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Volume 23 Issue 568

Elohim Has Made All Our Days

by — Dean H. Hough

ood and evil, we know them both; but as believers in the God of the Scriptures we accept something else also as true. All that is, including both good and evil, must be traced finally to God.

See the work of the One, Elohim ... In a day of good be resting in the good, and in a day of evil, be vigilant; Indeed the One, Elohim, has made this one along with that one (Ecclesiastes 7:13-14).

THE VIEWPOINT OF ECCLESIASTES

The book of Ecclesiastes has sometimes been dismissed as a philosophical dissertation that gives a mostly human viewpoint of life, and might even, in certain passages, undermine the divine requirements of moral behavior and devoutness. As a whole, the book does just about the opposite. It relates all human experience, both upright and sinful, both happy and miserable, to the operations of God. It refuses to leave God out of the picture no matter how dark and confused and unpleasant the picture may be.

Now in the "fourth book" (Ecclesiastes 7:13-9:15) the Assembler brings up the truth that we all will have good times and bad times in our lives, and the best way to deal with this in the current situation is to rest in the good and keep vigilant in the bad. There are many things in our lives that are intrinsically good and need to be enjoyed as long as they can be (*cf.* 9:7-10)¹. Yet these are uncertain, and

1. Go, eat your bread with rejoicing, and drink your wine with good

mischance and a season of evil are certain to come eventually (9:11-12).² That indeed is, by itself, a very human sort of philosophy; but the writer does not treat this by itself. He has brought up such matters because they are included in "the work of the One, Elohim" (7:13).

The attention given to Elohim in all of these considerations of the human experience of good and evil is extremely important. It takes these accounts of human activities, and of human experiences that are apparently allotted unevenly, and places them ultimately in the hands of God. It does not deny the human part in doing deeds of good and evil, but going beyond that it recognizes that God maintains His divine responsibility in it all; He is over all of these experiences and is operating all.

heart, for already the One, Elohim, has approved of your works. In every season, let your garments be white, and oil on your head, let it not be lacking. Enjoy life with a wife whom you love all the days of your vain life, which He gives to you under the sun — all your vain days, for this is your portion in life and in your toil that you are toiling under the sun. All that your hand finds to do, do with your vigor, for there is no doing or devising or knowledge or wisdom in the unseen where you are going.

2. Again I saw under the sun, that the race is not to the fleet, nor the battle to valiant masters, nor even bread for the wise, nor even riches for the understanding, nor even favor for the knowing, for season and mischance shall happen to them all. For, moreover, a man does not know his season; like fish that are held in a vicious weir, and like birds that are held in a snare, So the sons of humanity themselves are trapped by a season of evil, When it falls on them suddenly.

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LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE AND KNOWING BY FAITH

One of the reasons why there is such confusion about the book of Ecclesiastes is that we have often failed to distinguish what the Assembler has perceived by way of his investigations and what he has come to know by faith. These often seem contradictory. In his investigations, Ecclesiastes has found,

There is the righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is the wicked man who is prolonged in his evil (7:15).

By his own experience he has observed,

There are righteous men for whom retribution is according to the work of the wicked, and there are wicked ones for whom retribution is according to the work of the righteous (8:14).

Nevertheless, Ecclesiastes knows,

That good shall come to those who stand in fear before the One, Elohim. Yet good shall not come to the wicked one, nor shall he prolong his days which are like a shadow (:12-13).

This conviction of eventual settling of accounts is based not on what Ecclesiastes has found by observation but what he has found by his recognition of God in his heart.

What Ecclesiastes has observed with his senses is honestly recorded; but what he knows in his heart is that there is a God Who is responsible and Who will do the right thing, no matter how much [one's] experience may contradict. Present facts observed do not contradict the fact of God and the fact of His righteousness.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH VANITY

This descendant of David had the time and means to investigate many kinds of human experiences. We might well wonder why, if he were such a wise person, he did not avoid some of the very stupid experiences he sought out; but we must admit that no matter how foolish they were, these experiences were truly characteristic of human behavior.

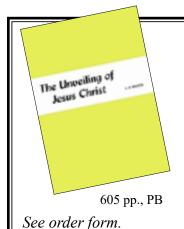
Fleshly indulgences do produce many problems and corrupt our characters; but it is also true that the wicked sometimes seem to live more comfortably than the righteous.

Of course, no one is truly righteous in the full sense of the term.

There is no righteous man in the earth who does good [absolutely] and never sins (7:20).

It is all very relative; but things are not balanced out perfectly in this life. In our experiences at present, those who are more selfish and grasping may indeed have longer lives and less misery than those who are more God fearing and caring toward others. The only certain equality is death.

Just as to all, there is one destiny for the righ-



The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

by — A.E. Knoch

Study on the Book of Revelation, commonly called The Revelation of St. John. Including: The Mystery of the Seven Stars, The Mystery of God Finished, The Mystery of Babylon.

teous one and for the wicked one, for the good one and for the bad one, for the clean one and for the unclean one, for the one who sacrifices and for him who makes no sacrifice, so it is for the good person as for the sinner ... One destiny is for all; moreover the heart of the sons of humanity is full of evil, and ravings are in their heart throughout their lives, yet after it, they are joined to the dead (9:2-3).

The facts are set before us, and most of us would agree that these are facts of life; but Ecclesiastes does not leave the facts alone in their harsh pessimism. He has insisted that *Elohim* has made our days what they are; and this is what makes this book so unique, and indeed important to the whole of Scripture as the Word of God.

God would not have us ignore the reality of evil or pretend that it is otherwise than it is; but faith in God and His righteousness puts this reality into the right perspective.

Much of our misunderstanding related to this book is that we think of the term "vanity," so frequently used throughout, as a sort of everlasting uselessness, a kind of annihilation of the experience. This is wrong. Our life and experience are vain in that they do not last; they are transitory; but this is not absolute. In fact, in the light of the truth that God has made both the good and evil experiences, they must have a purpose toward a goal. When the factor of DEITY is brought into the equation, the pessimism turns to a reliance on God to bring about a righteous culmination.

THE SEEING OF THE HEART

However, this is, to the Assembler, a matter that he cannot find out by present experience. He knows from the fact of God and the fact of human sin and suffering that there must be a setting right; but as far as the work of Elohim is concerned, he learned,

That a man is not able to find out the work that is done under the sun, forasmuch as a man may toil in seeking it out but shall not find it; and even if a wise man says he knows, he is not able to find it out (8:17).

The wise Assembler says he knows that God will judge, and that He will judge justly; but he has not found it out in all of his searchings. Experience ▶

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says otherwise; but a recognition of God in the heart brings us to the conclusion that God is operating and will judge rightly and will deal triumphantly with present vanity.

For I laid all this on my heart, and my heart saw all this: That the righteous and the wise and their services are in the hand of the One, *Elohim* (9:1).

All will die, and

The dead know nothing whatsoever ... and there is no further portion for them for the eon (:3-6).

However, there is that which the Assembler has not observed by experience, and which rests on God, and goes beyond the eon.

The experiences of Ecclesiastes would all lead toward pessimism and despair. His honest account of what he perceived with his senses would strengthen a conclusion of meaninglessness; but he does not reach that conclusion. This is because of his faith of the seeing of his heart. Because of this he knows that all human experience is finally in the hand of God. This is the solid foundation of the Assembler's knowledge of a righteous outcome to things, despite his accumulation of indisputable evidence in the present life against such an assurance.

Because of the evidence of God's presence within Israel, His personal dealings with them and their enemies and His personal Word to them, the Assembler's faith in God was based more on sight and experience, more like that of Thomas (cf. John 20:24-30) than it is for us today. However, we may also say that we have a greater revelation of God's purpose for good than Ecclesiastes had because we have become acquainted with Christ. What is important for us from this book is its testimony that reliance on God as Deity over all things, both good and evil, is a great blessing.

(see **ELOHIM**, next page)

The Keys of Death and Hell

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

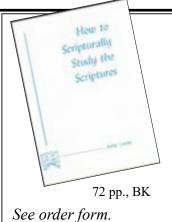
Keys lock and unlock things. That's their purpose.

In Revelation 1:17-18 Christ says,

Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He Who lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Think of it: God sent His Son "to be the Savior of the world" (I John 4:14), and now Christ has possession of the keys of death and hell. What do you think the "Savior of the world" (John 4:42), the One Who came to set captives free (Luke 4:18), is going to do with "the keys of hell and of death"? Lock, or unlock them?

Are you afraid of death or hell? Well, you needn't be. Now that Christ has the keys to both of them, it's of little wonder that He prefaced His powerful declaration with, "Fear not!"



How to Scripturally Study the Scriptures

by — Adlai Loudy (1893-1984)

This book deals chiefly with the correct partitioning of the Word of Truth. The seven chapters are titled as follows: God Has Spoken; A Divine Admonition of Endeavor; How to Scripturally Study the Scriptures; Have a Pattern of Sound Words; Distinguish the Things that Differ; Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, and the Conclusion.

"The book should prove extremely valuable in introducing the knowledge of Paul's special *ministry to those who are strangers to it.*" – A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Many Voices



ELOHIM (continued from previous page)

We cannot prove from our experiences that there is a pattern of order and meaning and value in life; but we believe there is and have good reason for believing so. We believe that God will reward good acts and condemn wicked acts; and we will go much further now that we are believing that God sent His

Son into the world to save sinners. The revelation of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ trains us to praise God as our Savior and as the Savior of all mankind. This is the testimony of God's evangel to us, and this is what we believe.

Unsearchable Riches, Volume 90

Æ.

Man-Made Walls

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

adly, we hear a lot about walls these days. Walls of division and separation abound everywhere, in every facet of life. Often, the very first thing people want to tell you about are their walls – their division with others.

The only wall ordained by God between people was the "barrier" between Jew and Gentile, Israel and the Nations. Paul called this division the "middle wall of partition" in Ephesians 2:14. The Concordant Version calls it "the central wall of the barrier." Paul proclaimed that Christ Jesus has now broken down this barrier wall.

Meanwhile, humanity perceives a host of their own of divisionary walls:

- walls of religion
- walls of denominations
- walls of creeds
- walls of ideology
- walls of nationality
- walls of race

- educational barriers
- social barriers
- class barriers
- political barriers
- economic barriers

The continued efforts of the systems of this age are to draw us into these divisional barriers. We are constantly called on to join sides; however, there are no divinely ordained walls among humanity at this time. Man-made walls of division are not *genuine*: they are *imagined*. Having been given "the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:18) we are not to be party to such estrangement and alienation. Rather, we have a divine calling to disregard these false, deceptive divisions and to be living proclamations of "the Word of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19).

Refuse to build walls among humanity. Refuse to recognize the fictitious and factious barriers built by others. Live in divine light, without walls. "For He is our peace ..." and "has broken down the hostile dividing wall" (Ephesians 2:14, Weymouth).



72 pp., PB See order form.

The King James Version – 400 Years of Bondage

1611-2011

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

1611 was not a high spiritual mark in the history of the church, the Body of Christ. Instead of being a grand year of the pinnacle of preservation or perfection of God's Word, it was rather the sad depths of the subtle corrupting of God's Word by the historic union of governmental and ecclesiastical politics.

An excellent book! – NC

Quite an eye opener to say the least! Very good! – NM

Bible Student's Notebook

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 23, No. 568 - October 25, 2016

This *free* electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25):
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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ABBREVIATION KEY

Scripture Version

(Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations are taken from the Bible Student's Version).

CV: Concordant Literal Version

DAR: Darby Translation

DT: Dabhar Translation

FF: Ferrar Fenton Bible

KJV: King James Version

RE: Rotterdam's Emphasized Bible

WT: Weymouth Translation

YLT: Young's Literal Translation

Reference Sources

AA: Analytical Analysis (Welch) BDB: Brown-Driver-Briggs

Hebrew Lexicon

CB: Companion Bible Notes &

Appendixes (Bullinger)

CC: Concordant Commentary (Knoch)

CKC: Concordant Keyword

Concordance (Knoch) CL: A Critical Lexicon and

Concordance (Bullinger)

CWS: Complete Word Study Dictionary (Zodhiates)

FoS: Figures of Speech

(Bullinger)

SEC: Strong's Exhaustive

Concordance

TGL: Thayer's Greek-English

Lexicon

UR: Unsearchable Riches

VED: Vine's Expository

Dictionary

YAC: Young's Analytical

Concordance

Reference Notations

cf. – compare

e.g. – for example

et al. - and others

etc. - et cetera (and so on)

ff. – and the following

i.e., - that is

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