

14.

CONCLUSION

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

- A. One last word [now that] all has been heard (12:13).**
- 1. Fear God, and keep His commandments (12:13b),**
 - 2. For this is the all-in-all for the man (12:13c).**
- B. For God will bring every deed into judgment (12:14),**
- 1. Including every hidden one (12:14b),**
 - 2. Whether [it was] good or bad (12:14c).**

After surveying the whole range of human thought and actions and concluding that all of them to be vanity, Solomon comes to one brief summary statement. He states the conclusion to which all his studies led in six words, whether spoken in Hebrew or English. When Solomon had spoken those six words, he had said it all. Those words were, “Fear God and keep His commandments.”

Solomon’s closing words show that he had not been rambling aimlessly in all that he wrote. He was aiming at a very definite conclusion. The conclusion was that the vanity of all human effort should teach people to trust and obey God. People can never find true satisfaction in any effort of their own. No matter what they believe or practice, it never will turn out to be complete or perfect. The failure of all human thought and effort reveals that people need God. No one is adequate by himself. The only way to have real meaning in life is to fear God and obey His commandments. Everything Solomon said in his book leads to that one final word or statement, “Fear God and keep His commandments.”

By fear, Solomon did not mean terror. He meant having profound respect and revere God. His words had the same meaning as the New Testament word “trust.” Solomon ended the Book of Ecclesiastes with the pure gospel message. The one and only hope of humankind is faith in God that leads to obeying Him. No better statement of what it takes for a person to be saved has ever been made than the conclusion Solomon drew at the end of all of his studies.

The words translated “the all-in-all for the man” are literally “the all of the man.” They have been

explained in various ways, but the easiest and best explanation is that Solomon was saying that when a person trusts and obeys God he has everything he needs. It took a thousand words for Solomon to explain the vanity of human thought and effort. It took him only six words to explain the finality and completeness that comes from trusting and obeying God. They are all it takes to make a person’s life complete. When a person quits trying to solve everything for himself and turns it all over to God, he becomes whole. He has it all.

The final reason for trusting and obeying God is that God will judge all the actions of a man, including those done in the open and those done in hiding, as well as those that were good and those that were evil. Solomon obviously did not see death as the end. His final words reveal that when the spirit goes to Sheol and meets God, the person will still have to face God in judgment. He did not enter into the question of when and where that judgment will take place. He simply made it clear that at last everyone will be judged for the life he has lived and that God will be the One who will judge him. Everyone’s actions will fall short and fail to measure up, but his final outcome will not be determined by his own actions but by God. For that reason the only meaningful thing a person can do in life is to trust and obey God.

Further clarification of how God’s judgment will be conducted had to wait for later revelations, especially New Testament revelations. The New Testament reveals that at the judgment the sins of believers all will have been forgiven and the judgment will determine only how great their rewards will be according to God’s measurement of how much good they did for Him. It also reveals

that at the judgment unbelievers will have no goodness to their credit because without God their lives produced nothing good. For them the judgment will determine how great their punishment will be according to God's measurement of the extent of their sins. Without

the revelations that God gave through Jesus and his apostles, Solomon had to be content with knowing that at the judgment all was going to be well for those who trusted and obeyed God but it will not be well for those who did not put their trust in Him.