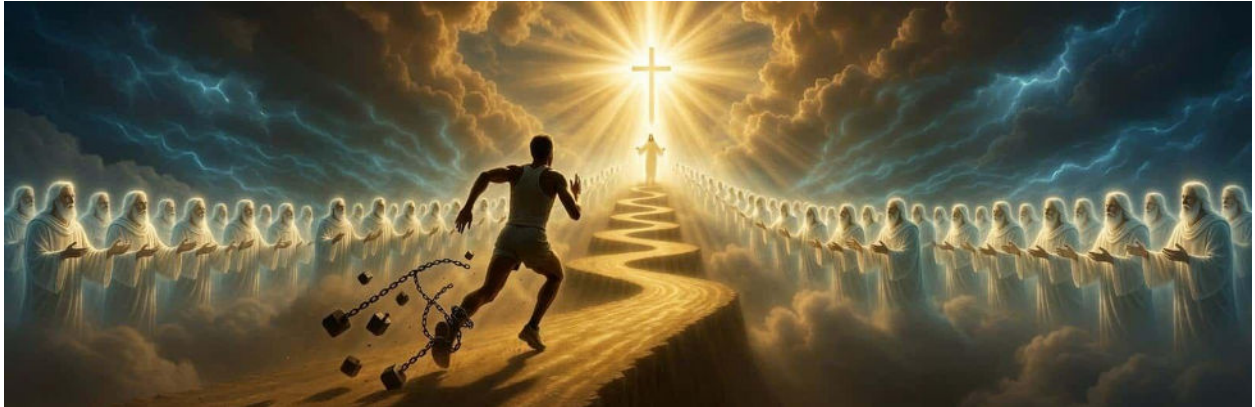
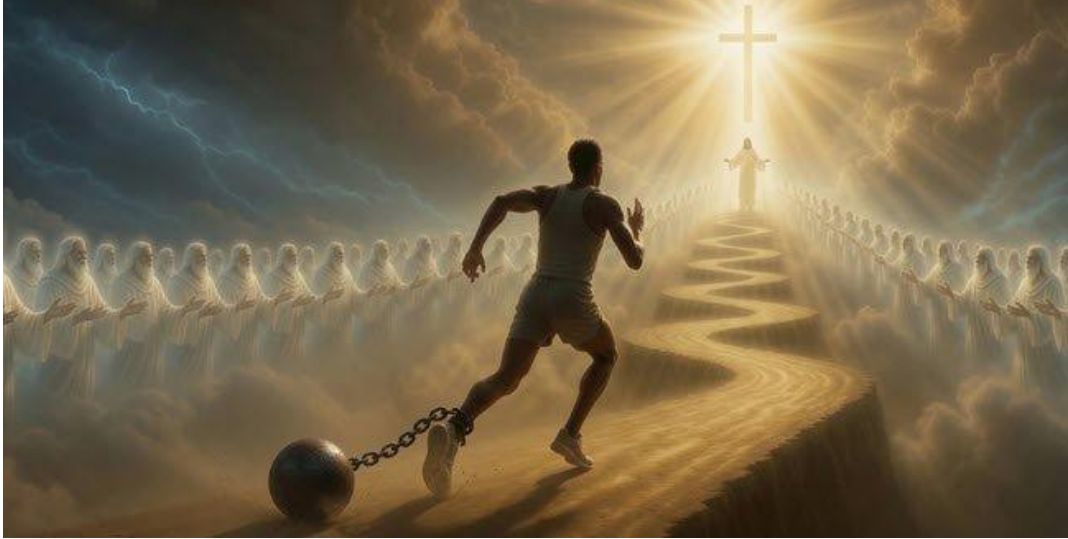


RUNNING THE RACE OF FAITH



Forward Vanity of Vanities! All is Vanity

In a world consumed by endless cycles of striving and dissatisfaction, the timeless words of Ecclesiastes confront us with an uncomfortable truth: apart from God, all is vanity. As we press on in the Christian life, this sobering assessment serves as both warning and motivation, directing our gaze beyond the temporal to the eternal prize. The metaphor of the “**Race of Faith**” reminds us that we are not aimless wanderers but runners in a divinely appointed contest—one that demands endurance, vigilance against sin’s enticements, and unwavering focus on Jesus Christ. May these reflections strengthen your resolve to run well, resisting every snare so that you may finish the course with joy.



All is Vanity

The verses of Ecclesiastes 1 present a sobering picture of life “under the sun,” where all human activity and achievement ultimately prove to be vanity—a mere vapor that dissipates without lasting substance or satisfaction. **“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity” (Ecclesiastes 1:2)**, as generations come and go while the earth endures; the sun, wind, and rivers follow their ceaseless, repetitive cycles; and despite constant seeing and hearing, the eye and ear remain unsatisfied. Nothing is genuinely new, and even the greatest works fade into oblivion with no remembrance among those who follow (**Ecclesiastes 1:4-11**). This reality directly relates to **the Race of Faith** in **Hebrews 12:1-2**, where believers are exhorted to “lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.**” The Preacher’s observations reveal the futility of investing one’s life in temporal pursuits that offer no true advantage or eternal legacy, thereby underscoring the urgency of redirecting all effort toward the incorruptible goal of the faith-race rather than the wearisome treadmill of this age.



Satan Temptations

Satan cunningly employs temptations to exploit this very vanity, luring believers away from the race by promising satisfaction in the very things the Preacher declares empty. Sin is like a roadside sign enticing one to try, but looking on the back of the sign, one sees only ugliness and despair—as **James 1:14-15** warns, “each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.” Through enticements of novelty, sensory gratification, worldly success, or even religious busyness that lacks heart transformation, the enemy seeks to weigh down the runner with encumbrances, causing stumbling, weariness, and potential disqualification from finishing well. These temptations foster a focus on the fleeting “under the sun” rather than the eternal realities secured in Christ’s New Covenant (**1 John 2:15-17**), making one vulnerable to the willful sin and turning back against which Scripture solemnly warns. By recognizing that all such pursuits are vanity and a chasing after wind, **the runner** is strengthened to resist these snares, cast them aside by grace, and press forward with endurance—looking to Jesus who Himself endured for the joy set before Him.



Conclusion

In the end, the Preacher's cry that "**all is vanity**" is not meant to leave us in despair, but to liberate us. It strips away every false promise the world offers and clears the track for the only race that truly matters—**the Race of Faith**. As we lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles, let us run with endurance, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Satan's roadside signs may glitter with temporary allure, yet their reverse side reveals only emptiness and death. Choose instead the narrow path of New Covenant obedience and grace-empowered perseverance. May you finish your race well, hearing the Master's commendation: "**Well done, good and faithful servant**" (**Matthew 25:21**). Run on, dear runner—Christ is both your strength, comforter, and your coming reward.

