

Faith-Rest Drill: Analysis of Ecclesiastes: Gerhard von Rad's "Wisdom in Israel": True Security is Trust in God & His Word

Analysis:

- 1- In concluding our study of the book of Ecclesiastes I'd like to summarize Solomon's unorthodox approach to divine revelation.
- 2- Obviously when he wrote this book he benefited from the enduement of the Holy Spirit.

Enduement: To graciously provide or equip with power or ability. Imbue: to permeate or influence. This was a revocable power of the Holy Spirit issued to a very few believers in the Old Testament dispensations as well as the Incarnation. Scripture documents the granting of enduement to Joseph, Moses, the 70 Elders, Bezaleel, Aholiab, the Tabernacle construction crew, Joshua, most Judges (e.g., Gideon and Samson), most kings (e.g., Saul, David, and Solomon), and all the writers of the Old Testament canon. It was offered by the Lord to His disciples during the Incarnation.

Psalms 51:11b - Do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Job 32:8 - There is a human spirit and the Holy Spirit gives understanding.

Luke 11:9 - "I say to you, ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened."

v 13 b - "... your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him."

- 3- But that which makes it unorthodox is that in Ecclesiastes he reveals for our advantage the tremendous anguish and suffering associated with life in reversionism.
- 4- It is a personal account of how *not* to live your life but which fortunately in the end leads Solomon to a correct conclusion: we are to love God and keep His commandments.

- 5- But during his self-imposed time of adversity, Solomon was unable to discern that the troubles he encountered were not only a part of the divine decrees but also of his own free will.
- 6- It is this confusion that has led many a poor saint to distraction and motivated the writing of many a Bluegrass song.
- 7- I would like to analyze the thinking of Solomon in this regard and I rely on the assistance of:

von Rad, Gerhard. "Trust and Attack." In *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. by James D. Martin. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1972; pp. 190-94:

Israel's search for knowledge did not allow a man to adopt an objective spectator's role. The objects to which her knowledge addressed itself compelled commitment, they demanded man's complete trust. Only with the presupposition of the giving of complete trust could life be lived. The teachers left their pupils in no doubt as to what was at stake in this undertaking; it was nothing less than the gaining or losing of 'life.' Their knowledge demanded commitment and acknowledgments of orders. The basic attitude towards a reality experienced in this way was one of complete trust.

- 1) The "knowledge" attained by the "pupils" was Bible doctrine, the thinking of God. It demanded complete commitment and trust.
- 2) This is in essence the faith-rest drill, the spiritual life of Israel.
- 3) The only way anyone can acquire a sense of temporal security in the devil's world is through knowledge of biblical truth followed by complete faith in the God who backs it.
- 4) The Israelites were aware that the world was designed to kill them but that true security could only be found in one's commitment to God's Word.

- 5) That commitment required the acknowledgement of imperative moods and their application to man and circumstances. Such commitment, they learned, preserved one's life.
- 6) In a hostile environment that was in no way organized, civilized, and governed as so may are today, it placed every individual at the mercy of *cosmos diabolicus*.
- 7) God offered a system of thinking which guaranteed the believer a source of divine protection, without which he was without hope, protection, or security in the devil's world.
- 8) Several of Solomon's Proverbs convey the mental attitude possessed by one who executes the faith-rest drill and the advantages of such an attitude:

Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.

16:20 - He who gives attention to the Word shall find good and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.

28:25 - An arrogant man stirs up strife but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.

29:25 - The fear of man brings a snare but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted.