspective, they will they will "obscure" themselves from the proper perspective. This will result in them becoming extremely cynical about life and even hostile to others overall.*

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:18 NASB95**

*Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.*

**Introduction To Verse 18:** Qoheleth is continuing his thought here about riches and abundance from the previous statements. From a research perspective this is the "discussion" part of his discourse where he takes his observations and looks at them in light of his results. In this case he is using wisdom to observe the alternative.

***Question: How is this point true?***

#### **Here**

- הִנֵּה (hinnê)
- This Hebrew word is a demonstrative particle.
- Prolongation of the Hebrew word הֵן (hen), which could be used as an introjection or a hypothetical principle.
- "behold," "lo," or "see."
- This particle directs the reader to focus on the proceeding idea, statement, or concept that comes after it.

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**I (myself) have seen...** The word that Qoheleth used in this text is the Hebrew word ראָה (*ra'a*). If you recall this is the word that is used to not just underscore something that one sees with their eyes, but what one inspects and evaluates its quality.

**Good:** The Hebrew word that is used is the word טוב (*tob*). Once more this is word Qoheleth used to underscore the quality of a thing from the perspective of God. Remember this is **NOT** Qoheleth's temporal opinion, He is using wisdom to evaluate these activities and motivations.

**Cross-Reference: Ecclesiastes 1:13.**

#### Fitting

- יָפֶה (*yape*)
- This Hebrew word occurs 2 times in the book of Ecclesiastes.
- "beautiful," "fair," "well."
- This word occurred one other time in the book of Ecclesiastes.

**Cross-Reference: Ecclesiastes 3:11.**

**Putting this All together:** Qoheleth's statement with the words that he uses is an important and intentional one. Now that Qoheleth has shared the perspective of the love of money and ultimately where this outlook leads, he is going to give the congregation of Israel the proper perspective from the view of God concerning this subject.

#### Ecclesiastes 5:18 NASB95

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#### Enjoy Oneself

- וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה (*ra'a tob*)
- You can translate these Hebrew words as "see good."
- There is another interesting verse that we observed previously that underscored this point made by Qoheleth.

**Cross-Reference: Ecclesiastes 2:24.**

**Qoheleth's Observation:** Qoheleth seemed to suggest that a person in light of their perspective ought to intentionally examine and evaluate the good (from the perspective of God) in all their labor with the life that God has given to them.

#### Reward

- חֶלֶק (*khleq*)
- This word occurs 67 other times in the Hebrew Scriptures.
- This Hebrew word occurs 8 times in the book of Ecclesiastes.
- The Hebrew root word is חָלַק (*khalaq*) which a verb meaning "divide," "distribute," or "assign."
- The Greek word in the Septuagint that is used is the word μέρος (*meris*), which means "portion," "share."
- The word "reward" has a different connotation than the word Qoheleth uses in this statement. What is the "share" or "portion" that Qoheleth is mentioning?

**Cross-Reference: Ecclesiastes 2:10, 21, 3:22.**

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#### **Ecclesiastes 5:18 Revised**

*Here is what I have [inspected by wisdom] to be [qualitatively good] and [appropriate]: to eat, to drink and [examine the quality of good] in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his [portion].*

**The Main Point of Qoheleth:** *Qoheleth* mentioned that to have the necessities (food and drink) in life and see that one's labor is good in the sight of God as means to provide those necessities in a short physical life that God has given is the portion, and a person ought to be at ease with this.

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:19 NASB95**

*Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.*

#### **Empowered**

- שָׁלַט (*shawlat*)
- This Hebrew word occurs 8 times in the Hebrew Scriptures.
- This Hebrew word occurs 4 times in the Book of Ecclesiastes.
- "Domineer," "have power," or "Become a master of."
- A person who has control over a particular person or thing.

**Riches and Wealth:** The two Hebrews words *Qoheleth* used are עָשָׂר (*oser*) and נָכָס (*nekes*). When it comes to these words that are used most of the time, they are used concerning kings who had resources, not necessarily a common person.

**The Main Point of Qoheleth:** *Qoheleth* mentioned that to have the necessities (food and drink) in life and see that one's labor is good in the sight of God as means to provide those necessities in a short physical life that God has given is the portion, and a person ought to be at ease with this.

#### **Rejoice**

- שָׂמַח (*samah*)
- If you recall this word is not just discussing an emotional response, but a perspective or outlook concerning a particular subject or topic.

**Cross-Reference: Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, 3:22.**

**The Main Point of Qoheleth:** *Qoheleth* mentioned all these mentioned that the monetary resources, and the control to use these resources for their needs the is wealthy person's portion while being satisfied with the labor they have produced, because the labor, and the resources, have been given freely by God.

#### **Ecclesiastes 5:20 NASB95**

*For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.*

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**Qoheleth's Observation:** *Qoheleth* ends this thought that those who have many resources often times will not remember (or recall) the years of their life because in their minds God has kept them occupied due to their perspective.

**Some Final Thoughts:** Qoheleth is once more giving what a person, rich or poor, perspective ought to be when observing money and abundance. A person ought not to live for money, but to recognize it to provide food and drink, and be satisfied not only with these things, but also the labor itself.

Also, labor ought not be used as a form of identity for a human being. It is a gift from God that a person, with this perspective can be content and find satisfaction from.

**End of Chapter Five**