

THE VANITY OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

Introduction:

1. The book of Ecclesiastes records the “wisdom” of Solomon as he sought for meaning and purpose in life without the wisdom of God.
2. It was the great experiment of his life – and serves as a powerful warning to all mankind.
3. Without God, all is vanity and vexation of spirit...

- I. The Examination of Nature and Science (Ecclesiastes 1:3-11)
 - A. Solomon was a keen observer of the natural world.
 - B. But Nature alone can provide no satisfying answer to the questions of life.
 - C. Generations of men come and go, yet the earth remains unchanged.
 - D. No matter man’s experience, the sun continues rising and setting each day.
 - E. The seasons change and the wind blows as it always has.
 - F. For thousands of years rivers have flowed into the sea, yet the sea is not filled.
 - G. Even men are never satisfied, repeating their history time and again.
 - H. Searching for meaning in Nature (apart from God) leaves one with only emptiness and despair.
 1. Astronomy – *study of space*
 2. Biology – *study of life*
 3. Ethology – *study of animal behavior*
 - I. Science is not able to provide answers outside of the physical realm.
 1. Science is “systematized knowledge derived from observation, study, and experimentation carried on in order to determine the nature or principles of what is being studied” (Webster).
 2. Thus, Science cannot comment on the unobservable – i.e., the origin of the universe, the origin of life, etc.
 3. Nor can Science comment on the spiritual or the supernatural.

- II. The Revelation of Nature and Science (Romans 1:18-25; Psalm 19)
 - A. When Nature and Science are studied in their proper place, they can reveal important truths.
 - B. The existence of God can be deduced from an honest observation of the natural world (Rom. 1:18-20).
 1. God reveals His existence.
 2. God reveals His eternal nature.
 3. God reveals His power.
 4. God reveals His divinity.
 - C. When man learns of God’s existence, but does not learn of God Himself, he turns to idolatry – creating a “god” in his own image (Rom. 1:21-25).
 - D. Nature declares the splendor and intelligence of God (Psalm 19:1-6).
 - E. Yet, divine revelation is necessary to know God Himself (Psalm 19:7-14).

- III. The Harmony of Nature and Science (Proverbs 6:6-8; 30:18ff)
 - A. The wisdom of God reveals the proper place and purpose of Nature.
 - B. The earth is under the dominion of man, but merely a temporary home (Gen. 1:26; 2 Peter 3:10).
 - C. Man’s life and labor in the Lord is never in vain (1 Cor. 15:58; cf. Matt. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 2:17)!