

Finding Answers

“All this have I seen in my days of vanity: there is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his evil-doing. Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldst thou die before thy time? It is good that thou shouldst take hold of this; yea, also from that withdraw not thy hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth from them all” (Ecclesiastes 7:15-18).

In the recent past we have considered Solomon’s references to the providential care of God, some of which are set forth by contrasts. “For every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die” (3:1-2). Whatever the topic, there is also a contrast. However, recognizing these contrasts, and man’s inability to search out the thing of God, Solomon said, “He hath made every thing beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Mankind may question and reason concerning the matters of life as to why God allows what He allows, or does what He does, but such reasoning will inevitably make a full circle, and return to the beginning, “that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end.”

Within the text of Ecclesiastes 7:15-18, an observation is made regarding equity: “there is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his evil-doing.” The facts simply do not make sense when viewed from man’s perspective as he lives under the sun. Asaph once reasoned, “Surely God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart” (Psalms 73:1): he expresses a principle he knows to be true. However, he has a problem: “But as for me, my feet were almost gone; My steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the arrogant, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death; But their strength is firm” (Psalms 73:2-4). Asaph had the facts, but he could not find the equity in what he knew to be true concerning God and that which he saw with his eyes, “Until,” says Asaph, “I went into the sanctuary of God, And considered their latter end. Surely thou settest them in slippery places: Thou castest them down to destruction. How are they become a desolation in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, So O Lord, when thou awaketh, thou wilt despise their image” (Psalms 73:17-20).

How is it so that a righteous man “perisheth in his righteousness,” while an evil man’s life is prolonged “in his evildoing”? How is it that “all that would live

godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12)? As man lives, under the sun, he cannot “find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end.”

From the mind of an earthly thought process, there are extremes to every opposite, and each possessing their own dangers: “It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from that withdraw not thy hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth from them all.”

Remember the words of Moses, saying, “The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).