

VANITY AND COUNSEL TO FEAR GOD

Ecclesiastes 12:1-8

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INTRODUCTION

In this closing chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, the prudent preacher continues his sermon using the best impressions that would have powerful and lasting influence on his hearers or listeners.

He talks about young people, the dangers of old age, and the effect of death (*vanity of life*) and the need for all to be religious (*fear God*) because of the fearful judgment that will come upon all people.

From our text, we are going to discuss part of the closing message of exhortation by King Solomon.

A CALL ON YOUNG PEOPLE TO KNOW GOD [Verse 1]

Remember now your creator in the days of your youth...when they have enough strength to work for God efficiently, not to be deceived by youthful mirth and pleasures of sin which are vanities of life. They should therefore know and guide themselves with

the word of God to be free from youthful lusts (**2 Timothy 2:22, Psalm 119:9-11**) Some Bible versions like in **Job 35:10**, use *creators or makers*. The plural here refers to the *Father, Son and the Holy Spirit*, when God said, "Let us create man..." (**Genesis 1:26**). God created us from the beginning and as such we must serve and honour Him from the beginning of our lives.

The reason to know God by the youth is given – ***when the evil days have not come...sickness and death incapacitates and terminates our works for God respectively.***

When death delays, old age creeps in which makes us unable to work hard for God due to lack of strength.

It is so important to know and worship God in our youthful age as it is one of the greatest follies and ingratitude to God to decide to worship Him at old age which is like offering a sick, or lame animal as sacrifice to God.

THE DECAYS AND INFIRMITIES OF OLD AGE [Verse 2 - 5]

Here Solomon speaks in proverbs that at old age the following occurs:

- The sun or the light of the moon or the stars be darkened...become dim to the old people because of the decay of their sight and have no pleasure in them.
- *The clouds return after the rain...the dropping, disappearance and return of the clouds are likened to old people who when free from one ailment, another seizes them, the end of one problem is the beginning of another.*
- *The keepers of the house tremble. The head (the watch-tower) of the body shakes, the anus and hands also shake – means old people are being disturbed and discouraged. Then the strong men shall bow themselves – the legs and thighs that support the body (the house) become weak and old people cannot travel long distance and cannot sustain themselves (Zechariah 8:4).*
- *The grinders cease because they are few – some old people have few teeth while others have lost all and thus*

cannot chew food properly for easy digestion.

- *Those who look from windows be darkened – due to old age, their eyes are dim (Genesis 27:1, 1 Kings 14:4).*
- *The doors are shut in the street – old people stay within and do not go for entertainment.*
- *The voice of bird wakes old people up as every little thing disturbs their sleep.*
- *All the daughters of music are brought low – they neither can sing actively nor have interest in music like young people (Ecclesiastes 2:8).*

They are always afraid to go to high places due to old age. The almond tree flourishes...the old man's hairs become grey as the almond tree blossoms earlier than other trees.

The grasshopper is a burden and desire shall fail...the old people can bear nothing as any little thing is heavy upon them. In fact, old people become tasteless to so many worldly pleasures and vanities – *when thou say, I have no pleasure in them (verse 1c).*

Verse 6 - 7

For ever the silver cord be loosed or the golden bowl be broken...when death occurs, the sacred tie between the two oldest

friends (*body and spirit*) is broken and a permanent separation is made.

The body returns to the dust from where it came (***Genesis 3:19***) and later decomposes and gradually becomes dust hence we must not place priority on the physical body (***Psalms 49:17***).

Then the spirit returns to God who gave it (***Genesis 2:7***). Here, the soul either goes to Tartarus or paradise awaiting the final judgment of God (***Luke 16:22-27, Hebrews 9:27, 2 Corinthians 5:10***).

In this way, man goes back to his long-awaited home where he hails from but the mourners continue to mourn (***verse 5c***).

Verse 8

Solomon said, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" – worldly pleasures, youthful exuberance and old age without the fear of God or being in Christ are the emptiness of life (***Matthew 16:26***).

CONCLUSION

We have been educated in this study on why young people must remember and serve their Creator as old age will put many impediments on their way to do this. That we must fear God and avoid sinful pleasures so that when the spirit is finally separated from the body by reason of death,

it will go back happily to God and rest in heaven (***Matthew 16:26, Ecclesiastes 12:7, Matthew 25:34,46***).