

Ecclesiastes 8:16-17 - Desirable Things – Part 5 – Learn to Accept God’s Unknowable Ways

Stam, HebrewLexicon, Gill, Poole, Trapp, Expositor, Geneva, Henry, Clarke, Barnes, INT, TSK,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Why did God make man if he knew man was going to sin? Man does not know the answer to this question and cannot find it. But man keeps asking. There are other questions too: Why did God made man with different colors since so many racial problems have occurred? Did God plan the fall of mankind and then decided to create or did God create man and then planned the fall of mankind? One more example: You would remember the context of this passage from last week: Solomon stated that there were tyrants暴君 in the world and that Christians had to learn to deal with them. Why does God allow tyrants in this world when they cause so much pain and suffering?

Solomon then wrote addressing some of the obvious questions that would have come into his readers’ minds about the unknowable ways of God. And this is what God wants you to hear about today. Listen to his Word.

Our headings are: **It is Foolish to Attempt to Know the Unknowable, and It is Wise to Accept your Limitations.**

Our goals are: That you will **rejoice in and use what God has given you in his Word, knowing that he tells you everything you need to know and believe about Christ, your salvation, and how you must now live.**

It is Foolish to Attempt to Know the Unknowable

16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night,

1. So man wants to know everything about everything – even secret things. He wants to know why God does some of the things he does? God tells him some things but he is not satisfied with that much. He wants to know why does God let evil people live long? Why do good people often die young? Why are people of evil religions often quite wealthy and churches often struggle to make ends meet? Why do some people work just as hard as others and still work for 1/100th of the other persons? Why does God allow some countries to have huge natural resources and other countries have mountains of snow – they get the oil and we get the frozen tundra? Why does God not stop wicked people from pretending to be Christians, knowing that those pretenders cause Christ to get a bad name? Man’s knowledge is never satisfied. This questioning of God is not new and his providential work is not new.
2. God is not opposed to反对 learning things. So you must not revel in ignorance, like when Christian say that you must not read any other book than the Bible. God expects man to know about and make use of things he has provided. God is not surprised by LTE – 4G phone, or nano-technology, or that someone 10 thousand miles away can pinpoint where you are to 1cm. There are many things that man does know. Considering our context, Solomon for instance talked about many things that he knew: Solomon studied poetry and he wrote and memorized many proverbs. He studied horticulture and other sciences, he studied war, construction, technology, wine making, justice, etc. He was truly a brilliant man. John Gill wrote: He “took notice of it, contemplated on it, considered it, and weighed it well... viewed the various steps and methods of it, to find out, if possible, at least, some general rule by which it proceeded... But there are some secret things that God does not want man to know.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 For God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who is good in His sight.

3. But let me ask this question first: Why does man want to know secret things which God has not revealed to him? There are different reasons:

a. Man wants to know everything because he wants to control his own destiny.

b. Man wants to know because he is curious. (But isn't the old saying "curiosity killed the cat?")

Do you sometimes want to remember the words of a song...or the name of a singer...and you just can't get it out of your head? But over curiosity is bad.

c. Sometimes man wants to be lazy and not bother to work and search things out. For example, Jesus pointed out that those who know when the master would return used his time away to be lazy rather than do his work.

Matthew 24: 42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

4. But back to our main point: These ever-curious and overly-curious people take a lot of time trying to find out truth...not even allowing themselves rest. This shows an underlying problem. Man is often not satisfied with what God has given to him...even as Eve "desired to be wise" and ate of the forbidden fruit. She wanted to be like God. What foolishness! What a horrible sin!

Genesis 3: 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

It is Wise to Accept of your limitations

17 then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it; moreover, though a wise man attempts to know it, he will not be able to find it.

1. Solomon then contemplated God's providence properly and recognized the impossibility of fully grasping the purposes of God's providences. So he accepted his limited knowledge.

2. You see, even though a man may find out many things that God has done, he knows a lot less about the reasons (the "why") God has done what he has done.

a. The Apostle Paul reiterated the reminder that many of God's providential acts are outside of man's ability to fathom.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

b. Moses earlier made a similar statement. There are some things that God did not want men to know. In this case God did not want men to know why he was punishing his people. God purposely conceals certain things...sometimes from certain people.

Deuteronomy 29:24 "All nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?' 25 "Then people would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; 26 'for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. 27 'Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. 28 'And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.' 29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

c. The Apostle Paul claimed his personal ignorance about a situation but rested in God's providence天意,

2Corinthians 12:2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

d. Dr. Luke also pointed out that there were some things that man will not know and should not ask to know... like when the kingdom will come or not...

Acts 1:6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

e. And when will Christ return at the end of the earth? This was the question the disciples asked Jesus and people continue to ask to this same question day?

Matthew 24:3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

We've read from Matthew 24:36 already. Christ gave them the sign of his coming in judgment, but then he said for the other request there was no sign.

3. In accepting your limitations of knowledge of God's providence, there are some things you would do well to remember at the same time. Limited knowledge will help you to accept God's providences.

a. God does what is best for his children. He cares for sparrows and hairs. He will care for you.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

b. Be assured of it.

c. God does not want you to become preoccupied with some things as it would rob you of the time to do your duties. For, example, in Acts 1 above, the disciples were sent to build the kingdom, rather than wondering about when the kingdom would come.

4. So instead of complaining about what you don't know, learn to adore and accept the deepness of God's Unsearchable plans.

Conclusion:

Man must stop philosophizing 推理研究 in areas in which he cannot have any knowledge. To do so is to waste your life and not do what you are called to do. Those who spend time looking where they cannot see are also setting themselves up for God judgment.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: 1. Whatever God does, even if it does not appear make sense to you, know that he did it with proper cause. His ways are always just and good. Accept that in some things you will be learned, but in others, ignorant. Don't complain. 2. You must give in to the will of God, knowing that he does what is best for his children. Don't pretend to find the reason for everything. Rather, worship God for the depth of his unsearchable counsels, and work for the building of his kingdom. 3. What you do need to know he has revealed to you. You needed to know how to be saved and he has shown that to you. God the Father sent his Son to teach you how to be redeemed by Christ's blood and he paid the price for your freedom. And he has revealed that Christ now rules over you and keeps you safe. Be thankful for this knowledge. Enjoy this knowledge. Serve him for this knowledge. Wait to learn more in heaven!

Finally, one of the most contemptuous 轻蔑的 comment I have heard is a person saying: "Well, if God wanted me to believe, he would give me a sign." Those who say this think God's delay in judgment means that judgment is not coming. Wrong. I urge you to use the time God has given you to make your life right with God. Christ died for the sins of the world. Ask God to count Christ's death as yours so you could have everlasting life. You know this, now act.