

Jan. 9, 2016

- Genesis 16-17 – Pre-incarnate Christ before Hagar; the Abrahamic Covenant
- Matthew 12 – The Sabbath and Jesus’s confrontation with the Pharisees.
- Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 – Human and animal deaths.

Reflections:

Genesis 16-17. What a mess we see in chapter 16. What an illustration of the many harmful consequences of Abraham’s lack of integrity. Yet, what a sight to behold as pre-incarnate Christ, the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity, personally appears to Hagar. What a rebuke it must have been to Abraham when Hagar told him that God told her to name her son, Ishmael, which means “God hears.” God provided for pregnant and mistreated Hagar and promised her that she would be the matriarch of a wild and hostile people, a prophecy that is demonstrated daily among the Arabs to this very hour. In chapter 17 we have the Abrahamic Covenant, which is an enlargement on previous promises of God to Abraham. It was sealed by the sign of circumcision. Verse 1 is one of the most important verses in the Bible in that it outlines the key to true spiritual growth, namely to walk before the Lord, which is all about a second-person relationship with Him.

Matthew 12. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said that he did not come to destroy the Law, and yet in 12:1-5 it appears that He allows His disciples to break the Sabbath by picking grain on the Sabbath. First, Jesus kept the Mosaic Law perfectly (Matt. 5:17-18). Moreover, His disciples did not break the Mosaic Law. What they did is to violate the Pharisee’s Law, which were filled with traditions. Deeds of mercy and necessity were permitted on the Sabbath. They were eating merely handfuls of grain as they passed through the field, which was permitted by the Mosaic Law (Deut. 23:25). They were not working on the Sabbath. Second, as Jesus points out, He was the Lord of the Sabbath, not the other way around. He made it! And He could (and later did) change it, if He so desired. He is Eternal God in His Person.

Ecclesiastes 3:16-22. This passage seems to suggest that there is no difference between the death of humans and animals. However, Solomon makes it clear that humans do return to God after death, Ecc. 12:7. In this passage, he is merely pointing out similarities between human and animal deaths. In both cases, their bodies die and return to the dust. Likewise, their deaths are certain, and both are powerless to prevent it. So, in this respect the physical phenomenon are the same for both humans and animals. In other words, it all appears the same “under the sun.” However, the Total Truth teaches us that humans go up (3:21), have eternity in their hearts (3:11), will be judged (11:9), and will go to an eternal home (12:5). So, Ecclesiastes is not denying life after death. However, it is warning about the futility of living only for this life under the sun.

In ‘Ehyeh,

Pastor Don