

## **Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Twelve : Vanity of Vanities, the Reality in Jesus, and the Revelation of the Sons of God**

### **I. Overview:**

The theme of this book of Ecclesiastes is vanity of vanities. The central thought of Ecclesiastes is the vanity of vanities of human life under the sun in its falling away from God. The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description of the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, a life in the corrupted world. Only the new creation, which is in the heavens and not "under the sun", is not vanity but is reality. Eternity in Ecclesiastes 3:11 is a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy. In Ephesians 4:17- 24 Paul presents the reality in Jesus; everything else the Lord did in His human life was God expressed and therefore was reality. As a result of Satan's injecting himself as sin into man, man and all created things were brought into the slavery of corruption and made subject to vanity. At present the creation hopes to be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God when the sons of God are revealed.

### **II. Truth and Enlightenment:**

Day 1 —

A. Expound the contents of Ecclesiastes.

The contents of Ecclesiastes are a description by Solomon, after his falling away from God and returning back to God, concerning the human life of fallen mankind under the sun, which is in the corrupted world. He set his heart to seek and to search out all that is done under the heavens, and he observed that according to the natural phenomena all the things done in cycle remain the same, generation after generation, all wearisome and nothing new.

B. Explain Paul's word in Romans 8:20-21 corresponds to Ecclesiastes.

According to Ecclesiastes, human history, from its beginning to the present, is vanity of vanities. Man was created by God with the highest and purpose, that is, to express Him in His life. But God's enemy, Satan the devil, came in to inject himself as sin into the man. Through this fall of man, man and all the created things were brought into the slavery of corruption, made subject to vanity. This corresponds to what says in Romans 8:20.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the words in Ecclesiastes 3:11 and its spiritual implications.

God has put eternity in man's heart. This means that in man there is a kind of aspiration for God, an aspiration for something eternal. Physical things may be enjoyable, but they are temporal. Many successful people can testify that when they were endeavoring to advance in their career, they sensed that there was an emptiness within them. This feeling comes from the aspiration in man's heart for something eternal.

B. Explain Ecclesiastes 3:11 with Second Corinthians 4:18.

Second Corinthians 4:18, " We do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." This verse is the proper explanation of Solomon's word in Ecclesiastes 3:11. The wise king said that God created everything beautiful in its own time and also put eternity in man's heart. This matches our human experience.

Day 3 —

A. Describe how we walked in the vanity of the mind before we were saved.

The Gentiles are the fallen people, who become vain in their reasonings. They walk without God in the vanity of their mind, being controlled and directed by their vain thoughts. Whatever they do according to their fallen mind is vanity, void of reality. Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4:17 suggests that we the believers, who once walked in the vanity of the mind before we were saved, may continue to do so after we are saved.

B. Expound what of the spiritual revelation in Ephesians 4:17-32 we see.

These verses reveal that Christ is the reality and grace for the living of the new man. When God in Christ was incarnated as a man, He came with grace and reality; grace and reality refer to a person, that is, the Triune God incarnated and expressed in humanity. Ephesians presents reality and grace as a pair for the living of the new man.

Day 4 —

A. Expound what the characteristics of the life of Jesus is in Ephesians 4:21.

The expression the reality is in Jesus refers to the actual condition of the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. In the godless walk of the nations, the fallen people, there is vanity, but in the godly life of Jesus there is the reality. Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God. God was in His living, and He was one with God.

B. Illuminate Jesus being not only great but also very fine in His daily walk.

For example, when He fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish, He instructed His disciples to gather the broken pieces left over that nothing may be lost, which amounted to twelve handbaskets full. The four Gospels reveal that in every detail of the Lord's daily living, there is no vanity but only the reality. Moreover, in nearly every page of the four Gospels, we see the reality in the godly living of Jesus.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the meaning of "the revelation" in Romans 8:19.

In Romans 8:19 "the revelation" denotes the manifestation or the appearing of the sons of God. We all are the sons of God. The day will come when the sons of God will be manifested, we all shall be glorified. We shall be in glory, designated as sons by the glory of God. Then all other people will have to admit that we are the sons of God. The entire creation is waiting for this with watching eyes.

B. Expound two words in Romans 8:21, "slavery" and "corruption."

In the entire universe there is nothing except vanity and corruption. This corruption is a kind of bondage, a slavery that binds the whole creation. Creation has been made subject to vanity in the hope that it will be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. One day the children of God will be glorified, brought into glory.

Day 6 —

A. Testify how we are different from worldly people in the inward feeling.

If you talk with unbelievers, they will admit that they have some enjoyment in their entertainment. However, they will also tell you that they are unhappy. They also are groaning, but only groaning; there is nothing else. We, on the contrary, as we are groaning, have within us the Spirit as the firstfruits, as the foretaste of God Himself. Even as we are suffering, we have the enjoyment.

B. Explain what the full sonship is.

While we are groaning and enjoying the firstfruits of the Spirit, we are expecting sonship. What is full sonship? It is the redemption of our body. In the coming day we will also have sonship in our body. This is full sonship, our longing expectation. Then the whole universe will behold the sons of God.

### III. Conclusion:

Because Satan injects sin into man, as a result man and all creation are brought into the slavery of corruption and are made subject to vanity. No wonder Solomon sighed in Ecclesiastes 1: 14, "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and indeed, all is vanity and a chasing after wind." David said in Psalm 39: 5, "Behold, You have made my days as mere handbreadths, And my lifetime is as nothing before You; Surely every man at his best is altogether vanity." Today the entire creation is being bound in a state of vanity and corruption and they are eagerly expecting the revelation of the sons of God. Then they will be delivered from vanity, corruption, and slavery. We, the sons of God, really bear a responsibility to the whole creation, that is, to accelerate the maturity of life.