

The Book of **Ecclesiastes**

The title of this book in Hebrew, Qoheleth (6953), is the word translated “Preacher” in chapter one, verse one. The English title is a transliteration of the title in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The Greek word Ekklesiastes, which means “speaker of a called out assembly,” is derived from the word ekklesia (1577), which is the New Testament word for “church.”

Solomon’s name does not explicitly appear in the text, but tradition has uniformly ascribed the book to him. In verse one, the author describes himself as the “son of David, king in Jerusalem.” Though other “sons” of David did become king in Jerusalem, the contents of the book and the facts about the author make it clear that it was Solomon. No one could claim to be over Jerusalem and as wise as Solomon (Eccl. 1:16). Furthermore, who else had the wherewithal to build and acquire good that Solomon had (Eccl. 2:3-8)? Likewise, are any so well known for the setting forth of many proverbs (Eccl. 12:9)? It seems that Solomon, near the end of a life spent seeking after the things of this world, was brought to repentance by the rebuke of the Lord (1 Kgs. 11:9-13). Most likely, he sat down at this time and wrote, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, about the vanity of his worldly pursuits and attempts to find peace and joy in temporal things. The application of this book to the Christian life is seen in that Solomon is cautioning those believers who have been lured away by the values, riches, and philosophies of this world to return from their prodigal ways. Those who are not believers are warned by Solomon’s own example that life at its best is but vanity without Christ.

The perspective of Solomon at the time he wrote is the key to the proper understanding of the Book of Ecclesiastes and to explaining its general pessimism. Solomon writes from the same perspective by which he had lived most of his life, that of one “under the sun” (Eccl. 1:3 and 30 other occurrences). It is from the earthly, secular perspective that life becomes futile. Yet even so, there are times when Solomon’s faith in God is made known (Eccl. 12:13-14 is usually referred to but this is only the climax of thoughts like 2:25; 3:11, 17; 8:12-13; 11:9).

Solomon’s consideration of life without God led him to the assessment that life is unjust. Oppression goes on, the wicked prosper, and the fruits of man’s labor pass from his control (Eccl. 1:15; 2:21; 4:1, 8; 6:2; 7:15). Not only this, but the Preacher ended up like the pleasure-seekers of today; “You may as well enjoy yourself, because life will soon be over” (Eccl. 2:24; 3:12; 5:18; 8:15; 9:7-10).

Countless lives throughout history have confirmed the Preacher’s findings; wisdom, pleasure, alcohol, human achievement, great riches, sex – all lead to emptiness, “vanity,” if there is not a proper relationship to God (Eccl. 1:13; 2:1, 3, 8, 10, 12). (Key Word, page 833)

Chapter 1

All Is Vanity

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

Preacher, 6953, qoheleth, ko-heh'-leth; feminine of active participle from 6950; a (female) assembler (i.e. lecturer); (abstract) preaching (used as a "nom de plume" Koheleth); -preacher.

2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

Vanity, 1892, hebel, heh'-bel; or (rarely in the abstract) babel, hab-ale'; from 1891; emptiness or vanity; (figurative) something transitory and unsatisfactory; often used as an adverb: x – altogether, vain, vanity.

1:2 The theme of the Book of Ecclesiastes is that "under the sun [i.e. "without God in the picture] all is vanity." The key word in the book is "vanity," occurring thirty-eight times. It is used to describe outward and tangible things (Eccl. 2:15, 19; 8:10, 14) as well as inward thoughts (Eccl. 1:14; 2:11). The word "vanity" is from the Hebrew hebel (1892), which emphasizes that which is empty and passing. The phrase "vanity of vanities" denotes the Hebrew way of expressing a superlative (it could be translated "most futile"). This method is also seen in the phrase "most holy place" (Ex. 26:34), of which the literal meaning in the Hebrew is "holy of Holies." (Key Word, pp. 833-834)

Romans 8:

18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

Labour, 5999, amal, aw-mawl'; from 5998; toil, i.e. wearing effort; hence worry, whether of body or mind: -grievance (-vousness), iniquity, labour, mischief, miserable (-sery), pain (-ful) perverseness, sorrow, toil, travail, trouble, wearisome, wickedness.

4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

Generation, 1755, dowr, fore'; or (shortened), dor; from 1752 (properly) a revolution of time, i.e. an age or generation; also a dwelling: -age, x evermore, generation, [n-] ever, posterity.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth (*Hebrew, panteth*) to his place where he arose.

6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

Christ stated in John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again (*Hebrew, return to go*).

8 All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 The thing that hath been, *it is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

10 Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after.

Solomon's Own Experience

12 I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all *things* that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith (*Hebrew, to afflict them*).

Genesis 3:

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

15 *That which is* crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting (*Hebrew, defect*) cannot be numbered.

16 I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all *they* that have been before me in Jerusalem: *yea, my heart had great experience* (*Hebrew, had seen much*) of wisdom and knowledge.

17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

18 For in much wisdom *is* much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

Chapter 2

1 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also *is* vanity.

Mirth, 8057, wimchah, sim-khaw'; from 8056; blithesomeness or glee, (religious or festival): x exceeding (-ly), gladness, joy (-fulness), mirth, pleasure, rejoice (-ing).

Christ stated in Luke 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

2 I said of laughter, *It is mad*: and of mirth, What doeth it?

3 I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine (*Hebrew, to draw my flesh with wine*), yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life (*Hebrew, the number of the days of their life*).

4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all *kind of* fruits:

6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:

7 I got *me* servants and maidens (*Hebrew, sons of my house*), and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, *as* musical instruments (*Hebrew, musical instrument and instruments*), and that of all sorts.

9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was* no profit under the sun.

This verse is Solomon's reflection on all that he had accomplished. The result of it all was emptiness, and it had become unprofitable. The words that best describe Solomon's feelings at this point are "vanity and vexation of spirit." In all of the supposed pleasures of life, he found no satisfaction (Heb. 11:25). The cause of all this "vanity and vexation" was that Solomon had not learned how to restrain his desires. There are many believers (even preachers and church leaders) that have not learned this lesson well enough. In the end, however, they will see that the fulfillment of fleshly desires will be unprofitable. Their accomplishments for God are a testimony of Him to the world, but the times when the flesh is not restrained will result in a reproach on the cause of Christ. (Key Word, page 835)

12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the king? *even* that which hath been already done (*Or, in those things which have been already done*).

13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly (*Hebrew, that there is an excellency in wisdom more than in folly*), as far as light excelleth darkness.

14 The wise man's eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.

15 Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me (*Hebrew, happeneth to me, even to me*); and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also *is* vanity.

16 For *there is* no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now *is* in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise *man*? as the fool.

17 Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun *is* grievous unto me: for all *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

18 Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken (*Hebrew, labored*) under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.

19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise *man* or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun.

This *is* also vanity.

20 Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.

21 For there is a man whose labour *is* in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave (*Hebrew, give*) it *for* his portion. This also *is* vanity and a great evil.

22 For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?

23 For all his days *are* sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.

24 *There is* nothing better for a man, *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* he should make his soul (*Or, delight his senses*) enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it *was* from the hand of God.

25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten *hereunto*, more than I?

26 For *God* giveth to a man that *is* good in his sight (*Hebrew, before him*) wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him that is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

Genesis 7:1 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

Luke 1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Chapter 3

A Time for everything

1 To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born (*Hebrew, bear*), and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from (*Hebrew, to be far from*) embracing;

6 A time to get (*Or, seek*), and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Christ stated in Luke 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

11 He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

12 I know that *there is* no good in them, but for *a man* to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, *it is* the gift of God.

14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.

15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past (*Hebrew, that which is driven away*).

Injustice

16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, *that* wickedness *was* there; and the place of righteousness, *that* iniquity *was* there.

17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work.

2 Thessalonians 1:

6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

18 I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them (*Or, that they might clear God and see*), and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all *is* vanity.

20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that (*Hebrew, of the sons of men*) goeth upward (*Hebrew, is ascending*), and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

22 Wherefore I perceive that *there is* nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that *is* his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

Chapter 4

1 So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side (*Hebrew, hand*) of their oppressors *there was* power; but they had no comforter.

Comforter, 5162, nacham, naw-kham'; a primitive root; (properly) to sigh, i.e. breath strongly; (by implication) to be sorry, i.e. (in a favourable sense) to pity, console or (reflexive) rue, or (unfavourably) to avenge, (oneself): - comfort (self), ease [one's self], repent (-er, -ing, self).

2 Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.
3 Yea, better *is he* than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

4 Again, I considered all travail, and every right work (*Hebrew, all the rightness of work*), that for this a man (*Hebrew, this is the envy of a man from his neighbor*) is envied of his neighbour. This *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit.

5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.

6 Better *is* an handful *with* quietness, than both the hands full *with* travail and vexation of spirit.

7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.

8 There is one *alone*, and *there is* not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet *is there* no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither *saith he*, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This *is* also vanity, yea, it *is* a sore travail.

John 2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

9 Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up.

11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm *alone*?

12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

13 Better *is* a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished (*Hebrew, who knoweth not to be admonished*).

14 For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also *he that is* born in his kingdom becometh poor.

15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

16 *There is* no end of all the people, *even* of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also *is* vanity and vexation of spirit.

Chapter 5

Rash Promises

- 1 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.
2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing (*Or, word*) before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Matthew 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

- 3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words.
4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for *he hath* no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.
5 Better *is it* that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.
6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it *was* an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?
7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there are* also *divers* vanities: but fear (*Or, revere*) thou God.

Fear 3373, yaw-ray'; a primitive root; to fear, (moral) to revere;

The Vanity of Life

- 8 If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter (*Hebrew, at the will, or purpose*): for *he that is* higher than the highest regardeth; and *there be* higher than they.
9 Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field.

Field, 7704, sadeh, saw-deh'; or saday, saw-dah'ee; from an unused root meaning to spread out; a field (as flat): -country field, ground, land, soil, x wild.

- 10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity.

Vanity, 1892, hah-bel'; or (rarely in the abstract) habel, hab-ale'; from 1891; emptiness or vanity;

- 11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes?
12 The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.
13 There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

14 But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and *there is* nothing in his hand.
15 As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.

16 And this also *is* a sore evil, *that* in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?

17 All his days also he eateth in darkness, and *he hath* much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.

18 Behold *that* which I have seen: *it is* good and comely (*Hebrew, there is a good that is comely*) for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days (*Hebrew, the number of days*) of his life, which God giveth him: for it *is* his portion.

1 Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this *is* the gift of God.

20 For he shall not much remember (*Or, Though he give not much, yet he remembereth*) the days of his life; because God answereth *him* in the joy of his heart.

Chapter 6

1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men:

2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil disease.

Jesus stated in Luke 12:

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

3 If a man beget an hundred *children*, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also *that* he have no burial; I say, *that* an untimely birth *is* better than he.

4 For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.

5 Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known *any thing*: this hath more rest than the other.

6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice *told*, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?

7 All the labour of man *is* for his mouth, and yet the appetite (*Hebrew, soul*) is not filled.

8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?

9 Better *is* the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire (*Hebrew, than the walking of the soul*): this *is* also vanity and vexation of spirit.

10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it *is* man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.

11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what *is* man the better?

12 For who knoweth what *is* good for man in *this* life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth (*Hebrew, the number of the days of the life of his vanity*) as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

Chapter 7

Comparing Wisdom and Folly

1 A good name *is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

2 *It is* better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart.

3 Sorrow (*Or, Anger*) *is* better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

4 The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth.

5 *It is* better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

6 For as the crackling (*Hebrew, sound*) of thorns under a pot, so *is* the laughter of the fool: this also *is* vanity.

7 Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.

8 Better *is* the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.

9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

10 Say not thou, What is *the cause* that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this (*Hebrew, out of wisdom*).

11 Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance (*Or, as good as an inheritance, yea better too*): and *by it there is* profit to them that see the sun.

12 For wisdom *is* a defence (*Hebrew, shadow*), *and* money *is* a defence: but the excellency of knowledge *is, that* wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

13 Consider the work of God: for who can make *that* straight, which he hath made crooked?

14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set (*Hebrew, made*) the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

15 All *things* have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just *man* that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked *man* that longeth *his life* in his wickedness.
16 Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself (*Hebrew, be desolate*)?

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time (*Hebrew, not in thy time*)?
18 *It is* good that thou shouldst take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.
19 Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty *men* which are in the city.
20 For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

21 Also take no heed (*Hebrew, give not thine heart*) unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee:
22 For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.
23 All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it *was* far from me.

Romans 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

24 That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?
25 I applied mine heart (*Hebrew, I and my heart compassed*) to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* madness:
26 And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart *is* snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands: whoso pleaseth God (*Hebrew, he that is good before God*) shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.
27 Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, *counting* one by one, to find out the account (*Or, weighing one thing after another, to find out the reason*):
28 Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.
29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

Chapter 8

1 Who *is* as the wise *man*? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness (*Hebrew, the strength*) of his face shall be changed.

Obey the King

2 I *counsel thee* to keep the king's commandment, and *that* in regard of the oath of God.
3 Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.
4 Where the word of a king *is, there is* power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?
5 Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel (*Hebrew, shall know*) no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.
6 Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man *is* great upon him.
7 For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be (*Or, how it shall be*)?
8 *There is* no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither *hath he* power in the day of death: and *there is* no discharge (*Or, casting off weapons*) in *that* war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

Solomon is simply stating that no person can control the time of his or her death. When the time comes for a person to die, there is not power within that person to stop or even delay it from happening. The attitude of uncertainty concerning the death and its inescapability has plagued humankind throughout their existence. If they knew the specific time that the end was coming, they would certainly seek to delay it. The truth is that God is in control of man's destiny. Only Christ was able to say that He had "power to lay [His life] down" and the "power to take it again" (John 10:18). In humanity's view, the only solution for death is to attempt to prolong life. Medical methods have improved over the centuries, but it is still by God's grace and power that He allows people to continue living. The truth is every person has been appointed a time to die (Heb. 9:27). Even in the Christian's life, he or she must acknowledge that becoming a believer does not exempt one from death. For the believer, there is the promise of eternal life following death, which should be a source of hope to continue living for God. (Key Word, page 841)

Life Seems Unfair

9 All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: *there is* a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.
10 And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this *is* also vanity.
11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.
12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

Which fear, 3372, yaw-ray'; a primitive root; to fear, (moral) to revere;

13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

14 There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just *men*, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked *men*, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also *is* vanity.

15 Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also *there is that* neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)

17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek *it* out, yet he shall not find *it*; yea further; though a wise *man* think to know *it*, yet shall he not be able to find *it*.

Romans 11:

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Chapter 9

1 For all this I considered in my heart (*Hebrew, I gave, or, set to my heart*) even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, *are* in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred *by* all *that is* before them.

2 All *things come* alike to all: *there is* one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as *is* the good, so *is* the sinner; and he that sweareth, as *he* that feareth an oath.

Malachi 3:

14 Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

15 And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.

3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

6 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.

7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.

9 Live joyfully (*Hebrew, See, or, Enjoy life*) with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.
10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.
11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Wisdom and Foolishness

12 For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so *are* the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.
13 This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it *seemed* great unto me:
14 *There was* a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:
15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.
16 Then said I, Wisdom *is* better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom *is* despised, and his words are not heard.
17 The words of wise *men are* heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.
18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

Chapter 10

1 Dead flies (*Hebrew, Flies of death*) cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so *doth* a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom *and* honour.
2 A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.
3 Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom (*Hebrew, his heart*) faileth *him*, and he saith to every one *that* he *is* a fool.
4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.
5 There is an evil *which* I have seen under the sun, as an error *which* proceedeth from (*from before*) the ruler:
6 Folly is set in great dignity (*Hebrew, in great heights*), and the rich sit in low place.
7 I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.
8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.
9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; *and* he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.
10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom *is* profitable to direct.
11 Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babler (*Hebrew, the master of the tongue*) is no better.

12 The words of a wise man's mouth *are* gracious (*Hebrew, grace*); but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

13 The beginning of the words of his mouth *is* foolishness: and the end of his talk (*Hebrew, his mouth*) *is* mischievous madness.

14 A fool also is full of words (*Hebrew, multiplieth words*): a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?

15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

16 Woe to thee, O land, when thy king *is* a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!

This sounds like many leaders of today, especially in government.

17 Blessed *art* thou, O land, when thy king *is* the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry (*Hebrew, maketh glad the life*): but money answereth all *things*.

20 Curse not the king, no not in thy thought (*Or, conscience*); and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

20 This verse is an injunction concerning speaking against those who have been placed in positions of authority. Though the person may have mishandled his or her position, it must be understood that God has established their office. Therefore, the office must continue to be respected, even though the person occupying that office may fall in their duty. (Key Word, page 844)

Chapter 11

A Wise Man

1 Cast thy bread upon the waters (*Hebrew, upon the face of the waters*): for thou shalt find it after many days.

God is giving the promise that though it may seem that effort is being wasted in service to Him, there will be rewards in heaven (2 Tim. 4:8). It may seem that believers go through their lives without recognition or glory, but the governing principle of their service should be to please and glorify the Heavenly Father, which is far greater than the satisfaction of the flesh. (Key Word, page 844)

2 Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

1 Timothy 6:

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty *themselves* upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.

4 He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

5 As thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit, *nor* how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

6 In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both *shall be* alike good (*Hebrew, shall be right*).

7 Truly the light *is* sweet, and a pleasant *thing it is* for the eyes to behold the sun:

8 But if a man live many years, *and* rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh *is* vanity.

Advice to Young People

9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these *things* God will bring thee into judgment.

10 Therefore remove sorrow (*Or, anger*) from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth *are* vanity.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Chapter 12

1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Solomon is admonishing young men and women, warning them about the dangers of not restraining their fleshly desires. (Key Word, page 845)

2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few (*Or, the grinders fail, because the grind little*), and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;
5 Also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is* high, and fears *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:
6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.
7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.
8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all *is* vanity.

The Conclusion

9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise (*Or, the more wise the Preacher was*), he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs.
10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words (*Or, words of delight*): and *that which was* written *was* upright, *even* words of truth.
11 The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd.
12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is* no end; and much study (*Or, reading*) *is* a weariness of the flesh.
13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter (*Or, The end of the matter, even all that hath been heard*): Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.
14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

13, 14 Solomon had been on a long journey “under the sun,”. This journey was a life of futility and emptiness. Now, at the conclusion, the Preacher puts all his works into proper perspective. All the things done for selfish gain are unimportant, pointless, and futile because they are secondary. The primary focus of man should be to “fear God and keep His commandments.” This is the only proper course for the believer to follow. God will evaluate all the deeds that are done in order to reveal the motives behind them. All will be brought before Him, even the things done in secret. This evaluation will be conducted based on obedience to the commandments that He has given as a guide for the believer’s life (2 Cor. 5:10). (Key Word, page 846)

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

References

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