



Part 6: Death

Death in the rest of the Scriptures

Dust to dust:
Genesis 3:17-19

The Measure of our Days:
Psalm 39:4-6

Precious to the Lord:
Psalm 116:15

Hope in the Lord:
Psalm 146:3-5

Treasure in Heaven:
Matthew 6:19-24

I am the Resurrection:
John 11:23-26

A Home Prepared:
John 14:1-7

Neither Death nor Life:
Romans 8:38-39

Death Swallowed Up:
1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 51-57

At Home with the Lord:
2 Corinthians 5:1-10

The Name of the Lord:
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

A New Creation:
Revelation 21:1-4

Death in Ecclesiastes

This subject is surely one of the central themes in Ecclesiastes. In all the twists and turns of life, in all the good and the bad, wisdom and foolishness, prosperity and poverty there is only one ultimate outcome. Morbid though it may seem to think too closely about, the reality is that this life will always end in death. There is no get-out clause, no matter how hard we try, we can't cheat that final moment. When your time has come your time has come and there's nothing you or anybody else can do about it. It's this sobering knowledge that should reinforce all of the reality checks that Ecclesiastes has been bringing us. No matter how successful, fruitful, prosperous or joy-filled your life may be it is all fading quickly away - life is like a breath the Scriptures tell us, here one moment and gone the next - and death is the final curtain to our fleeting time here in this world.

This may seem like a truth that should be easily acknowledged by everyone, whether God-fearing people or not, but I think the reality is that though they'd never say it quite like this, people really don't often believe that death is coming their way. We push it to the back of our minds, refuse to think about it and so practically live our lives as if we're going to live forever. This is the depressing reality for someone who doesn't have an eternal viewpoint - there is nothing

beyond the here and now, so you have to live for the moment. The Preacher wants to expose the futility of this way of life. It may work for some time, but here he is now, at the end of his life having achieved everything that any of us could hope to achieve, and he sees it all for what it truly is - empty - the final nail in the coffin of an empty life is the moment when literally everything you have left (if anything) is ripped away from you as you leave this life forever.

The only liberation from the morbidity of the death that is fast approaching for all of us is to be able to look up and beyond to that which never dies. To fear God as the Preacher encourages us to do is to know for sure that there is more to life than just the here and now. It's to be certain that death doesn't have to be the end - just as God is an eternal being, so He has made us to be eternal too. To see and know God in the midst of a dying world is to have hope for the future, and the chance to build for something that will truly last. We would do well to follow the example of Moses (Heb 11) who did just this - he chose not to 'enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin' but rather chose to suffer with God's people because he saw 'him who is invisible' and saw a 'better country' - a heavenly one, where the pleasures far outweigh the temporary pain in this life. These are just the kind of choices the reality of death calls us to make - don't lay up perishable treasures on earth, but heavenly treasure that lasts for eternity.