

Ecclesiastes 9:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Analysis

Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished (גַּם־אַהֲבָתָם וְגַם־שִׂנְאָתָם וְגַם־קִנְיָנָתָם כָּבַר אֲבָדָה)—death terminates all earthly passions and pursuits. The threefold repetition of gam (גַּם, also/even) emphasizes comprehensiveness: love (ahavah, אַהֲבָה), hatred (sin'ah, שִׂנְאָה), and envy (qin'ah, קִנְיָנָה) all vanish. The Hebrew avad (אָבַד, perished) means to be destroyed or lost—the emotional investments and rivalries that consumed the living cease at death.

Neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun (וְחֵלֶק אֵין־לָהֶם עוֹד לְעוֹלָם בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר בַּעֲשָׂה תַחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ)—the dead have no cheleq (חֵלֶק, portion/share) in earthly affairs. This isn't annihilationism but recognition that death severs connection to temporal existence. The Preacher's point is urgent: invest emotions and energy wisely while alive, for death ends earthly opportunity. Jesus taught a parallel truth: "work while it is day; the night comes when no one can work" (John 9:4). The judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10) will evaluate earthly deeds—what we loved, hated, and pursued matters eternally, though death ends earthly participation.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel's understanding of Sheol emphasized separation from earthly life. The psalmist lamented that in Sheol "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom" (Ecclesiastes 9:10)—the shadowy realm lacked the vibrant existence

of the living. This wasn't hopelessness but realism about death's finality "under the sun." Archaeological evidence shows ancient Israelites buried the dead with minimal grave goods compared to Egyptians—reflecting less developed beliefs about afterlife activity. The verse speaks phenomenologically from earthly observation: the dead don't participate in current events, businesses, politics, or relationships. Paul later revealed that believers absent from the body are present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8), but even this blessed state involves separation from earthly affairs until resurrection reunites soul and body. The Reformers emphasized that while believers' souls enjoy conscious fellowship with Christ, full redemption awaits bodily resurrection at the eschaton.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What passions—whether loves, hatreds, or envies—are consuming your emotional energy, and will they matter when death ends your earthly portion?
2. How does the reality that death terminates earthly participation motivate you to invest in eternal kingdom work while alive?

Interlinear Text

גַּם	אֶהְבֵּתָם	גַּם	שִׂנְאָתָם	גַּם	קִנְיָתָם	כֵּן רַ
H1571	Also their love	H1571	and their hatred	H1571	and their envy	is now
	H160		H8135		H7068	H3528
אָבִיָּה		וְהֵלֶק		אֵין	לָהֶם	עוֹד
perished	neither have they any more a portion			H369	H1992	H5750
H6		H2506				for ever
						H5769
בְּכֹל ל	אֲשֶׁר	בְּעֵשׂה	תַּחַת	הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ:		
H3605	H834	in any thing that is done	H8478	under the sun		
		H6213		H8121		

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 2:20 (Parallel theme): Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.