



March 11, 2018

“The Destiny of Eternity”

Ecclesiastes 9

Pastor Gary Hamrick

For those who don't know the Lord, this life will be as good as it gets, but for those who know the Lord, this life is as bad as it will ever be! The one lives with this world in mind, while the other lives with the promise of heaven in mind. Solomon was someone who lived his life with this world in mind, and that was because he had lost sight of God, and, as a result, he would write about how meaningless life was to him and how unfulfilled he was. The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way for us, because Jesus died on the cross to save us from sin and death, so that we could spend eternity with him!

### Destiny

1. [Ecclesiastes 7:2](#) - *“... death is the destiny of every man...”*
2. [Ecclesiastes 9:2-3](#) - *“All share a common destiny... This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all.”*
3. Destiny, as it is used in the book of Ecclesiastes, doesn't carry the meaning that is popular today; it refers to our final destination.

### Solomon's Questions

4. Solomon, who was the wealthiest and wisest man who ever lived, tried wine, women, wealth, and work, all of which ended up being meaningless to him.
5. Solomon's disillusionment with life caused him to ask, “What's the reason for living, if everyone is just going to die anyway?”
6. “What's the point of seeking wisdom if we'll die just like fools?”
  - a. [Ecclesiastes 2:15-16](#) - *“Then I thought in my heart, ‘The fate of the fool will*

*overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?' I said in my heart, 'This too is meaningless.' For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die!"*

7. "What's the point of striving for wealth when everything will go to someone else?"
  - a. **Ecclesiastes 2:18-19** - *"I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless."*
8. "What's the point for human beings if we're all going to die like animals?"
  - a. **Ecclesiastes 3:19-20** - *"Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: as one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return."*
9. "What's the point of being a good person if we're all going to die just like the wicked?"
  - a. **Ecclesiastes 9:2-3** - *"All share a common destiny - the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good man, so with the sinner; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them. This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all."*
10. Pastor Gary said: "There is an element of truth to all of the [questions Solomon was asking]. [The] fact of the matter is that the wise and unwise alike die. The righteous and the unrighteous alike die. Human beings and animals alike die. The rich and the poor alike die. Death is common to all. Death is no respecter of persons. We all die, and in that sense, Solomon [was] right in his observations. But where Solomon [went] wrong [was] the way he [thought] about death. The way [we] think about death has absolutely everything to do with how [we] live [our] life. [Our] view of death will ultimately control [we] live life."
11. Viewing death as the end will lead a person to make decisions to do whatever they want, whenever they want, with whomever they want.
12. Viewing death as the start line for all that God has prepared for those who believe in him, will lead a person live his or her life with heaven in mind, while still living life with earthly reality.

- a. Pastor Gary said: "It's having one eye on the present and one eye on the promise."
13. Pastor Gary said: "[Instead] of seeing death as the great equalizer, [Solomon saw] death as the great thief."
14. The Bible teaches that God has prepared something for everyone who believes, and it's literally going to be out of this world!
- a. **1 Corinthians 2:9** - *"However, as it is written: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.'"*
  - b. **Romans 8:18** - *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed..."*
  - c. **1 Peter 2:11** - *"Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world..."*
  - d. **Philippians 3:20a** - *"... our citizenship is in heaven."*

#### Life Is In God's Hands

15. **Ecclesiastes 9:1** - *"So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands..."*
16. Pastor Gary said: "[This] is a good reminder for us. ... When life seems to be drifting off course, [it's a good reminder for us] that God has a grip on the helm of [our lives]. And, that when the waters seem [to be] really choppy and rough, God has a good grip on the helm of [our lives]. ... When it seems [like we] are drifting forever and always at sea [and we] can't even see land, that in this patient endurance of life, God has a grip on the helm of [our lives]."
- a. **Psalms 31:15** - *"My times are in your hands..."*
17. Pastor Gary said: "God holds us in the palm of his hand and he cares for us and he comforts us, [so] we need to trust him, and we need to rest in that knowledge, that we are in God's hands."
- a. **Isaiah 41:10** - *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*
18. Pastor Gary said: "There's nothing in life that is a mystery to God. God knows about [whatever it is] and God cares about [whatever it is]. [In] every single thing we go through, we can trust God with our lives. Our lives are in his hands."

## Life Is To Be Enjoyed

19. **Ecclesiastes 9:7-9** - *“Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do. Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love...”*
- a. Pastor Gary shared several statistics from a Pew Research Center study <sup>1</sup> that was published March 9, 2017, concerning marriage and divorce:
    - i. Since 1990 the divorce rate for people ages 25 to 39 has dropped 21%.
    - ii. Since 1990 the divorce rate for people over age 50 has more than doubled to 109%.
    - iii. Pastor Gary said these statistics demonstrate that many people go through life and end up not really knowing their spouse because they didn't invest time in their marriage.
20. Someone has said, “Don't get so busy making a living that you forget to make a life.”
21. Pastor Gary said: “Christians should be the most glad and joyful people on the planet!”

## Life Is Unpredictable

22. **Ecclesiastes 9:11** - *“I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.”*
23. Pastor Gary said: “Life is unpredictable. Things don't always turn out the way [you think they should], and that can be good and that can be bad, obviously. Life is unpredictable. And because [life] can sometimes through a curveball and catch [you] off guard, [you] can end up finding [yourself] in a place [you] didn't expect [to be], in a good way and a bad way. Sometimes you can look at your life and you can think [to yourself], ‘I didn't expect to be here.’ And you are amazed. And other times you can look at life and think [to yourself], ‘I didn't expect to be here.’ And you are devastated. ... But, it's the grace of God that takes you to the heights and it is the same grace of God that will visit you in the valleys.”
- a. **James 1:17** - *“Every good and perfect gift is from above...”*
  - b. **Psalms 46:1-3** - *“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/09/led-by-baby-boomers-divorce-rates-climb-for-americas-50-population/>

*mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.”*

- c. [Hebrews 13:8](#) - “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”
  - d. [Hebrews 13:5-6](#) - “... ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid...’ ”
  - e. [Proverbs 18:24](#) - “... [Jesus] is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”
24. [Ecclesiastes 9:12](#) - “Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come...”
25. [Psalm 139:16b](#) - “All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”
26. [Revelation 21:5](#) - “He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ ”

### Discussion Questions

1. Read [Ecclesiastes 7:2; 9:2-3](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences concerning the ways the Holy Spirit helped them deal with the big questions of life. (See #4 through #9 above)
3. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s remarks about (See #10 and #11 above)
4. Read and discuss the Scriptures concerning all that God has prepared for those who believe. (See #14 above)
5. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s comments about our lives are in God’s hand. (See #16 through #18 above)
6. How has your trust in the Lord increased as you have grown in your relationship with him?
  - a. Would you be able to fall asleep in an MRI tube?
  - b. Are you able to patiently wait for the results of scans, tests, and other medical exams, because you know the Lord has you in the palm of his hand?
  - c. How have you trusted the Lord when the results weren’t what you were hoping they would be?
7. Read and discuss the quote and Pastor Gary’s comments concerning enjoying life. (See #20 and #21 above)

8. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the unpredictability of life. (See #22 through #26 above)
9. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).