

1. Epicureanism and Other Philosophies in Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes prods us to consider our presentation of the Gospel. It is common for the upright to become flabbergasted by the logical gymnastics and deceptions used to justify sin, denial of God and explain life. Our Gospel presentation must be more evangelistic than to bring attention to the absurdity of sin.

Paul probably was dumbfounded internally by what he found at Athens, but his chosen action was a clear presentation of the Gospel.

Acts 17:23 — For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

The author of Ecclesiastes does this well as he suggests to the reader, “Ok, let us consider to the end what you have concluded about life.” Does life have a point? If so, what is the point? How can we make sense of being here?

Ecclesiastes does not teach epicureanism or any of the several other philosophies suggested in it. Ecclesiastes is a mirror held up to humanity. This book is a self-look and inspection of the human condition and some common conclusions. Koheleth helps us consider who we are and why we are under the sun by walking down the different avenues common to man.

One example of the philosophies considered in Ecclesiastes is epicureanism:

“Epicureanism is an ancient school of philosophy founded in Athens by Epicurus. It rejects determinism and advocated hedonism (pleasure as the highest good), but of a restrained kind: mental pleasure was regarded more highly than physical, and the ultimate pleasure was held to be freedom from anxiety and mental pain, especially that arising from

needless fear of death and of the gods.”

Ecclesiastes 2:24 — There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.

Ecclesiastes 3:12,13 — I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. 13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

The conclusion to epicureanism or any of the other human philosophies void of the one true God, is that these “streets” are “dead end streets”. Knowing this from the beginning, we must be more prepared to reach out to the lost and better explain the gospel than just resorting to “bullying” and “manipulative” tactics.

How ready is our answer for those caught in the snare of the enemy? Some absurdities when Humanity looks for fulfillment and meaning while shutting God out concern:

- Gender (Genesis 1:27)
- Marriage (Matthew 19:5,6)
- Truth is Relative (John 18:37,38; John 14:6; 1 John 5:20)
- Do what Feels Good (Psalm 16:11; Proverbs 21:17; Galatians 5:19-21)
- Hypocrisy in Religion (Matthew 7:5; James 1:26)
- Religion and Violence (James 1:27)

Chapter 3 (The natural man's view of the weary round of life.)

There is a Time for Everything, vs. 1-8

“It is just life. Things happen to us. There is no purpose or design in it. It is all chance.”

a time:

- to be born and to die
- to plant and to pluck up that which is planted
- to kill and to heal
- to break down and to build up
- to weep and to laugh
- to mourn and to dance
- to cast away stones and to gather stones together
- to embrace and to refrain from embracing
- to get and to lose
- to keep and to cast away
- to rend and to sew
- to keep silence and to speak
- to love and to hate
- of war and of peace

Jeremiah 29:11; Daniel 2:21; Amos 3:6; Job 1:10; Romans 8:28; Matthew 5:45-48

What Difference does it Make? , vs. 9-12

9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? 10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. 11 He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. 12 I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in

his life.

The changing seasons of life, apparently add to its vanity.

The Conclusion of the Materialist, vs. 13-22

13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

- Is man a mere beast? (3:19)