

A Study of the Wisdom Literature

OT Survey Lesson 298—Eccl. 5:8-6:12

Introduction: In this section, the Preacher turns his attention to matters concerning poverty and wealth. He sees how the poor often suffer without justice. He sees many who are wealthy unable to enjoy what they have. He sees the futility of finding satisfaction in the accumulation of earthly wealth.

Lesson aim: To see the vanity of the quest for riches and the need to appreciate in faith what God has given us and empowered us to enjoy.

Observations about poverty and wealth—Eccl. 5:8-6:12

1. About what does the preacher urge the reader not to be shocked? (v. 8) To what does he attribute these misfortunes of government? Would the preacher consider anarchy or no government preferable to having a ruler over it? (v. 9)
2. What vanity did the preacher see in the accumulation of wealth? (v. 10) What did he observe was often true with those whose “goods increase”? (v. 11)
3. How did one’s possessions affect the sleep of the working man in contradistinction to the rich man? (v. 12)
4. What grievous evil did the preacher observe? (v. 13) What else had he observed might also occur? (v. 14)
5. What truth should remind all of the vanity of the quest for riches? (v. 15-16) What else did the Preacher affirm may attend man’s life while seeking material gain? (v. 17)
6. So then, what course does the Preacher recommend? (v. 18) How did he regard the ability to enjoy what one acquires? (v. 19) What blessings will this bring to the one who so lives? (v. 20)
7. What other evil did the preacher find prevalent among men? (6:1-2)

8. What did the preacher say about the man whose soul is not satisfied with good things? (v. 3-5) Yet, even if one were to live a thousand years twice and not enjoy good things, what is his destiny? (v. 6)
9. All of man's labor is for what? (v. 7) Is there any ultimate advantage for the wise man over the fool in the matter of accumulation of wealth? (v. 8) What in the preacher's mind is "better"? (v. 9)
10. Can man change the basic character of the world or his place in it? (v. 10) Can he overpower the providence of the Lord who made all things as they are? Will "many words" change things? (v. 11)
11. What three things point to the lack of a solution to the vanity of life, except as lived by the principle of faith? (v. 12)