

Jan. 2, 2016 – The Fall, the Battle, and the Futility of the Temporal Realm

- Genesis 3-4
- Matthew 3-4
- Ecclesiastes. 1:6-11.

Reflections:

Genesis 3-4. Genesis 3:8 says that Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord.” How could they hide from God if He is omnipresent (Psa. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23)? Moreover, there are passages in the Bible that depict God in spatial and temporal language. For example, He is said to indwell believers but not unbelievers. How could God be omnipresent and yet not be everywhere and so be in all things? The solution is found in understanding the classical view of God, which is much different than our modern neo-theistic view of God. God is both immanent and transcendent. He is immanent within in all things as well as transcends beyond all things. He transcends time and space, but He can also manifest Himself immanently in creation. God is not like us: He is radically different; while we are like Him, He is not like us. In sum, Genesis 3:8 is speaking of a visible manifestation of God. God is everywhere in His omnipresence, but from time to time He manifested Himself in certain places through certain things, such as a burning bush, the pillar of fire, smoke in the Temple, and so forth. It is in this latter localized sense that one can go from “the presence of the Lord.”

Matthew 3-4. Chapter 4 provides a good insight into the nature of the spiritual battle. Note the testing of the sense appetites verses “appetite/love” for God and the things of God. All tests come down to the battle of priorities—those of the sense appetites vs. those of the intellective/spiritual appetites. Apart from apprehending this truth, and all of the classical metaphysics on human nature, one does not have a clue about man’s fallen nature or how to gain victory. The issue must always be the prioritizing of the intellective/spiritual life. To make sense pleasures, the details of life, and the temporal issues the most important things is to end up loving and worshipping Mammon rather than God (Matt. 6:19-24)—even if one uses God simply to get more “stuff”—that is, to get more Mammon with God’s help. Note how Jesus Christ dealt with the tests: by orienting to God’s Word—thus illustrating the critical importance of every believer to know the Word of God for himself.

Ecclesiastes. 1:6-11. In verse 9-10 we are told that there is nothing new under the sun. The critics are wont to say that this is false because there are all kinds of new things—just look at the inventions of technology, like smart phones. The context, see verses 8-9, is about all of the means whereby man can be satisfied “under the sun.” All of the regular means of wine, wealth, wisdom and works (Ecc. 2) have already been tried and found wanting. The point is that there is nothing new that man could try to bring him transcendent happiness. Transcendent happiness is only found in the transcendent realm with the God of the Bible and the eternal perspective that He alone offers. Nothing of the sense pleasures, wine or smart phones, can fulfill man’s intellective/spiritual hunger. It has all been tried before!

In ‘Ehyeh,

Pastor Don