

Commentary on Ecclesiastes 1-6

by Chuck Smith

Transcript

Book of Ecclesiastes begins,

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem (Ecc 1:1).

So that identifies the author as Solomon. The Hebrew word that is translated preacher is a word that can mean one of the assembly or a debater. And it is determined that the translation preacher is not necessarily a good translation of this Hebrew qoheleth, that it might be better translated the debater. "The words of the Debater, the son of David, the king of Jerusalem." He refers to this, and in Ecclesiastes is the only time this Hebrew word is used, and it is in the feminine form. And it is used seven times here as Solomon is referring to himself. And really a debater or one who is searching, the searcher. The son of David, the king of Jerusalem. And the book of Ecclesiastes is indeed a search.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Searcher [or the Debater], vanity of vanities; all is vanity (Ecc 1:2).

Now he starts out with the conclusion of his search. After searching through everything, this is his conclusion of life. Now it is important that we note that the book of Ecclesiastes is a book that deals with the natural man searching for meaning in life. The word Jehovah is not used in this book. He does refer to God, the Elohim. But not unto Jehovah God in the personal sense that a person can know God. But God as a worldly man speaks of God, just a force, a power, a title--the Elohim.

Those who truly know God in a personal way know God as Yahweh or as Jesus Christ. But this is that worldly, impersonal concept of God. As he is searching for the meaning of life, he searches through all kinds of natural experiences. But there is throughout the book the denial of the spiritual. It is putting man on the level of animals. It is looking at man as an animal. And it is trying to find the reason or the purpose for life on the animal plane and it must follow that life on the animal plane is totally empty. It is totally frustrating. Looking at life on the animal plane sees man as an animal possessing a consciousness and a body, but the spirit is not related to God. So man as an animal is aware and conscious of his body needs. And he is living to seek to satisfy his body needs. And a person who lives on the body level seeking to only satisfy his body needs, denying the spiritual aspect of his nature, is going to end up ultimately with this feeling of emptiness and frustration.

The word vanity literally means that which vanishes. It\

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