

- Why do we spend our time in study of God's word?

**2Tim. 3:14** You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

**2Tim. 3:15** and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

**2Tim. 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

**2Tim. 3:17** so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- Understanding scripture is ultimately about preparing every believer to do the good work God has for them. It is our walk of sanctification, helping to make us holy and set apart as sacred. It is how we are disciples of Jesus and what we are to use as we disciple other believers.
  - Paul tells Timothy, you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom... What sacred writings would Paul be referring to? (The OT scriptures)
  - It is as important to know what is given to us in the Old Testament scriptures as it is the New Testament scriptures. At VBVF we study both.
- For our study time together we are moving to the Old Testament, we are going to study the book of Ecclesiastes.
- How many of you have studied this book before? It is new book for many of us, including me. It was a suggestion from one of the members of our class.
  - I read through it, and was struck by the appropriateness for the wisdom it offers as we navigate the times we are in!
- What genre, or categories of literature are found in the Old Testament scriptures?
  - Pentateuch—the first 5 books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy
    - Historical
    - Prophets
    - Wisdom
- Ecclesiastes falls into the group known as Wisdom books.
  - It has a reputation of being what type of book? (depressing)
  - Within the Wisdom Literature of the ancient Near East there was a style of writing which we may call "pessimism literature". Ecclesiastes is the only example of this style of writing included in the scriptures.
  - Ecclesiastes is also one of five books, or scrolls, included in what is called the Megilloth (*muh-gee-lah*), which in the Jewish tradition is read during Sukkot, or Feast of Booths (Tabernacles). It is the seventh and last festival on the biblical calendar, as recorded in Leviticus 23.

- The other four books read are the [Song of Songs](#), Ruth, Lamentations and Esther.
- I do not often spend a lot of time setting up a book before we just start the study of the book. I try to wait until something is mentioned in the book and then follow that assessment. I am going to do a bit more in background and preview of the book this time. We will also refer back to these as they are brought to us in the verse-by-verse study of the book as well as doing a review when we are finished.
- This author begins with his conclusion and then spends the book defending his position. We can discuss at the conclusion of the study if we think that this was true.
  - It appears to be reflective in nature, which might indicate that it was written by someone after they had lived much of their life, and had their experiences to look back upon to share what they learned and how it changed their perspectives on life.
    - This is not an uncommon desire for people in all cultures and throughout history. Many of us have experienced this in our own lives either as the receiver or giver of the information.
  - There are interesting approaches used by the writer to cause the reader to think more deeply about their own observations. The writer is inviting us to take this journey with him, to think about questions and answers for ourselves.
- A number of recognizable literary forms are used in the Book of Ecclesiastes:
  - Aphorism – short truth statements sometimes called Proverbs, which are also admonitions. Some help clarify life’s difficulties while others used to be argued against.
  - Admonition – warnings or reproofs.
  - Didactic narrative: Didactic – intending to teach a moral lesson, and Narrative – using a short story to teach the moral lesson.
  - Antiproverbs – sayings with an opposite conclusion than tradition would dictate.
    - It is presented to make you think the person is leading in a predictable direction and then they turn at the last minute.
    - We see this most often used in humorous ways. Like, "If at first you don't succeed, quit". "What doesn't kill you makes you stranger."
    - The humor is only seen if the hearer knows the standard proverb.
    - This is why we miss the use of so many of these in works that are old, from another culture, or translated from another language.
  - Rhetorical questions – a question asked only to produce an effect or to make an assertion of affirmation or denial and not to elicit a reply, example "Are you out of your mind?"
    - My family accuses me of using these ALL the time. Asking "What time do you need to be there?", instead of saying directly, "you should stop doing what you are doing now when you should be getting ready to leave."
  - We find very descriptive language used for emphasis and simplification of understanding. Repetition is always used for emphasis. 1:2 displays this.
- I will try to define the type of literary form being used as we progress through this book. I

may miss this at times because I don't want to over analyze the style and miss the focus of the substance.

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

**Eccl. 1:2 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher,  
“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”**

- v.1 How does this book begin? (The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.)
- The author is not specifically identified by name.
  - The first descriptor of the author given is, “The words of the Preacher” (NASB translation).
  - The Hebrew literally is “The words of Koheleth”, a noun, from the root *kahal*; to collect, gather together, assemble, “one who convenes a congregation”.
    - There is nowhere else in the Old Testament this exact word is used.
    - Specifically the translation in the Septuagint is *qophelet* “one who convenes a congregation”, with the word for a public speaker, a speaker in an assembly; (*ekklesia*) or in English “Ecclesiastes” finally translated for us as preacher, teacher.
  - The focus became the role of the person, not the name the person.
  - This is also why, when translations were made in English, the idea of the role this person would have in calling the assembly would be The Teacher, The Preacher or The Leader of the Assembly.
- What is the Septuagint? (the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament)
- v.1 Secondly, the author clearly identifies he is what? (the son of David)
  - This would narrow the list of individuals we could identify as the author.

**2 Sam. 12:24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him**

**2 Sam. 12:25 and sent word through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD’S sake.**

- We see Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba.
- v.1 Finally the author says he is what? (King in Jerusalem).

**1Kings 1:28 Then King David said, “Call Bathsheba to me.” And she came into the king’s presence and stood before the king.**

**1Kings 1:29 The king vowed and said, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my**

life from all distress,

**1Kings 1:30** surely as I vowed to you by the LORD the God of Israel, saying, ‘Your son Solomon shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place’; I will indeed do so this day.”

- Read more of 1 Kings to get the details of the events of Solomon becoming king of all Israel, ruling from Jerusalem.
- This would be the first verse we would look to in identifying the author of this book and why many have concluded this is Solomon, since he clearly meets all the criteria. Solomon’s authorship was historically accepted by Christians and Jews.
  - There have been books written about the suggestions that Ecclesiastes was written by someone else. They hypothesize that the Hebrew used in the text belongs to a time considerably later than that of Solomon’s time and that the identifying writing styles were not common at the time of Solomon’s life.
  - There is nothing definitive excluding Solomon as the author, and I will teach from the perspective that Solomon is the author. Who wrote the words does not diminish what the words mean.
- The early verdict to credit this writing to Solomon is why it was placed after the writings in the scriptures attributed to his father David. The works of the father come before the son.
  - I think it might be important for us to know a bit about Solomon before we delve into what this book contains for us. Who was Solomon according to scripture?

**1Kings 2:12** And Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.

- Solomon reigned over a united Israel (both Israel and Judah) from about 970 to 931 BCE.
  - Solomon was given great understanding and discernment by God.

**1Kings 3:3** Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

**1Kings 3:4** The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

**1Kings 3:5** In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, “Ask what you wish Me to give you.”

**1Kings 3:6** Then Solomon said, “You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

**1Kings 3:7** “Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my

father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

**1Kings 3:8** “Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.

**1Kings 3:9** “So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”

**1Kings 3:10** It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.

**1Kings 3:11** God said to him, “Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice,

**1Kings 3:12** behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

**1Kings 3:13** “I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days.

- v.3 Solomon loved the Lord.
- v.12 God gave Solomon a wise and discerning heart above any other human being before or since.
  - This is very important to understand especially as we move through Ecclesiastes. The words of wisdom come from the man defined by God as the wisest man with most discerning heart.
  - Solomon built the house of the LORD.

**1Kings 9:10** It came about at the end of twenty years in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house

- Solomon was a great king!

**1Kings 10:23** So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom.

**1Kings 10:24** All the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.

- This would also mean the things that other cultures in other lands held in esteem or regarded as important were not seen as discerning as the wisdom of Solomon given by God.
- We also understand this man given this great discernment from God was far from perfect.

**1Kings 11:1** Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

**1Kings 11:2** from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, “You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.” Solomon held fast to these in love.

**1Kings 11:3** He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

**1Kings 11:4** For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

**1Kings 11:5** For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

**1Kings 11:6** Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done.

**1Kings 11:7** Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.

**1Kings 11:8** Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

**1Kings 11:9** Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,

**1Kings 11:10** and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded.

**1Kings 11:11** So the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant.

**1Kings 11:12** “Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

**1Kings 11:13** “However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

- This is the overview of Solomons' life. This is the testimony recorded in scripture of this man. This is the man who appears to have shared his insights through the book of Ecclesiastes. It would appear that even with the wisdom given by God, this vast knowledge was not enough to bind him to God or to cause him to obey God.
- God's will demonstrated His grace and mercy to Solomon as he enjoyed a long reign as king of Israel.

**1Kings 11:42** Thus the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was

**forty years.**

- Back to Eccl. 1v2 What do we read? (“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”)
  - Other translations use in place of vanity the word "futile".
  - The Hebrew word used here is meaningless. Something devoid of value, significance, meaning, without real substance, or permanency.
- We begin by noticing the repetition of words used to show the emphasis of this point. This verse is the theme of the book.
  - We could also say this is Solomon’s theory of life. A theory is someone’s interpretation of facts. This is what the remainder of the book puts forward, an evaluation of the facts as Solomon sees them. We will evaluate the conclusion Solomon puts forth at the end of the book.

**Eccl. 1:3 What advantage does man have in all his work  
Which he does under the sun?**

**Eccl. 1:4 A generation goes and a generation comes,  
But the earth remains forever.**

- v.3 How does Solomon ask the reader to consider his statement of meaninglessness? (What advantage does man have in all his work – Which he does under the sun?)
- This is an example of a rhetorical question.
  - What does “advantage” mean? (What is the true achievement, or the evidence something substantial has been achieved.)
  - Where is the measurement of this work being assessed? (Which he does under the sun)
  - What does “under the sun” mean? (This is a focus on what occurs down here on the earth. This is important to understand as it is repeated 29 times in this book.
- To begin with, this would be a phrase that would be inclusive of all people, not unique to a given people, like only the Israelites.
- Secondly, it sets up a dichotomy of viewing events on earth versus events in heaven.
  - In spiritual terms the focus is between a temporal view versus an eternal view of events.
- v.4 What first proof does Solomon offer in the true lack of achievement? (A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever.)
- The existence of mankind is a cycle one after the other. One man’s life lived to give way to the next man’s life lived to the next man’s life lived. Each very much like the last with no evident measurable change. Each of these lives out his days on the same planet.
  - There is no sum gain to the existence of one man’s lifetime on this earth. The earth stays the same and is not affected by the life of one person. The life cycle continues unabated.

**Eccl. 1:5 Also, the sun rises and the sun sets;  
And hastening to its place it rises there again.**

**Eccl. 1:6 Blowing toward the south,  
Then turning toward the north,  
The wind continues swirling along;  
And on its circular courses the wind returns.**

**Eccl. 1:7 All the rivers flow into the sea,  
Yet the sea is not full.  
To the place where the rivers flow,  
There they flow again.**

- v.5 What example of this lack of advantage does Solomon give us to ponder next? (Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; And hastening to its place it rises there *again*.)
  - Solomon is not focused on the uniqueness of each sunrise or sunset. He is focusing the attention on the relatively boring nature of the unending repetition of the cycling of the sun.
  - Every person can see this display for themselves. Nothing ever changes this event from reoccurring.
- v.6 What does Solomon draw our attention to next? (Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns.)
  - Every person can feel this display for themselves as well. Nothing ever changes the process from reoccurring.
  - There is an interesting note found in Adam Clark's commentary:

**All the versions agree in applying the first clause of the sixth verse to the sun, and not to the wind. Our version alone has mistaken the meaning. My old MS. Bible is quite correct: "The sunne riisith up, and goth down, and to his place turnith agein; and there agein riising, goth about bi the south, and then agein to the north." The author points out two things here:**

- 1) Day and night, marked by the appearance of the sun above the horizon; proceeding apparently from east to west; where he sinks under the horizon, and appears to be lost during the night.**
- 2) His annual course through the twelve signs of the zodiac, when, from the equinoctial, he proceeds southward to the tropic of Capricorn; and thence turneth about towards the north, till he reaches the tropic of Cancer; and so on.**

- v.7 What final earthly cycle does Solomon mention? (All the rivers flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again.)
  - Water recycling through rivers going into seas just to be absorbed in the air and put back to the land to become the river flowing into the sea again. The unending loop with no end goal of filling something up and then ceasing.



- Solomon gives examples of things that have continual loops of activity starting with the human life cycle and then earthly cycles of sun in the sky, wind on the land and water in the sea. For all their continual activity there is never really a change in what occurs.

**Eccl. 1:8 All things are wearisome;**

**Man is not able to tell it.**

**The eye is not satisfied with seeing,**

**Nor is the ear filled with hearing.**

**Eccl. 1:9 That which has been is that which will be,**

**And that which has been done is that which will be done.**

**So there is nothing new under the sun.**

**Eccl. 1:10 Is there anything of which one might say,**

**“See this, it is new”?**

**Already it has existed for ages**

**Which were before us.**

**Eccl. 1:11 There is no remembrance of earlier things;**

**And also of the later things which will occur,**

**There will be for them no remembrance**

**Among those who will come later still.**

- Solomon introduced what are repeating cycles with no end or apparent change in nature in verses 5-7 and now asks the reader to see this parallel in the thoughts and actions in the human realm.
  - A poetic conclusion
- v.8 How does Solomon introduce his transition? (All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell *it*.)
  - All things produce only indescribable weariness or lack of satisfaction.
  - Man seems unable to even put into words a way to convey this burdensome truth, often only wanting to escape it.
- What observation does Solomon make? (The eye is not satisfied with seeing,)
  - There is always more we want to see, it is never enough.
  - Why do you think we slow down to see an accident? It is not enough to know there was an accident we want to see it for ourselves.
  - The same is true for what else? (Nor is the ear filled with hearing.)
  - Why do we listen to the same stories or news cycles over again? What nuances are we trying to decipher? We want to know just a little bit more.
  - Go back and listen to news from a year ago or from a big event from the past. You hear the drama in the voices as there is speculation about what impact that event might have and all the droning on about everyone's opinions. From our vantage point looking back it appears silly to have gotten so uptight about those situations.

- v.9 What is ultimately true no matter if we are able to see more or hear more in the moment? (That which has been is that which will be,)
  - Things that are true of what has been will be the same things true in the future of things that will be again. An example would be catastrophes of nature are reoccurring, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, droughts etc.
- What is declared true about activity men engage in? (And that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.)
  - The human experience is a cycle just like nature's cycle. The things which men can do and have done are the same things they will do in the future. War, build things, observe and record, plant, eat,
- Solomon has made a statement. In science when one puts forth a statement it is called a theory or hypothesis.
  - If everything a man can do or think or create has already been done Solomon concludes what? (So there is nothing new under the sun.)
- v.10 How does Solomon ask the reader to challenge his conclusion? (Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new?" )
  - Solomon answers his question how? (Already it has existed for ages, Which were before us.)
  - Every discovery made is usually an unveiling of what exists already but we are just now "discovering" it or finding a way to explain it or use it.
- v.11 Even if something had been learned what happens to the information? (There is no remembrance of earlier things;)
  - Because we don't remember the information what is the result? (And also of the later things which will occur,)
  - The results will be the same unalterably.
- Solomon demonstrates this cycle how? (There will be for them no remembrance)
  - Who is this true for? (Among those who will come later *still*.)
- As a human race we do not learn from the past so as to prevent repeating those errors in the future.
  - Ask any history buff.

- We'll begin with a review of Ecclesiastes Chapter 1
- This book is Wisdom literature. The author is Solomon, a man who was given by God wisdom and discernment greater than any man. The theme established is, “all is meaningless” began with nature cycles repeating with no change here on earth (under the sun).
  - The cycles in nature display a meaninglessness in understanding an advantage in life.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes is Solomon’s theory of the meaning of life.
  - The thesis is the meaning of life can’t be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try.
- Once a theory is proposed it must be substantiated.
  - What has Solomon used to substantiate his theory so far? (The observable cycles in nature give no meaning to life: ie biorhythm, solar, weather, water and accumulation of knowledge).
    - Everyone can observe these things and they never cease to be true.
    - From a scientific measurement they are ‘reliable, stable, and repeatable’.
    - Solomon continues to substantiate his theory through personal experience.

**Ecccl. 1:12 I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.**

**Ecccl. 1:13 And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.**

**Ecccl. 1:14 I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.**

**Ecccl. 1:15 What is crooked cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted.**

**Ecccl. 1:16 I said to myself, “Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge.”**

**Ecccl. 1:17 And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind.**

**Ecccl. 1:18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.**

- v.12 The author continues by restating who he is. How? (I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem)
  - From last week you remember the translation of the word ‘Preacher’ to the one who convenes an assembly. The author also repeats his resume including him being king over Israel in Jerusalem.
  - This does not mean he was once king over Israel and is not now king over Israel, it is given to help the reader know the experience he has to speak from.

- When someone is sharing important information they should always establish with what authority they have to offer that information. This is sadly lacking in our current world.
  - Examples would be those with no understanding of science making declaration about why things occur in our world (ie. climate change, medical reasons for a pandemic, etc...)
  - Those with no knowledge of political science informing us about ???
  - Those with no understanding of economics dictating financial solutions.
  - People lacking any foreign policy training or experience criticizing what is being proposed.
- The point is when someone is going to put forth their position of something they should have the experience to speak from to give weight to what they share.
  - This author wants to establish he has been the king over Israel in Jerusalem. This was shared at the beginning of the chapter in verse 1.
- It is noteworthy that Solomon used this same language in the writings of the Proverbs.

### Prov. 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

- Eccl. v.13 What does Solomon says he did? (And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven.)
  - Solomon establishes his intent to seek and explore was by what faculty? (By wisdom)
    - How does one 'seek and explore?' (Experience for themselves)
  - v.13 What did he wish to explore? (concerning all that has been done under heaven.)
    - This is similar to the phrase in verse 3 'under the sun'.
    - In verse 3 it was established that the events Solomon would be referring to were on the earth vs. in heaven and added temporal vs. eternal.
  - v.13 How does Solomon describe this project? (*It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.*)
    - What is 'it' referring to? (seeking and exploring....all that has been done under heaven)
    - This process is described how? (is a grievous task)
      - It is a dark and solemn duty, not filled with joy.
  - Where does this task come from? (*which God has given*)
    - The word for God used here is Elohim not Yahweh.
    - This name for God is often used when referring to His power and justice or judgment.
    - This would invoke the thought of God universally considered by all men, not God as referred to by His covenant people, the Jews.
    - This task was given by God, not a chance occurrence.

- Who did God give this task to? (the sons of men)
  - Humankind.
- How else is this task described? (to be afflicted with)
  - When men try to understand all the things that occur on earth it is not a journey laden with joyous contemplations, instead it is with affliction and grievous outcomes to ponder.
- Why do bad things happen? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do bad things happen to innocent people?
- Why do evil men prevail? Why is evil ever rewarded?
- Why is life not a sum game of good rewarded and bad punished?
- How many learned men of history testify to this truth? How many men have driven themselves insane in the pursuit of gaining to explain the intricacies of life? Philosophers drive themselves into literal madness. The list of philosophers taking their own lives is significant.
  - There are wise teachings, like the Proverbs, that seem to demonstrate a truth that doing right will equal reward and doing evil will be judged.
  - The book of Job challenged this thought yet in this narrative there was an ultimate turn around for Job in the end. Yet in this world we know that is not always the case. Why is this not always the truth? (We know plenty of people who have done the right and proper things in life, yet they don't seem to have been rewarded for those things).
- v.14 What does Solomon declare he has done in pursuit of researching this truth? (I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun,)
  - Solomon has observed all the works of man.
  - What would the works of man done under the sun be? (All knowledge accumulated).
    - Solomon said this journey was taken to examine all things through his wisdom. What was known by man?
    - Remember how wise Solomon was according to scripture.

**1Kings 3:12** behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.

- Solomon had superior wisdom and discernment beyond any man before or since him. God given!
- Remember there was not a kingdom that did not recognize the wisdom of Solomon. Each kingdom of this time would have compared their accumulated knowledge with that displayed by Solomon.

**1Kings 4:29** Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and

**breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.**

**1Kings 4:30 Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.**

**1Kings 4:31 For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known in all the surrounding nations.**

**1Kings 4:32 He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.**

**1Kings 4:33 He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish.**

**1Kings 4:34 Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.**

- Eccl. v.14 With all the wisdom and discernment given by God to Solomon what is his conclusion of this work to be? (and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.)
  - All man's wisdom is meaningless in determining the meaning of life and the pursuit to that end is like chasing after the wind.
- v.15 What observation does Solomon make next? (What is crooked cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted.)
  - The things Solomon saw as crooked could not be made straight.
  - Philosophy and education in the world does not restore the evil nature of man.
  - There was no hope to fix those things which were wrong.
  - What was determined to be lacking in man's wisdom could not even be calculated. There was so much Solomon determined missing in man's understanding it was beyond measure.
- v.16 What self-awareness did Solomon admit to? (I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge.")
  - Solomon had to admit to himself that there was no one who had accumulated as much wisdom as he had to make reference from. There was nowhere else to turn to increase the knowledge he had access to.
- v.17 What comparison to wisdom did Solomon look at? (And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly;)
  - It would appear, that madness and folly were in contrast to wisdom, or that in his search for an answer in wisdom he even tried to learn more of madness and folly.
    - The Septuagint translates this "Parables and science."
  - It may be Solomon wants to learn of madness and folly to avoid them. Does Solomon turn from seeking wisdom from only wise men but also achieve wisdom by learning what to avoid from the madness of fools?
- The more we strive for an outcome in one direction that does not lead to the answer, to continue in that direction is like insanity.

- We sometime hear this quoted “The definition of insanity is to do the same thing over again and expect a different result”. Not sure if it was actually Einstein or not.
- v.17 What did this comparison result in? (I realized that this also is striving after wind.)
  - Solomon did not find the answer he was looking for.
- v.18 The comparison of wisdom to extreme folly did not help Solomon find the answer he was seeking. Why? (Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge *results in* increasing pain.)
  - What did more wisdom for Solomon bring? (much grief)
  - What did increasing knowledge do for Solomon? (*results in* increasing pain)
- In fact, more wisdom only brought more grief. The more Solomon was aware of the injustices, inequalities, oppression, cruelty and suffering in men’s lives with no clear answers to why they exist, or how to fix them only increased pain for Solomon.
  - Keep in mind the reason for Solomon to seek the wisdom and the knowledge was to understand all that has been done under heaven given in verse 13. This all goes back to verse 3.

### **Eccl. 1:3 What advantage does man have in all his work Which he does under the sun?**

- The question is ‘What advantage does man have in all his work?’ What is the sum advantage in what man accomplishes here on earth? All man can accomplish in the flesh, in his temporal being gives NO advantage.
  - When things are less than advantage or equal or fair man can’t put right that which is crooked or explain all that is missing in understanding this and therefore wisdom is meaningless in this ultimate pursuit.

**Eccl. 2:1 I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.” And behold, it too was futility.**

**Eccl. 2:2 I said of laughter, “It is madness,” and of pleasure, “What does it accomplish?”**

**Eccl. 2:3 I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives.**

**Eccl. 2:4 I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself;**

**Eccl. 2:5 I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees;**

**Eccl. 2:6 I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees.**

**Eccl. 2:7 I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I**

possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem.

**Ecccl. 2:8** Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men — many concubines.

**Ecccl. 2:9** Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me.

**Ecccl. 2:10** All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor.

**Ecccl. 2:11** Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun.

- v.1 Seeking more wisdom did not bring Solomon the answer to his question, so how does Solomon say he continues his journey to discover what advantage man has in all his work? (I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.” And behold, it too was futility.)
  - Solomon has a conversation with himself, “I said to myself.”
  - What did Solomon tell himself? (Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.”)
    - What answer did this bring for Solomon? (And behold, it too was futility.)
- v.2 What did Solomon try next? (I said of laughter, “It is madness,” and of pleasure, “What does it accomplish?”)
  - From the light-hearted simple joy of laughter, to the more extreme pursuits of pleasure...
  - From one extreme to the other, what is the rhetorical question? (“What does it accomplish?”)
    - The implied answer is that it did not accomplish his goal of finding an answer.
- v.3 Next, what does Solomon try? (I explored with my mind *how* to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding *me* wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives.)
  - Solomon decided to logically experiment with affecting his body with wine.
    - He clarifies what limitation? (while my mind was guiding *me* wisely)
  - What is the implication? (drinking for physical effect but stopping before the mind was not in control) Not drunk. To enhance his experiences.
    - What else did Solomon explore? (‘how to take hold of folly’).
      - Participating in joys, but allowing himself to participate without those things taking control of his reason, in moderation he engages.
  - What was the purpose of these experiments? (until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives).



- v.4 What focus of striving to find an answer does Solomon share next? (I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself)
  - Solomon does not list all the works he set out to accomplish here but we get a glimpse of these projects in 1 Kings 9:15-19...

**1Kings 9:15** Now this is the account of the forced labor which King Solomon levied to build the house of the LORD, his own house, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

**1Kings 9:16** For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and captured Gezer and burned it with fire, and killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

**1Kings 9:17** So Solomon rebuilt Gezer and the lower Beth-horon

**1Kings 9:18** and Baalath and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land of Judah,

**1Kings 9:19** and all the storage cities which Solomon had, even the cities for his chariots and the cities for his horsemen, and all that it pleased Solomon to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land under his rule.

- The details on the project of Solomon building a house for the name of the LORD are given in 1 Kings 5:5 - 6:38, I will not read all here, but you can read for your own study.

**1Kings 5:5** "Behold, I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to David my father, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he will build the house for My name.'

**1Kings 6:38** In the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished throughout all its parts and according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.

- This was an amazing accomplishment! The emphasis of the projects Solomon was listing were the things he did just for himself. That may be why there is no reference to the building of the temple here in Ecclesiastes.
- Eccl. 2:4 What else did Solomon do? (I built houses for myself.)

**1Kings 7:1** Now Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

**1Kings 7:8** His house where he was to live, the other court inward from the hall, was of the same workmanship. He also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom Solomon had married.

- Eccl. 2:4 How does this verse finish? (I planted vineyards for myself)
  - What is a great estate without its own vineyard? :)
- v.5-6 What other impressive projects does Solomon recount? (I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees.)
  - All these things take great planning and time. They take great knowledge in a multitude of areas! Name some – physics, chemistry, geology, biology...
- v.7 What did Solomon own? (I bought male and female slaves and I had home-born slaves. Also, I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem.)

**1Kings 9:20** As for all the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, who were not of the sons of Israel, **1Kings 9:21** their descendants who were left after them in the land whom the sons of Israel were unable to destroy utterly, from them Solomon levied forced laborers, even to this day.

**1Kings 9:22** But Solomon did not make slaves of the sons of Israel; for they were men of war, his servants, his princes, his captains, his chariot commanders, and his horsemen.

**1Kings 9:23** These were the chief officers who were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people doing the work.

- Eccl. v.8 How did Solomon pay for all this work to be done and accumulation of things? (Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces.)

**1Kings 9:26** King Solomon also built a fleet of ships in Ezion-geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

**1Kings 9:27** And Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, sailors who knew the sea, along with the servants of Solomon.

**1Kings 9:28** They went to Ophir and took four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.

- v.8 How does this verse end? (I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men — many concubines.)
  - Every form of entertainment and physical pleasure was obtained by Solomon. We know he had 300 concubines.

**1Kings 11:3** He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

- What is the difference between a wife and a concubine?

- Wives would bring a dowry to a relationship, but concubines did not. In cultures that permit ownership of slaves a concubine would be a slave. There was no remarriage permitted for either woman nor a return to their parental home. Both were taken care of for life.
- v.9 How does Solomon sum up all he had achieved? (Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me.) Remember what we read in 1Kings 4:29-34: It was a truth universally acknowledged that his wisdom surpassed that of everyone else who had ever lived.
  - Solomon acknowledges all these vast accomplishments and that his wisdom never left him. It was the gift that kept producing all these outcomes. The gift that keeps on giving!
- v.10 What did Solomon allow to direct his pursuits? (All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them.)
  - What goal directed Solomon's quests? (I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure.)
  - What was the result of these pursuits? (my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor.)
    - Solomon declares this was his reward. His heart was pleased. That was it. There was nothing that brought the answers he was looking for.
- v.11 What is the summation for Solomon of these achievements? (Thus, I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun.)
  - All wealth and activities it afforded were vanity, futile or meaningless.
  - They were like striving after the wind, something one can never catch, there is no end game with any ultimate satisfaction.
    - There is no profit, or advantage or sum gain, 'under the sun'.
    - These activities were only squandered time in the measurement of a life lived out on earth.

- Let's start again with a review of Ecclesiastes:
  - This book is Wisdom literature. The author is Solomon: a man who was given, by God, wisdom and discernment greater than any man.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek it there.
  - Solomon begins by calling attention to how the repeating cycles in nature display a meaninglessness in understanding an advantage in life.
  - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth are also meaningless in understanding an advantage in life.

**Eccl. 2:12** So I turned to consider wisdom, madness and folly; for what will the man do who will come after the king except what has already been done?

**Eccl. 2:13** And I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness.

**Eccl. 2:14** The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one fate befalls them both.

**Eccl. 2:15** Then I said to myself, "As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?" So I said to myself, "This too is vanity."

**Eccl. 2:16** For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man as with the fool, inasmuch as in the coming days all will be forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die!

**Eccl. 2:17** So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind.

- v.12 Solomon returns to an idea he mentions earlier, how? (So I turned to consider wisdom, madness and folly;)
  - What question does Solomon pose? (for what *will* the man *do* who will come after the king *except* what has already been done?)
    - Who is the man who will come after the king? (An heir to the throne, the next king.)
  - What question does Solomon ponder about this next king? (What will he do except what has already been done?)
    - He can only follow in the footsteps of Solomon. What had Solomon accomplished? (An amazing list of building projects beyond imagination, reigned over a kingdom in Israel, accumulated wealth beyond any need, was a righteous judge of the people, enjoyed exceedingly the pleasures of life.)
    - As a king of Israel, there is nothing new to do that Solomon as king had not accomplished.
- v.13 What observation does Solomon share? (And I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness.)
  - What does "excels" mean? (*advantage, profit*)

- This is the same word translated "advantage" in 1:3 and "profit" in 2:11.
- So wisdom does have an advantage or profit over folly, like light has an advantage over darkness.
- v.14 How does Solomon describe the advantage? (The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness.)
  - The wise man's eyes can see things the fool will not be able to see, like one who walks in light can see, and one who walks in darkness and can't see.
  - Solomon enjoyed the pleasures or fruits of his labors, but in a more restrained way than the all-out over-indulgence of the fool. There was some advantage in wisdom.
- v.14 What is also true? (And yet I know that one fate befalls them both.)
- v.15 What reasoning does Solomon apply now? (Then I said to myself, "As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me.")
  - Since both will have the same fate what does he ponder? (Why then have I been extremely wise?" )
  - If both have the same fate and Solomon's wisdom did not give him a different fate what does he conclude? (So I said to myself, "This too is vanity.")
    - Solomon sees that having wisdom, in itself, is vanity, or meaningless.
- v.16 Solomon explains this how? (For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man *as* with the fool, inasmuch as *in* the coming days all will be forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die!)
  - The focus is on the "lasting remembrance" of each.
    - "Lasting remembrance" is defined how? (in the coming days)
    - We might say in the future days.
  - What is true in the future days of both? (all will be forgotten)
  - Using Solomon as an example we know he had more wisdom than any man before him or since he was on earth. Where is that wisdom now? (Lost to us)
  - There was no record made of all the wisdom to pass on to future generations that has survived. Why was the wisdom achieved not kept and not added to by those who came after so that mankind would have the benefit now?
    - What the wise man knew and did is lost in the same way as what the foolish man knew and did.
- v.16 What else is true for each man? (And how the wise man and the fool alike die!)
- v.17 What did this realization cause Solomon to say? (So I hated life)
  - What specifically did he hate? (for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me)
    - The work Solomon accomplished on earth, in his temporal life, were grievous to him now.
  - Why did he consider the work "grievous"? (Because everything is futility and striving after wind.)

- All Solomon had accomplished was only done here on earth, or 'under the sun'. All those things were considered futility. Nothing with lasting value outside of the earth, or to those in the future in a lasting valuable way.
  - Solomon found he actually had done what? (striving after wind)
  - He had been chasing after something his whole life to only now realize he could not achieve it by his wisdom.

**Ecccl. 2:18** Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, for I must leave it to the man who will come after me.

**Ecccl. 2:19** And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored by acting wisely under the sun. This too is vanity.

**Ecccl. 2:20** Therefore I completely despaired of all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun.

**Ecccl. 2:21** When there is a man who has labored with wisdom, knowledge and skill, then he gives his legacy to one who has not labored with them. This too is vanity and a great evil.

**Ecccl. 2:22** For what does a man get in all his labor and in his striving with which he labors under the sun?

**Ecccl. 2:23** Because all his days his task is painful and grievous; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is vanity.

- v.18 Not only did Solomon realize the wisdom he had was grievous but what else does he say he hated? (Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun.)
  - Why did he hate his labor? (for I must leave it to the man who will come after me.)
- v.19 Why does leaving all the fruit of his labor to someone concern Solomon? (And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool?)
  - With all Solomon's wisdom he does not have the ability to control the category his heir will be in, being wise or a fool.
  - What does Solomon conclude? (Yet he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored by acting wisely under the sun. This too is vanity.)
  - How had Solomon gained the fruit of his labor? (by acting wisely under the sun)
    - The fact that someone can receive all the benefits earned by someone else Solomon declares is what? (This too is vanity.)
    - This is another reason the way the world works in determining where an advantage can be is meaningless. It makes no sense.
- v.20 Because this is a reality what does Solomon say? (Therefore I completely despaired of all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun.)
  - It had lost meaning to Solomon.
- v.21 Solomon explains exactly what this means, how? (When there is a man who has

labored with wisdom, knowledge and skill, then he gives his legacy to one who has not labored with them. This too is vanity and a great evil.)

- Solomon broadens his explanation to anyone who finds themselves in this position not just himself, how? (When there is a man)
- This is not just something Solomon has experienced.
- A man who has done what? (who has labored with wisdom, knowledge and skill, then he gives his legacy to one who has not labored with them)
  - What is his focus? (he gives his legacy to one who has not labored with them)
  - What is a legacy? (anything handed down from the past, as from an ancestor or predecessor)
  - How is the one receiving the legacy described? (one who has not labored with them)
    - This is describing a person that inherits something they had nothing at all to do with the acquiring or the building of the legacy with the one leaving it all.
    - When this happens what does Solomon have to say about it? (This too is vanity and a great evil.)
- A legacy can change in one generation or maybe more but eventually this will be the truth for all men who establish their legacy based on what they do here on earth or as described as "under the sun".
  - Solomon says this is not just meaningless it actually moves to being a great evil. Solomon expresses a stronger impact to this declaration.
  - Remember this is exactly what happens to Solomon.

**1Kings 11:1** Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

**1Kings 11:2** from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love.

**1Kings 11:3** He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

**1Kings 11:4** For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

**1Kings 11:5** For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

**1Kings 11:6** Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done.

**1Kings 11:7** Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.

**1Kings 11:8** Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

**1Kings 11:9** Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,

**1Kings 11:10** and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded.

**1Kings 11:11** So the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant.

**1Kings 11:12** “Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

**1Kings 11:13** “However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

- v.11 God said, “I will tear the kingdom from you” (Solomon)
  - The kingdom will be given to a servant of Solomon. (“I will not do it in your days.”)
  - This event will happen to the legacy of Solomon. (“One tribe will be left to your son.”)
- Eccl. 2:22 What question does Solomon ask? (For what does a man get in all his labor and in his striving with which he labors under the sun?)
  - What does a man actually have to show for all his work on earth?
- v.23 What did this man who passes on his legacy do? (Because all his days his task is painful and grievous; even at night his mind does not rest.)
  - This was not just the activity of labor but even the constant thinking about this activity that consumes a man’s thoughts at night.
  - All the doing and thinking about this labor is what? (This too is vanity.)

**Eccl. 2:24** There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.

**Eccl. 2:25** For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?

**Eccl. 2:26** For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God’s sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind.

- v.24 In contrast to laboring, a mans tasks being painful and grievous, what does Solomon describe? (There is nothing better for a man *than* to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good.)
  - At this time in Solomon’s life he says there is nothing better than this endeavors.



- v.24 Who can grant this? (This also I have seen that it is from the hand of God.)
  - Solomon say he has seen this for himself.
- v.25 What rhetorical question does Solomon ask? (For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?)
- v.26 What does Solomon describe as coming from the hand of God? (For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind.)
  - The last use of the word "he" used here should also be capitalized since the pronoun used prior was referring to God and there is not a shift in subject.
  - Let's reread with the pronouns replaced.

**For to a person who is good in *God's* sight *God* has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner *God* has given the task of gathering and collecting so that *God* may give to one who is good in God's sight.**

- A contrast is given here. How is the first person described? (For to a person who is good in His sight)
  - Who's sight? (God's sight)
  - What did God give that person who is good in His sight? (He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy)
- Who do we know were given the these exact gifts by God? (Solomon)

**1Kings 3:12 behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you.**

**1Kings 3:13 "I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that there will not be any among the kings like you all your days.**

- Solomon was given wisdom and knowledge and riches and honor. Solomon in Ecclesiastes adds the word "joy."
- Eccl. 2:26 How is the second state of a person described? (to the sinner)
  - What did God give this sinner? (He has given the task of gathering and collecting)
  - Why does God have the sinner gather and collect? (so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight.)
    - God is always the one giving to the one who is good in His sight.
    - This is true even when we can't see this at work. There are plenty of 'sinners' and evil people who have inherited loads of wealth and other benefits in worldly measures.
    - There are also many testimonies throughout history of evil men who end of

benefiting godly men in the end. Is this the point Solomon is making?

- Solomon has been sharing his observations lived out in his life: how wisdom and great wealth was meaningless. He has just established that thinking he could decide how to leave a legacy was also meaningless.
- The two ways God can seem to respond to men are on display in Solomon's life.
  - We saw the first one in 1 Kings 3:12-13 but that was not the end of the story for Solomon. We see a brief highlight first in 1 Kings 3:3.

**1Kings 3:3** Now Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

- Refer back to the verses we just read in 1 Kings 11:4-8

**1Kings 11:4** For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

**1Kings 11:5** For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

**1Kings 11:6** Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done.

**1Kings 11:7** Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.

**1Kings 11:8** Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

- What did God do?

**1Kings 11:11** So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant.

- This was the worst punishment Solomon could endure for his sin.
  - Solomon acknowledges God is just in Ecclesiastes 2:25 (For who can eat and who can have enjoyment without Him?)
- Eccl. 2:26 After revealing how God deals with man what does Solomon say? (This too is vanity and striving after wind.)
  - God will ultimately do as He determines and it is meaningless to resist Him.
  - God told Solomon what the consequence of his sin was going to be.

- Solomon lived out the remainder of his life knowing this truth.
- This may be one of the reasons he writes Ecclesiastes.
- This was a grievance sin Solomon committed against God.
  - Let's look at exactly what this sin was.
  - Solomon went after Ashtoreth and Milcom. He built high places for Chemosh and Molech. There are plenty of horrible things involved in the worship of these gods but there is one gruesome practice that stood out in its grievousness – child sacrifice.
  - God warns His people before they enter the promised land to avoid this.

**Lev. 18:21** 'You shall not give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.

**Lev. 20:1** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

**Lev. 20:2** "You shall also say to the sons of Israel: 'Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones.

**Lev. 20:3** 'I will also set My face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given some of his offspring to Molech, so as to defile My sanctuary and to profane My holy name.

**Lev. 20:4** 'If the people of the land, however, should ever disregard that man when he gives any of his offspring to Molech, so as not to put him to death,

**Lev. 20:5** then I Myself will set My face against that man and against his family, and I will cut off from among their people both him and all those who play the harlot after him, by playing the harlot after Molech.

- "Those who give their offspring to Molech," is talking about child sacrifice. God will not accept this.

**2Kings 16:2** Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David had done.

**2Kings 16:3** But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel.

- King Ahaz participated in this abomination of child sacrifice.

**2Chr. 33:1** Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.

**2Chr. 33:2** He did evil in the sight of the LORD according to the abominations of

the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.

**2Chr. 33:3** For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he also erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.

**2Chr. 33:4** He built altars in the house of the LORD of which the LORD had said, “My name shall be in Jerusalem forever.”

**2Chr. 33:5** For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

**2Chr. 33:6** He made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.

**2Chr. 33:7** Then he put the carved image of the idol which he had made in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever;

**2Chr. 33:8** and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them according to all the law, the statutes and the ordinances given through Moses.”

**2Chr. 33:9** Thus Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.

- Manassah participated in child sacrifice with his own son in the valley of Ben-hinnom. He led Judah to do more evil than the nations in the land before the Israelites.

**2Kings 23:10** He also defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech.

**2Kings 23:13** The high places which were before Jerusalem, which were on the right of the mount of destruction which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the sons of Ammon, the king defiled.

**2Kings 23:14** He broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherim and filled their places with human bones.

- Josiah, grandson of Manassah, defiled these places, meaning he removed them. Notice Topheth is in the valley of the son of Hinnom

**Jer. 19:4** “Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and

have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent

**Jer. 19:5** and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind;

**Jer. 19:6** therefore, behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when this place will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-hinnom, but rather the valley of Slaughter.

**Jer. 19:10** “Then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you

**Jer. 19:11** and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot again be repaired; and they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place for burial.

**Jer. 19:12** “This is how I will treat this place and its inhabitants,” declares the LORD, “so as to make this city like Topheth.

**Jer. 19:13** “The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will be defiled like the place Topheth, because of all the houses on whose rooftops they burned sacrifices to all the heavenly host and poured out drink offerings to other gods.””

**Jer. 7:30** “For the sons of Judah have done that which is evil in My sight,” declares the LORD, “they have set their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it.

**Jer. 7:31** “They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.

**Jer. 7:32** “Therefore, behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when it will no longer be called Topheth, or the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of the Slaughter; for they will bury in Topheth because there is no other place.

**Jer. 7:33** “The dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky and for the beasts of the earth; and no one will frighten them away.

**Jer. 7:34** “Then I will make to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land will become a ruin.

**Jer. 8:1** “At that time,” declares the LORD, “they will bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from their graves.

**Jer. 8:2** “They will spread them out to the sun, the moon and to all the host of

heaven, which they have loved and which they have served, and which they have gone after and which they have sought, and which they have worshiped. They will not be gathered or buried; they will be as dung on the face of the ground.

**Jer. 32:31** “Indeed this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My wrath from the day that they built it, even to this day, so that it should be removed from before My face,

**Jer. 32:32** because of all the evil of the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah which they have done to provoke Me to anger — they, their kings, their leaders, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**Jer. 32:33** “They have turned their back to Me and not their face; though I taught them, teaching again and again, they would not listen and receive instruction.

**Jer. 32:34** “But they put their detestable things in the house which is called by My name, to defile it.

**Jer. 32:35** “They built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

**Mic. 6:6** With what shall I come to the LORD  
And bow myself before the God on high?  
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,  
With yearling calves?

**Mic. 6:7** Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams,  
In ten thousand rivers of oil?  
Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts,  
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

**Mic. 6:8** He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

- God never asks for the sacrifice of the life of a child to be given to Him, like the worship of other God's demanded.
  - Child sacrifice took place in worship of Molech. It is emphasized that death took place in the valley of Ben-hinnom when it says it filled this place with the blood of the innocent.
  - Many other corrupt practices in worship to many other false gods filled Israel.
- Solomon is recognized as the king that built the places for these events that took place.
  - This is the legacy of Solomon!

**Citation:**

- For outside sources concerning child sacrifices in ancient cultures: <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/01/science/relics-of-carthage-show-brutality-amid-the-good-life.html?pagewanted=all>

- We will begin again reviewing what we have learnt of Ecclesiastes:
  - This book is Wisdom literature. The author is Solomon, a man who was given by God wisdom and discernment greater than any man.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
  - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an advantage in life.
    - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth are meaningless in understanding an advantage in life.
- Last week we added Solomon processing through a man's desire to leave a legacy, lasting remembrance, and concluding man can't truly affect his own legacy here on this earth as a measure of understanding this advantage in life. Trying to do so was vanity, or truly meaningless.
  - If what one can leave behind is not the point in living day to day life then where would man go to find an answer to the question, "What is the advantage of life?"
- Let's read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

**Eccl. 3:1 There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven —**

**Eccl. 3:2 A time to give birth and a time to die;**

**A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.**

**Eccl. 3:3 A time to kill and a time to heal;**

**A time to tear down and a time to build up.**

**Eccl. 3:4 A time to weep and a time to laugh;**

**A time to mourn and a time to dance.**

**Eccl. 3:5 A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;**

**A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.**

**Eccl. 3:6 A time to search and a time to give up as lost;**

**A time to keep and a time to throw away.**

**Eccl. 3:7 A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;**

**A time to be silent and a time to speak.**

**Eccl. 3:8 A time to love and a time to hate;**

**A time for war and a time for peace.**

- v.1 Where does Solomon take the focus next? (There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven)
- First is the measurement of what? (appointed time)
  - Man's life is contained in time while God is not bound by time.
  - The time is not arbitrary but what? (appointed)



- The definition of appointed is: predetermined; arranged; set:
- There is predetermined time when everything is going to happen.
- First we learned the time is appointed then we learned this was true for everything, but the clarification for everything is what? (every event)
  - Every event where? (under the heaven)
  - This directs us to the “under the sun events”, things as they unfold on earth.
  - What is this to mean to us? (earthly, temporal)
- To give the details of just how inclusive this concept of God’s control is, Solomon proceeds with a unique poetic style using merisms.
  - Wikipedia defines "merism" (Latin *merismus*, Greek μερισμός *merismós*) as a linguistic phenomenon in which a combination of two *contrasting parts* of the whole refer to the whole.
  - For example, in order to say that someone "searched everywhere", one could use the merism "searched high and low".
  - The bible uses this style in other places.

**Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

**Rev. 22:13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”**

- In Genesis the use of heavens and the earth is to convey God created everything, not just the heavens and the earth but everything inbetween.
- In Revelation the use of three merisms would be to emphasize God is everything, not just in the beginning and the end but everything inbetween as well.
  - Eccl 3:2 What merism does Solomon begin with? (A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.)
    - What is this a description of? (The creation of and ending of everything living)
    - Solomon is using this event of creating and ending all life to point back to the conclusion that God has an appointed time for each.
- v.3 What does Solomon describe next? (A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up.)
  - v.4 What scope of emotional responses does man have to all events? (A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance.)
  - v.5 How does man respond to events in life? (A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones)
    - What is pictured by the dispersing of stones and the gathering of stones? (Building things, removing stones before planting or building contrasted with gathering stones for walls or buildings)

- v.5 What is described next? (A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.)
  - What does it mean to embrace? (to take or receive gladly or eagerly; accept willingly)
  - This is not just a picture of a human hug but a broader concept of opening up to relationship, ideas, or opportunities. The opposite is shunning to embrace or a time to not be open to those same things and everything in-between.
- v.6 What is described as a way to approach all decisions men have in life? (A time to search and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep and a time to throw away.)
  - The best description of these might be to think of those situations we see where the extreme in the negative is not followed by people. How many times have we witnessed people that will not give up on a relationship and/or endeavor past the point it was healthy. The second one can be seen on display by anyone who has watched an episode of 'Hoarders'.
- v.7 What is displayed next? (A time to tear apart and a time to sew together)
  - Because the word "sew" is used many see this in a narrow view of clothes or cloth but the idea is larger than that. There is an appropriate time for things to be separated and other times where things should be brought together in life. Examples to demonstrate this might be when a child leaves home to be joined in marriage to a spouse.

**Gen. 2:24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.**

- This can be true in all relationships. Nations or tribes separating in treaties to join other nations in treaties. Work place or church connections.
- v.7 What is also true for human relationships? (A time to be silent and a time to speak.)
  - There is an appointed time for everything we speak or don't speak.
  - Sometimes we speak more with our actions than our words.
  - Be mindful before speaking to be sure the Spirit is prompting us in our words and our timing to speak. (Story of a bible study leader sharing that just because you might have an answer to every question does not mean you need to share on every question...new concept for me)
- v.8 What extremes of emotion are addressed? (A time to love and a time to hate)
  - What can be activities that demonstrate these extremes? (A time for war and a time for peace.)
  - These are words Solomon uses to describe the all-inclusiveness of responses covered in God's economy. There are times in which war must exist to carry out God's ultimate purposes.

**Deut. 20:10 When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace.**

**Deut. 20:11** “If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you.

**Deut. 20:12** “However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it.

**Deut. 20:13** “When the LORD your God gives it into your hand, you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword.

- The answer is not always one way or the other; it is determined by God, and we must follow God’s prompting in every case.
  - The Bible Knowledge Commentary says Solomon followed his general statement with a poem on 14 opposites, each of which happens in its time. The fact that Solomon utilized polar opposites in a multiple of seven and began his list with birth and death is highly significant. The number seven suggests the idea of completeness and the use of polar opposites—a well-known poetical device called merism—suggests totality (cf. Ps. 139:2-3).

**Psa. 139:0** For the choir director. A Psalm of David.

**Psa. 139:1** O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

**Psa. 139:2** You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
You understand my thought from afar.

**Psa. 139:3** You scrutinize my path and my lying down,  
And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

**Psa. 139:4** Even before there is a word on my tongue,  
Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

**Psa. 139:5** You have enclosed me behind and before,  
And laid Your hand upon me.

**Psa. 139:6** Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
It is too high, I cannot attain to it.

**Psa. 139:7** Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?

**Psa. 139:8** If I ascend to heaven, You are there;  
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.

**Psa. 139:9** If I take the wings of the dawn,  
If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

**Psa. 139:10** Even there Your hand will lead me,  
And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

**Psa. 139:11** If I say, “Surely the darkness will overwhelm me,  
And the light around me will be night,”

**Psa. 139:12** Even the darkness is not dark to You,  
And the night is as bright as the day.

Darkness and light are alike to You.

**Psa. 139:13** For You formed my inward parts;

**You wove me in my mother's womb.**

**Psa. 139:14** I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

**Wonderful are Your works,**

**And my soul knows it very well.**

**Psa. 139:15** My frame was not hidden from You,

**When I was made in secret,**

**And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;**

**Psa. 139:16** Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;

**And in Your book were all written**

**The days that were ordained for me,**

**When as yet there was not one of them.**

- We see both King David and King Solomon identify clearly that God is in control of all events unfolding in creation! Because God is in control of all creation, Solomon now returns to the question facing all men, "What is the advantage of life?"

**Ecccl. 3:9** What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?

**Ecccl. 3:10** I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.

**Ecccl. 3:11** He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

**Ecccl. 3:12** I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime;

**Ecccl. 3:13** moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor — it is the gift of God.

**Ecccl. 3:14** I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him.

**Ecccl. 3:15** That which has been already and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by.

- v.9 What is the rhetorical question proposed by Solomon again? (What profit is there to the worker from that in which he toils?)
- v.10 What had Solomon seen? (I have seen the task which God has given the sons of men with which to occupy themselves.)
  - What is a task? (a definite piece of work assigned to, falling to, or expected of a person; duty.)
    - Who gave the task? (God)
  - Who did God give the task to? (he sons of men)
  - Why did God give the tasks? (with which to occupy themselves)

- God gives man work to fill his time on earth.
- v.11 Solomon reiterates central theme in Chapter 3 how? (He has made everything appropriate in its time.)
  - What else does he add? (He has also set eternity in their heart)
  - What is eternity? (The time beyond what happens during a man's life on earth)
    - Man lives his life on earth with an innate knowledge there is something after this life.
  - What is the limitation of knowledge God gives man? (yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.)
    - It is God's plan that man does not know all things God is doing in His creation from the beginning of creation to the fulfillment of that creation. We are each part of a beautiful tapestry and need to know only what our part in that is, not how it relates to the whole. He is the creator and artist and we can trust what part we have to play by trusting in Him.
    - We can see the desire of men to know about eternity and to know the whole of this bigger plan by our desire to know more in our acquisition of human knowledge of our world in areas like science, philosophy and even theology.
- v.12 Without knowledge of all God is doing, what does Solomon say is also true? (I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good in one's lifetime)
  - Man is to rejoice.
  - Man is to do good in his own lifetime.
    - Without knowing the bigger picture and how our circumstances fit into the larger puzzle, we are to rejoice and focus on our own time.
    - What are we to do with what God gives us?

**Eph. 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;**

**Eph. 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

**Eph. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**

- Eccl. 3:13 How does Solomon finish? (moreover, that every man who eats and drinks sees good in all his labor — it is the gift of God.)
  - When man can daily have his basic survival needs met and then sees good in all his labor, that is what? (it is the gift of God)
    - The definition of good is established by who? (God.)
    - When God sees the work as good then it is to only be seen as a gift from God, not a gift to God.
    - Man is to focus his work and life in the light of eternity.
- v.14 Unlike man's work that comes and goes in his life time what is true about that work

done by God? (I know that everything God does will remain forever)

- What impact does the work of man have to this end? (there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it)
  - There is not need to correct or fix that which is perfect! Nothing man does can add or take away from God's perfect plan.
  - God has one goal for man? (for God has *so* worked that men should fear Him.)
- All that God has created and made evident in His creation should bring the fear of God into every heart of man.
  - Paul also conveys this in Romans 1:18-21.

**Rom. 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

**Rom. 1:19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

**Rom. 1:20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

**Rom. 1:21** For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

- Eccl 3:15 From God's perspective what is true? (That which is has been already and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by.)
  - What is that 'which has been already'? (Prior to God's creation)
  - What is that 'which will be'? (After this creation)
    - From God's perspective these two event have already been set. From the big picture they are set by God.
  - What does God seek? (what has passed by.)
  - What connects the past from the future? (That which happens now or in the moment or in each day that knit together is each life of a man. That which occurs in the measurement of time from man's perspective)
    - God seeks man to do labor and use the time given in God's way because man has the fear of God. God will judge those works as seen in the movement of time and will call the past to account in due time.

**Eccl. 3:16** Furthermore, I have seen under the sun that in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness.

**Eccl. 3:17** I said to myself, "God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man," for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.

**Eccl. 3:18** I said to myself concerning the sons of men, "God has surely tested

them in order for them to see that they are but beasts.”

**Eccl. 3:19** For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity.

**Eccl. 3:20** All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.

**Eccl. 3:21** Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?

**Eccl. 3:22** I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?

- v.16 Knowing God measures a man’s labor in an eternal perspective, what does Solomon observe? (Furthermore, I have seen under the sun *that* in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness.)
  - How does Solomon introduce the next truth? (I have seen)
  - Where did this witness take place? (under the sun) On earth.
    - What should exist on earth? (in the place of justice)
    - What occurs instead of justice? (there is wickedness)
    - What else should exist on earth? (in the place of righteousness)
    - What prevails instead of righteousness? (wickedness)
- v.17 What future event brings consolation to Solomon? (I said to myself, “God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man,” )
  - God will not have to rush His justice why? (for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.)
    - There is a purpose in God’s plan for what is wicked both in future judgment of those as well as in supporting God’s plan for the present circumstances, in every event on earth. God uses the acts of the wicked to continually bring about His ultimate purposes.
- v.18 What conclusion does Solomon say God will see? (I said to myself concerning the sons of men, “God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts.”)
- v.19 Solomon clarifies what is common to man and beast in what way? (For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity.)
  - What does it mean they have the same breath?

**Gen. 2:7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.



**Gen. 6:17** “Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.

**Gen. 7:15** So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life.

- Both man and beast have the same breath of life and when it is gone they are dead. For all man’s wisdom and works the end is still the same....death. Both are just passing through this world and in that way they do not change the path set by God and all is vanity.
- v.20 What other parallel is in death of man and beast seen? (All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.)

**Gen. 2:19** Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

- Both man and beast return to the ground where all originally were created from.
- Eccl. 3:21 What rhetorical question does Solomon pose? (Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?)
  - What is the breath of man here? (That which allowed him to live physically)
  - What is the breath of the beast? (That which allowed it to live physically)
  - When the breath of life leaves the man as when it leaves the animal there is no outward manifestation to show any difference. In man’s physical state alone he is like the beast God created.
- The reference to the breath of man ascending upwards and the breath of the beast descending downward to the earth means what then?
  - This could mean a view of the breath of man being the spirit of man. That which lives eternally. There is no indication that this is a view for animals so that leaves us with an unanswered question.
  - Solomon has been talking about the judgment of the wicked. There is no guarantee for men that their spirit will ascend. God knows which man’s spirit will ascend and which will descend. Man does not know or have the ability to judge this based on what his activities on earth are. Works are not what causes the breath of man to ascend.
- v.22 What is Solomon’s conclusion? (I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot.)
  - The activities of man to be pleasing to God, to be happy with the labor each day for this purpose.
  - During a man’s life on earth what is true for what follows man on earth? (For who



will bring him to see what will occur after him?)

- Man is never in control of what happens on earth after his existence. That is not the goal that man should spend his life's activities striving towards.

- Let's review Ecclesiastes so far.
  - This book is Wisdom literature. The author is Solomon, a man who was given by God wisdom and discernment greater than any man.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
    - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an advantage in life.
  - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth, and seeking an earthly legacy are meaningless in understanding an advantage in life.
    - There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Our desire should be to do what God wants done in our lives.

**Eccl. 4:1** Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun. And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and that they had no one to comfort them; and on the side of their oppressors was power, but they had no one to comfort them.

**Eccl. 4:2** So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living.

**Eccl. 4:3** But better off than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

- v.1 How does Solomon move ahead in the conversation of righteousness verses wickedness? (Then I looked again at all the acts of oppression which were being done under the sun.)
  - In Chapter 3, verse 16 we read, "Furthermore, I have seen under the sun that in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness."
  - Now in 4:1 Solomon looks more closely at this wickedness and specifically mentions the wickedness that is defined as 'acts of oppression'.
- How does Solomon continue? (And behold I saw the tears of the oppressed and *that* they had no one to comfort *them*)
  - Solomon looks at the human toll of oppression and says he sees the tears of these victims. He also says they had no one to comfort them.
  - What do the oppressors have? (and on the side of their oppressors was power)
    - The flip side to this is that the oppressed have no power.
  - Solomon repeats what? (but they had no one to comfort *them*.)
- v.2 The realization of this truth causes Solomon to say what? (So I congratulated the dead who are already dead more than the living who are still living.)

- What does 'congratulated' means here? (synonyms include applaud or salute)
- Who had Solomon just been talking about? (The oppressed)
- Those oppressed are better off dead than living through more oppression.
- v.3 The severity of this oppression is so great; what does Solomon conclude? (But better *off* than both of them is the one who has never existed, who has never seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.)
  - There is the worse case, which is those still living in oppression; the next best state to be in is to have died and no longer be suffering the oppression; and the most desired state is to never have suffered the oppression at all. Solomon is using extremes to make his point.

**Eccl. 4:4 I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is the result of rivalry between a man and his neighbor. This too is vanity and striving after wind.**

**Eccl. 4:5 The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh.**

**Eccl. 4:6 One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.**

- v.4 What does Solomon say next? (I have seen that every labor and every skill which is done is *the result of* rivalry between a man and his neighbor.)
  - What does it mean when someone says "I have seen"? (They are a witness)
  - What two things does Solomon identify? (every labor and every skill which is done)
- What is the motivation for every labor and every skill? (is *the result of* rivalry between a man and his neighbor)
  - What is a rivalry? (competition)
  - This same word is more often translated as jealousy.
    - A neighbor would be any person in proximity to know, or to see what they have, or what they do. This could be personally or collectively like tribes or nations.
  - The context of this comment is still what? (wickedness)
  - The wicked man's labor and skill are motivated by rivalry or jealousy.
    - What is the conclusion? (This too is vanity and striving after wind.)
- v.5 Who is identified first? (The fool)
  - What does the fool do? (folds his hands)
  - What work can you do when your hands are folded? (None)
  - When you don't bring in or produce anything new what is left to consume? (Whatever you already have, until all you have is used up)
- Similar language is used in Proverbs 24:30-34

**Prov. 24:30** I passed by the field of the sluggard

And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense,

**Prov. 24:31** And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles;

Its surface was covered with nettles,

And its stone wall was broken down.

**Prov. 24:32** When I saw, I reflected upon it;

I looked, and received instruction.

**Prov. 24:33** “A little sleep, a little slumber,

A little folding of the hands to rest,”

**Prov. 24:34** Then your poverty will come as a robber

And your want like an armed man.

- Eccl. 4:6 What two things are compared here? (One hand full of rest is better than two fists full of labor and striving after wind.)
  - The ‘handful of rest’ refers to v 5 of the ‘folding of the hands’ and can be seen repeated in Prov. 24:33.
    - ‘Handful of rest’ is not being elevated as a good thing it is being compared to something worse which is the two fists full of labor motivated by rivalry or jealousy with ones neighbor.
  - Wicked man will be motivated to compete with those around him or to shut down so as to purposely not be of use to those around him even to his own detriment. Neither is truly desirable but Solomon is using extremes to make his point again just like in verse 3.

**Eccl. 4:7** Then I looked again at vanity under the sun.

**Eccl. 4:8** There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches and he never asked, “And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?” This too is vanity and it is a grievous task.

**Eccl. 4:9** Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.

**Eccl. 4:10** For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

**Eccl. 4:11** Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?

**Eccl. 4:12** And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

- v.7 What does Solomon say he does next? (Then I looked again at vanity under the sun.)
  - Solomon says he ‘looked again’. He investigates more of what? (at vanity under the sun.)
- v.8 How does Solomon begin this discovery? (There was a certain man)

- We do not know who this man was.
- What is true for this man? (without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor.)
  - This man has no relative that he is working to help while he is alive or after he is gone.
- What does this man do? (yet there was no end to all his labor.)
- This man works without a family motivation, and never ceases to labor.
- What is the result? (Indeed, his eyes were not satisfied with riches)
- What else was true? (*and he never asked*, “And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?”)
  - He did not ask himself who was he laboring for. He was only working for his own accomplishment.
  - The labor resulted in what? (depriving myself of pleasure?”)
- The work was not even to satisfy his own pleasure, it was only for the sake of selfish greed devoid of pleasure.
  - What is the result? (This too is vanity and it is a grievous task.)
  - For this man life is not only meaningless but a burden.
- v.9 What is preferable? (Two are better than one)
  - Why? (because they have a good return for their labor.)
    - It would appear this is because they are laboring together.
    - We are not told what that return is, it is not measured in riches.
- v.10 How is this demonstrated? (For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion.)
  - What is true for the man who labors alone? (But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.)
- v.11 What simple example is used to further illustrate this truth? (Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm *alone*?)
- v.12 Solomon continues to use his good, better, best analogy how? (And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three *strands* is not quickly torn apart.)
  - When a threat comes, the one who is alone is overpowered versus when there are two they can resist the threat. They are not overpowered but can at least resist the threat together.
  - What is even better than two? (A cord of three *strands* is not quickly torn apart.)
    - Men are created to need others and not to be alone.

**Gen. 2:18** Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”

- Man had God in the garden of Eden but God created man not to be good alone, meaning without another person. God created another person for man to be with. God wants man to need another. Wickedness causes men to strive to be alone, to be against other men, and against God.

**Eccl. 4:13 A poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows how to receive instruction.**

**Eccl. 4:14 For he has come out of prison to become king, even though he was born poor in his kingdom.**

**Eccl. 4:15 I have seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces him.**

**Eccl. 4:16 There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them, and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him, for this too is vanity and striving after wind.**

v 13 Solomon begins with his next example of vanity how? (A poor yet wise lad is better than an old and foolish king who no longer knows *how* to receive instruction.)

The first person is described how? (A poor yet wise lad)

This person is compared to who? (an old and foolish king)

Why is the old king described as foolish? (who no longer knows *how* to receive instruction)

This implies the king at one time would do what? (receive instruction)

What can we assume the 'poor yet wise lad' was willing to do? (receive instruction)

Who does the instruction come from? (Not specified, could be counselors, could be priests or prophets or God)

This is why the poor yet wise lad was better at making decisions.

The question becomes, "Is this a general observation of kings and successors, or is it a specific king and successor?" When we get to verse 15 we see Solomon says, "I have seen," this would indicate this is a specific king and successor, and Solomon is a witness to the event in verse 15.

The three kings and successors of the throne to Israel would be where we would look to see if the verses here line up to those individuals as displayed through scriptures.

Is this a description of Saul to David, David to Solomon, or Solomon to his successor?

I believe this is a description of David to Solomon. As we go through each verse, we will look

to other scripture to see the truths revealed there that Solomon advances in these verses of Ecclesiastes.

v 13 Started with 'A poor yet wise lad'. We know from our study earlier regarding Solomon he was indeed a wise lad. He was wise in that he asked God for an understanding heart to judge. He says he was but a little child before God, the definition of a lad. 1 Kings 3:5-9.

1Kings 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, "Ask what you wish Me to give you."

1Kings 3:6 Then Solomon said, "You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

1Kings 3:7 "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

1Kings 3:8 "Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted.

1Kings 3:9 "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

Solomon declares himself to be 'but a little child'.

Estimates of Solomon's age range from about 13 to 20 years of age when he becomes king. Solomon did father a son the year before he became king.

1 Kings 14:31 Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king,

1Kings 11:42 Thus the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.

Solomon was just another son of David. It is not like he was raised in some palace to be trained and treated as the next king. He was not wealthy.

Eccl. 4:13 The next person is described how? ('an old and foolish king') 2 Sam. 5:4

2Sam. 5:4 David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years.

David became an old king dying at 74 years of age.

What else is said to be true of this king? (who no longer knows *how* to receive instruction.)

When David was younger he did know how to receive instruction. David turned to priests, prophets and to God for counsel. 1 Sam. 21:1, 22:9-10, 22:5, 23:2.

1Sam. 21:1 Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest;

1Sam. 22:9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing by the servants of Saul, said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

1Sam. 22:10 "He inquired of the LORD for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

David listened to the prophets of God. 1 Sam. 22:5.

1Sam. 22:5 The prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

David listened to the LORD. 1 Sam. 23:2.

1Sam. 23:2 So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and deliver Keilah."

Did David become one who did not seek or receive instructions in his decision making? 2 Sam. 24:1-15.

2Sam. 24:1 Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

2Sam. 24:2 The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people."

2Sam. 24:3 But Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

2Sam. 24:4 Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the



commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel.

2Sam. 24:5 They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad and toward Jazer.

2Sam. 24:6 Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi, and they came to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon,

2Sam. 24:7 and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites, and they went out to the south of Judah, to Beersheba.

2Sam. 24:8 So when they had gone about through the whole land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

2Sam. 24:9 And Joab gave the number of the registration of the people to the king; and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

2Sam. 24:10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

2Sam. 24:11 When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

2Sam. 24:12 "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, "I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you."'"

2Sam. 24:13 So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."

2Sam. 24:14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

2Sam. 24:15 So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

Second example of David as an old king. 1Kings 1:1, 5-48.

These verses will also reveal what Solomon declared in the rest of Eccl. 4 to be true.

1Kings 1:1 Now King David was old, advanced in age; and they covered him with clothes, but he could not keep warm.

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1Kings 1:5 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him.

1Kings 1:6 His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, “Why have you done so?” And he was also a very handsome man, and he was born after Absalom.

1Kings 1:7 He had conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest; and following Adonijah they helped him.

1Kings 1:8 But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and the mighty men who belonged to David, were not with Adonijah.

1Kings 1:9 Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and fatlings by the stone of Zohaleth, which is beside En-rogel; and he invited all his brothers, the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah, the king’s servants.

1Kings 1:10 But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, and Solomon his brother.

1Kings 1:11 Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, “Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it?

1Kings 1:12 “So now come, please let me give you counsel and save your life and the life of your son Solomon.

1Kings 1:13 “Go at once to King David and say to him, ‘Have you not, my lord, O king, sworn to your maidservant, saying, “Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne”? Why then has Adonijah become king?’

1Kings 1:14 “Behold, while you are still there speaking with the king, I will come in after you and confirm your words.”

1Kings 1:15 So Bathsheba went in to the king in the bedroom. Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king.

1Kings 1:16 Then Bathsheba bowed and prostrated herself before the king. And the king said, “What do you wish?”

1Kings 1:17 She said to him, “My lord, you swore to your maidservant by the LORD your God, saying, ‘Surely your son Solomon shall be king after me and he shall sit on my throne.’

1Kings 1:18 “Now, behold, Adonijah is king; and now, my lord the king, you do not know it.

1Kings 1:19 “He has sacrificed oxen and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king and Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited Solomon your servant.

1Kings 1:20 “As for you now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

1Kings 1:21 “Otherwise it will come about, as soon as my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be considered offenders.”

1Kings 1:22 Behold, while she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet came in.

1Kings 1:23 They told the king, saying, “Here is Nathan the prophet.” And when he came in before the king, he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground.

1Kings 1:24 Then Nathan said, “My lord the king, have you said, ‘Adonijah shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne’?”

1Kings 1:25 “For he has gone down today and has sacrificed oxen and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king’s sons and the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest, and behold, they are eating and drinking before him; and they say, ‘Long live King Adonijah!’”

1Kings 1:26 “But me, even me your servant, and Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and your servant Solomon, he has not invited.

1Kings 1:27 “Has this thing been done by my lord the king, and you have not shown to your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?”

1Kings 1:28 Then King David said, “Call Bathsheba to me.” And she came into the king’s presence and stood before the king.

1Kings 1:29 The king vowed and said, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress,

1Kings 1:30 surely as I vowed to you by the LORD the God of Israel, saying, ‘Your son Solomon shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place’; I will indeed do so this day.”

1Kings 1:31 Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, and prostrated herself before the king and said, “May my lord King David live forever.”

1Kings 1:32 Then King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” And they came into the king’s presence.

1Kings 1:33 The king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

1Kings 1:34 “Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there as king over Israel, and blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’”

1Kings 1:35 “Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne and be king in my place; for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah.”

1Kings 1:36 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, “Amen! Thus may the LORD, the God of my lord the king, say.

1Kings 1:37 “As the LORD has been with my lord the king, so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David!”

1Kings 1:38 So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David’s mule, and brought him to Gihon.

1Kings 1:39 Zadok the priest then took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, “Long live King Solomon!”

1Kings 1:40 All the people went up after him, and the people were playing on flutes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth shook at their noise.

1Kings 1:41 Now Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished

eating. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, “Why is the city making such an uproar?”

1Kings 1:42 While he was still speaking, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came. Then Adonijah said, “Come in, for you are a valiant man and bring good news.”

1Kings 1:43 But Jonathan replied to Adonijah, “No! Our lord King David has made Solomon king.

1Kings 1:44 “The king has also sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; and they have made him ride on the king’s mule.

1Kings 1:45 “Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon, and they have come up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise which you have heard.

1Kings 1:46 “Besides, Solomon has even taken his seat on the throne of the kingdom.

1Kings 1:47 “Moreover, the king’s servants came to bless our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make the name of Solomon better than your name and his throne greater than your throne!’ And the king bowed himself on the bed.

1Kings 1:48 “The king has also said thus, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has granted one to sit on my throne today while my own eyes see it.’”

David also acknowledges Solomon is wise. 1Kings 2:9

1Kings 2:9 “Now therefore, do not let him go unpunished, for you are a wise man; and you will know what you ought to do to him, and you will bring his gray hair down to Sheol with blood.”

Eccl. 4:14 How else does Solomon describe this ‘old and foolish king’? (For he has come out of prison to become king,)

David moved from one stronghold to another and from one city to another to escape from Saul. He was in prison to protect himself from Saul. He was not in a royal palace waiting to succeed king Saul.

What else is revealed about this ‘old and foolish king’ ? (even though he was born poor in his kingdom.)

David was the youngest son of Jesse and tended the flocks. This was not a royal family or a wealthy family. 1 Sam. 17:12-15.

1Sam. 17:12 Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men

1Sam. 17:14 David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul,

1Sam. 17:15 but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem.

Eccl. 4:15 What does Solomon say he has witnessed? (I have seen all the living under the sun throng to the side of the second lad who replaces him.) Remember 1Kings 1:39-40.

1Kings 1:39 Zadok the priest then took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!"

1Kings 1:40 All the people went up after him, and the people were playing on flutes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth shook at their noise.

1Kings says 'all the people and Eccl. says 'all the living under the sun throng to the side of who? (the second lad who replaces him)

What 'him' is being replaced? (King David)

Who is the 'second lad' referring to? (Solomon)

Who had declared himself to be king in place of David first? (Adonijah) 1Kings 1:5.

1Kings 1:5 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him.

The second lad to be announced as king is Solomon.

Eccl. 4:16 How does Solomon finish? (There is no end to all the people, to all who were before them,)

Who are the 'them'? (The two kings)

How is it true "all who were before them"? 1Kings 1:45-48.

1Kings 1:45 "Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon, and they have come up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise which you have heard.

1Kings 1:46 “Besides, Solomon has even taken his seat on the throne of the kingdom.

1Kings 1:47 “Moreover, the king’s servants came to bless our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make the name of Solomon better than your name and his throne greater than your throne!’ And the king bowed himself on the bed.

1Kings 1:48 “The king has also said thus, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has granted one to sit on my throne today while my own eyes see it.’”

Eccl 4:16 What does Solomon describe next? (and even the ones who will come later will not be happy with him, for this too is vanity and striving after wind.)

1Kings 2:13-25 Solomon dealing with Adonijah the son of Haggith, tried to undermine Solomon as king. He tried to take one of David’s concubines to try and find a way to seat himself as king of Israel. Pure deception.

1Kings 2:26-27 Abiathar the priest, had supported Adonijah and declaring himself to be king.

1Kings 2:28-34 Joab had also followed Adonijah, plus others wrongs he committed against David

1Kings 2:36-46 Shimei stood against David as king.

These are the ‘ones who will come later and will not be happy with him’ (Solomon).

Solomon was also alone in this way. He did not have confidants from his father king David to help him in his early reign.

All of this intrigue as Solomon secured the throne he now see as ‘vanity and striving after the wind’. It is meaningless in determining the advantage to life here under the sun.

- Again we start with our review of Ecclesiastes:
  - This book is Wisdom literature. The author is Solomon, a man who was given, by God, wisdom and discernment greater than any man.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
  - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an advantage in life.
    - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth and seeking an earthly legacy are meaningless in understanding an advantage in life.
  - There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Our desire should be to do what God wants done in our lives.
  - Wicked men oppress others, have no compassion and are motivated by desires to only take care of self. Men who step outside of Godly counsel can fall to this as well, as witnessed by Solomon of king David and was part of Solomon's testimony as well.
    - Where should man turn for direction?

**Ecc. 5:1 Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil.**

**Ecc. 5:2 Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.**

**Ecc. 5:3 For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words.**

**Ecc. 5:4 When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!**

**Ecc. 5:5 It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.**

**Ecc. 5:6 Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?**

**Ecc. 5:7 For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.**

- v.1 Where does Solomon direct his counsel next? (Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen)
  - Why did one go to the house of God? (To have an audience with God)
    - What do we do now to have an audience with God? (Approach God in prayer)

- What is to be the desire of our hearts when we approach God? (To draw near to listen)
- Listening to God is better than what? (rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools)
  - Why are these men fools? (for they do not know they are doing evil)
  - They are so far away from the counsel of God they are self-deceived and have followed their own creation for worship.
  - They do not come to listen to God. They come to sacrifice something to God.
  - They are ignorant of what pleases God.
  - They do the opposite of what God desires, which is why it is called doing evil.

**1Sam. 15:22** Samuel said,

**“Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices**

**As in obeying the voice of the LORD?**

**Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,**

**And to heed than the fat of rams.**

- Men are to approach God because they desire to hear from God and obey God first.
- Eccl. 5:2 When men speak to God what specific instructions does Solomon give next? (Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God.)
  - What is the perspective Solomon gives in this consideration? (For God is in heaven and you are on the earth)
  - Since God has a heavenly view of our circumstances how are we to approach Him? (therefore let your words be few.)
    - This is repeated for us by Jesus in Matthew 6:7-8 and in Romans 8:24-27.

**Matt. 6:7 “And when you are praying do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.**

**Matt. 6:8 “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

**Rom. 8:24 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?**

**Rom. 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.**

**Rom. 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;**

**Rom. 8:27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.**



- Eccl. 5:3 What is used to describe this concept? (For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words)
  - What is a dream? (Something we hope for or what we want)
  - How is this dream to be accomplished here? (through much effort)
    - What is effort? (Work)
    - Whose dream and whose effort? (Ours)
    - We bring that dream before God, this is the tie in to verse 1 where we come before God to sacrifice instead of to listen to God. What can we do or give to God? We try to convince God this is what we should do how?
  - What is described next? (the voice of a fool)
  - How is the voice of the fool identified? (through many words)
    - The many words are to convince God of what we want Him to do. We negotiate with God.
    - We see this practiced in our own day by those who name what they want in this life now and then use their words to claim it as though God will change His plans. We can not bargain with God.
    - This interpretation is verified in what is spoken of next in verse 4.
- v.4 What specific example of words spoken before God are covered next? (When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it)
  - What you promise to God, fulfill before God.
  - When one only speaks words, what is that to God? (for He takes no delight in fools)
    - Only a fool makes a promise to God and then does not keep it.
    - When you speak to God what should you do? (Pay what you vow!)
  - When do men often make rash vows before God? (When they are in trouble or in need of help or want something from God)
  - When the trouble passes what do men often do? (Forget about the vow they have made)
- v.5 After giving something careful consideration it is best to what? (It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.)
  - Take time and then do not speak if you are not certain. Do not make empty promises. It is only fear and pride that speaks in the moment like this, for how it makes one feel momentarily. They can feel like the hero, or big man or the generous sort etc... In the end this person is actually the coward, or the fool.
  - When this is a character defect, it results in no one trusting the words they hear this person speak.
- v.6 What is the result of this speaking a vow and not paying? (Do not let your speech cause you to sin)
  - What else should the vow maker avoid? (and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake)

- Who is the messenger of God? (Could be angels, or priests, or those who were known to represent God to us) ??
  - Do not renege. Your words must be trustworthy! There are no do-overs.
- What position does God hold to? (Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?)
  - If you do not follow through on vows then He will not protect the works of your hands; they will be destroyed. That one who thinks he will keep for himself instead of giving that which was promised in a vow to God, will lose the very thing he thinks he can hold onto. The fool will have to give it up no matter what.

**Acts 4:32** And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

**Acts 5:1** But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,

**Acts 5:2** and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

**Acts 5:3** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?"

**Acts 5:4** "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

**Acts 5:5** And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.

**Acts 5:6** The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

**Acts 5:7** Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

**Acts 5:8** And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price."

**Acts 5:9** Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well."

**Acts 5:10** And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

**Acts 5:11** And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

- Ananias and Sapphira made a vow that all that belonged to them belonged to the those who gather together as the church. They denied this claim by their actions and the result

was immediate death. A dramatic picture of the principle Solomon is highlighting.

- Eccl. 5:7 What is the reality before God? (For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.)
  - Take time and think through what you speak before others and before God. Do not imagine what you will do for God and then speak those promises to God and then break your promise to God. He is listening! Your words have real consequences.

**Eccl. 5:8 If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them.**

**Eccl. 5:9 After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.**

**Eccl. 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.**

**Eccl. 5:11 When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?**

- v.8 What does Solomon alert us to be watching for? (If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight)
  - Why should seeing this outcome not be surprising? (for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them.)
  - What is this a description of? (layers of bureaucracy)
    - What can happen at any layer in this bureaucracy? (Corruption)
    - What is the result of this corruption? (oppression of the poor, denial of justice and righteousness)
- v.9 What does Solomon say to prove this point? (After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.)
  - Who is at the top of any bureaucracy in their governmental system? (The king)
    - What do we see this king doing? (cultivating the field)
  - When a king cultivates the field what is the result? (it is an advantage to the land)
  - What happens to a field that is cultivated? (It produces)
    - There should be an abundance of provision for all those under the king's care.
- v.10 What does Solomon say can happen when there is abundance? (He who loves money will not be satisfied with money)
  - When there is someone who loves money in this bureaucratic governmental system, what is the result? (will not be satisfied with money,)
  - Who else is described in this system? (nor he who loves abundance with its income)
    - Those who store away the extra production or love the abundance with all it provides, these men will not be satisfied. There is never enough.
  - For both of these, what is true? (This too is vanity)

- Vanity meaning it is meaningless to change the world. It does not give meaning to life on this earth.
- v.11 Why is the extra provision vanity? (When good things increase, those who consume them increase.)
  - When there is abundance and wealth what happens to those who are around that abundance and wealth? (They absorb it all in proportion)
  - There are those at some level in the bureaucratic system who will absorb what is produced so that it does not actually reach the lower levels of the system.
    - This is why the poor will not see justice.
    - Stories of governmental budgets are filled with this truth.
  - What rhetorical question does Solomon purpose for the people with the good intentions at the top? (So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?)
  - Why does no manmade governmental system actually ever bring about true equality to all? (We are corrupt men)

**Ecccl. 5:12 The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.**

**Ecccl. 5:13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt.**

**Ecccl. 5:14 When those riches were lost through a bad investment and he had fathered a son, then there was nothing to support him.**

**Ecccl. 5:15 As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came. He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand.**

**Ecccl. 5:16 This also is a grievous evil — exactly as a man is born, thus will he die. So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?**

**Ecccl. 5:17 Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger.**

- v.12 What can be true for a working man? (The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much)
  - This is a reference to a laboring man. One who takes care of his own business and own family. This man can sleep at ease when he sleeps no matter how much he has or does not have.
  - What contrast does Solomon put forth? (but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep.)
    - Why would the full stomach affect his sleep? (Too much food)
    - Overindulgence.
- v.13 Solomon goes on to explain this how? (There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun: riches being hoarded by their owner to his hurt.)

- Solomon says there is an evil, that he has witnessed that occurs here on earth.
  - What is that evil? (riches being hoarded by their owner)
  - What is the result that is evil? (The owner is hurt by the hoarding)
  - Just like the man with the stomach so full he could not sleep.
- v.14 What happened to the hoarded riches? (When those riches were lost through a bad investment )
  - What other detail does Solomon point out? (and he had fathered a son)
  - The father made a bad investment and then loses everything. What happens? (then there was nothing to support him)
    - Who is the 'him'? (The man who made the bad investment)
- v.15 What else is true for this man? (As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came)
  - What is used for emphasis? (He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand.)
  - He will not take any thing with him. This includes the fruit of his loins, his son. You can't take people with you just like you can't take things.
- v.16 How does Solomon describe this? (This also is a grievous evil )
  - What is the grievous evil? (exactly as a man is born, thus will he die)
  - What measurement does Solomon apply again? (So what is the advantage to him who toils for the wind?)
    - The first grievous evil is that man would hoard to his own detriment.
    - The second grievous evil was that man will leave this life with nothing....under the sun.
- v.17 Before this man dies with nothing how does he live his life? (Throughout his life he also eats in darkness with great vexation, sickness and anger.)
  - One who eats in darkness is one without any light or salvation.
  - This one without hope lives in great vexation or fear.
  - This can often cause sickness in the body and the mind to be filled with anger.
    - Haunted by the fear of death.
    - Lack of contentment in both grievous evils leads to a sad existence and a sad end.

**Eccl. 5:18** Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.

**Eccl. 5:19** Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.

**Eccl. 5:20 For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.**

- v.18 What is finally the conclusion of Solomon to what brings an advantage to life? (Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting)
  - What does it mean when Solomon says 'I have seen'? (He is an eye witness to)
  - How does Solomon describe what he was a witness of? (to be good and fitting)
    - This is as opposed to vanity.
  - What is good and fitting? (to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils)
  - Where does this happen? (under the sun)
  - When? (during the few years of his life which God has given him)
  - What is this considered by Solomon? (for this is his reward)
    - The emphasis is on that which is given by God.
    - God determines the years given in life to the man.
    - God provides all that is needed to eat and to drink
    - In this acceptance, man can enjoy himself in all his labor which he toils.
- v.19 What declaration does Solomon make? (Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor)
  - For every man to whom God did what? (whom God has given riches and wealth)
  - When a man had been granted riches and wealth what else has God given that man? (He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor)
  - What is this to be seen as? (this is the gift of God.)
    - When this result is seen then one would know this can only occur as a gift from God.
- v.20 What else is a gift from God? (For he will not often consider the years of his life)
  - What does it mean when one 'considers' the years of his life? (Focuses on the brevity of life)
    - He will not be worried about how many years have passed or how many years might be left. This man is not overly focused on the past or the future but content in the present.
  - Why is this true? (because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.)
    - God blesses this man with the things that are described as the gladness of his heart. A man that is focused on the joys of today. A description of a heart steeped in contentment in the here and now.
- Do you know God in this way? Do you focus on where God has you now? A believer has the best gift God has to offer in the Grace and Mercy God has already poured out for the

believer.

- Let's review Ecclesiastes:
  - This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
    - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an advantage in life.
    - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth and seeking an earthly legacy are meaningless in understanding an advantage in life.
    - There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
  - God has allowed wicked men to oppress others, do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
  - Approach God in reverence seeking only to know His Will in every situation. Keep your word before men and God. Do not be focused on what can be accumulated or achieved in this life on this earth it is not what counts in the end, it is not where the advantage to life is found. Be satisfied in what God provides. In that is true contentment.

**Eccl. 6:1** There is an evil which I have seen under the sun and it is prevalent among men —

**Eccl. 6:2** a man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires; yet God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them. This is vanity and a severe affliction.

**Eccl. 6:3** If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, however many they be, but his soul is not satisfied with good things and he does not even have a proper burial, then I say, "Better the miscarriage than he,

**Eccl. 6:4** for it comes in futility and goes into obscurity; and its name is covered in obscurity.

**Eccl. 6:5** "It never sees the sun and it never knows anything; it is better off than he.

**Eccl. 6:6** "Even if the other man lives a thousand years twice and does not enjoy good things — do not all go to one place?"

- v.1 What does Solomon begin with now? (There is an evil which I have seen under the sun and it is prevalent among men)
  - Solomon describes this as evil.
  - What does 'which I have seen' mean? (This is something Solomon has been an eye witness to.)



- What does 'under the sun' mean? (Happens here on earth)
- What does 'prevalent among men' mean? (Happens commonly)
- v.2 How does this evil begin? (a man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires)
  - Where did the provision come from? (God has given)
  - What did God give? (riches and wealth and honor)
  - Where else do we see these three things listed together in the scriptures?

**2Chr. 1:9** “Now, O LORD God, Your promise to my father David is fulfilled, for You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.

**2Chr. 1:10** “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?”

**2Chr. 1:11** God said to Solomon, “Because you had this in mind, and did not ask for riches, wealth or honor, or the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may rule My people over whom I have made you king,

**2Chr. 1:12** wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed nor those who will come after you.”

- This is the only other scripture reference where these three specific items are listed together and in the same order.
  - What is the difference between riches and wealth?
    - Riches defined – abundant and valuable possessions.
    - Wealth defined – anything that has utility and is capable of being appropriated or exchanged.
    - Honor – high respect, as for worth, merit, or rank.
  - Solomon is described as a man with riches and wealth detailed in 2 Chronicles.

**2Chr. 1:14** Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.

**2Chr. 1:15** The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamores in the lowland.

**2Chr. 1:16** Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue; the king's traders procured them from Kue for a price.

**2Chr. 1:17** They imported chariots from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver apiece and horses for 150 apiece, and by the same means they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

- Solomon is not short of the resources seen as riches and he can use those in exchange for objects to be used as great wealth.
- Eccl. 6:2 How did this verse continue? (so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires)
  - With all the wealth and riches at his disposal what does Solomon also say is true? (yet God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them. This is vanity and a severe affliction.)
  - What could it mean 'God has not empowered him to eat from them'?
  - What does empowered mean? (to enable or permit)
  - Who does eat from them? (for a foreigner enjoys them)
    - Is there a time during Solomon's reign when with all his money and wisdom and honor he could not do something without the significant aid of a foreigner?

**2Chr. 2:1** Now Solomon decided to build a house for the name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself.

**2Chr. 2:2** So Solomon assigned 70,000 men to carry loads and 80,000 men to quarry stone in the mountains and 3,600 to supervise them.

**2Chr. 2:3** Then Solomon sent word to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, "As you dealt with David my father and sent him cedars to build him a house to dwell in, so do for me.

**2Chr. 2:4** "Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, dedicating it to Him, to burn fragrant incense before Him and to set out the showbread continually, and to offer burnt offerings morning and evening, on sabbaths and on new moons and on the appointed feasts of the LORD our God, this being required forever in Israel.

**2Chr. 2:5** "The house which I am about to build will be great, for greater is our God than all the gods.

**2Chr. 2:6** "But who is able to build a house for Him, for the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain Him? So who am I, that I should build a house for Him, except to burn incense before Him?

**2Chr. 2:7** "Now send me a skilled man to work in gold, silver, brass and iron, and in purple, crimson and violet fabrics, and who knows how to make engravings, to work with the skilled men whom I have in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided.

**2Chr. 2:8** "Send me also cedar, cypress and algum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut timber of Lebanon; and indeed my servants will work with your servants,

**2Chr. 2:9** to prepare timber in abundance for me, for the house which I am about to build will be great and wonderful.

**2Chr. 2:10** "Now behold, I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut the timber, 20,000 kors of crushed wheat and 20,000 kors of barley, and 20,000 baths of wine and 20,000 baths of oil."

**2Chr. 2:11** Then Hiram, king of Tyre, answered in a letter sent to Solomon: “Because the LORD loves His people, He has made you king over them.”

**2Chr. 2:12** Then Hiram continued, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a house for the LORD and a royal palace for himself.

**2Chr. 2:13** “Now I am sending Hiram-abi, a skilled man, endowed with understanding,

**2Chr. 2:14** the son of a Danite woman and a Tyrian father, who knows how to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood, and in purple, violet, linen and crimson fabrics, and who knows how to make all kinds of engravings and to execute any design which may be assigned to him, to work with your skilled men and with those of my lord David your father.

**2Chr. 2:15** “Now then, let my lord send to his servants wheat and barley, oil and wine, of which he has spoken.

**2Chr. 2:16** “We will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon and bring it to you on rafts by sea to Joppa, so that you may carry it up to Jerusalem.”

**2Chr. 2:17** Solomon numbered all the aliens who were in the land of Israel, following the census which his father David had taken; and 153,600 were found.

**2Chr. 2:18** He appointed 70,000 of them to carry loads and 80,000 to quarry stones in the mountains and 3,600 supervisors to make the people work.

- The first foreigner mentioned here is Hiram the king of Tyre.
- Next we see who will be sent to Solomon. “Now I am sending Hiram-abi, a skilled man, endowed with understanding.”
  - Who is Hiram-abi’s mother? (A Danite woman) 1 Kings 7:13-14.

**1Kings 7:13** Now King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre.

**1Kings 7:14** He was a widow’s son from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill for doing any work in bronze. So he came to King Solomon and performed all his work.

- It would appear Hiram’s mother is from the tribe of Naphtali but had been living in the tribe of Dan’s region. The point is that she was a Jew and therefore so was Hiram.
  - Who else does the King of Tyre send to Solomon? “I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut the timber”
  - How many foreigners come to Israel? (The number of aliens in Israel numbered 153,600.)
  - These are the foreigners Solomon brings to Israel. This is clearly defined in 2 Chronicles 2:17 the detail that Solomon numbered these after the census his father David had been taken.

- Could this be what Solomon is referring to when he writes ‘yet God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them?’
- What conclusion does Solomon give in Eccl. 6:2? (This is vanity and a severe affliction.)
- This is a direct contrast to a verse we studied last week.

**Eccl. 5:19 Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.**

- God gives riches and wealth to both. The outcome is the difference.
  - One is, ‘He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor.’
    - The contrast is, ‘God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them.’
  - One is ‘the gift of God.’
    - The other is ‘vanity and a severe affliction.’
  - Could it be that Solomon had experienced both of these and knows the difference? Just like in Ecclesiastes 2:26.
- Eccl. 6:3 Where does Solomon move next? (If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, however many they be, but his soul is not satisfied with good things and he does not even have a proper burial, then I say, “Better the miscarriage than he.”)
  - What two things are listed as things seen as a benefit by many men? (fathering children and living a long life)
    - Let’s be clear here. The term used is ‘fathering children’ — many offspring.
    - This does not equate to being a father to a hundred children.
    - Children were often seen then, and in many cultures today, as a form of wealth. They work for the family. They are part of a team that works together for their family unit. They are often the people who will take care of the parents as they age. They can therefore be a form of retirement for the parents.
  - The second thing listed was one who ‘lives many years’. This is seen as a natural desire for all mankind. There is a qualifier to ‘lives many years.’ What is it? (however many they be)
    - This is a relative qualifier since what may be many for one is not many for another. There is not a qualitative number that captures what many years is.
- In-spite of many children and many years to live, what is missing? (but his soul is not satisfied with good things and he does not even have a proper burial)
  - This man will not experience contentment and in death will not have a ‘proper burial’.
    - What is a proper burial versus non-proper burial? Let's look at Kings.

**1Kings 14:11** “Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken it.”

**1Kings 14:12** “Now you, arise, go to your house. When your feet enter the city the child will die.”

**1Kings 14:13** “All Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he alone of Jeroboam’s family will come to the grave, because in him something good was found toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.”

**2Kings 9:8** ‘For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab every male person both bond and free in Israel.’

**2Kings 9:9** ‘I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah.’

**2Kings 9:10** ‘The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury her.’ Then he opened the door and fled.’

- These verses simply demonstrate that a burial was provided for someone when something good was found toward God and those without this were denied a burial.
  - In context in Ecclesiastes then this person was not content in life and did not receive the end-of-life fulfillment of a proper burial—not content in life or in death.
- Eccl. 6:3 How does this verse end? (then I say, “Better the miscarriage than he”)
  - A miscarriage is a life conceived yet not born. Solomon says this life conceived yet not born is better than the person born who father’s many children, lives many years, yet is not content in his labor, and dies without regard.
  - v.4 Why is this true? (for it comes in futility and goes into obscurity; and its name is covered in obscurity)
    - What is Obscurity? (Dictionary.dotcom defines it as the condition of being unknown)
    - The miscarriage moves on to an unknown ending to men and its name will be unknown by men as well.
  - v.5 What else is true for the miscarriage? (“It never sees the sun and it never knows anything; it is better off than he.”)
    - The miscarriage does not experience any of what life on earth can provide yet it is better off than the man described by Solomon.
  - v.6 Solomon says this is true even if what? (“Even if the other man lives a thousand years twice and does not enjoy good things — do not all go to one place?”)
    - For the sake of exaggeration, Solomon says even if the living man lives two thousand years and has the same fate of not enjoying the good things, the miscarriage still is better.
    - Why is this true? (do not all go to one place?)
    - Where did Solomon say all would go before?

**Eccl. 3:20 All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.**

- This verse is talking about the physical fate — not the spiritual fate of men, miscarriage, or those who live and experience death.
  - This is not about where the souls of men go.
  - This is not about burial versus other forms of disposing or remains.

**Eccl. 6:7 All a man's labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied.**

**Eccl. 6:8 For what advantage does the wise man have over the fool? What advantage does the poor man have, knowing how to walk before the living?**

**Eccl. 6:9 What the eyes see is better than what the soul desires. This too is futility and a striving after wind.**

**Eccl. 6:10 Whatever exists has already been named, and it is known what man is; for he cannot dispute with him who is stronger than he is.**

**Eccl. 6:11 For there are many words which increase futility. What then is the advantage to a man?**

**Eccl. 6:12 For who knows what is good for a man during his lifetime, during the few years of his futile life? He will spend them like a shadow. For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?**

- v.7 Solomon moved back to talking about the life of the sad man how? (All a man's labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied.)
  - The focus of men's labor to satisfy himself physically is never met.
- v.8 Knowing this truth what question does Solomon ponder? (For what advantage does the wise man have over the fool?)
  - In this state of living an unsatisfied life what benefit does the wise have over the fool? (none)
    - Wisdom is of no benefit.
- v.8 What rhetorical question does Solomon pose next? (What advantage does the poor man have, knowing how to walk before the living?)
  - Does a poor man live a better life than the wealthy because he is poor during their lives? (No)
- v.9 For the poor man and the wealthy man what leads them? (What the eyes see is better than what the soul desires. This too is futility and a striving after wind.)
  - Both men seek after what they can perceive here on the earth with their eyes. They are led by their temporal decisions. The physical wins over the spiritual. The eyes are never satisfied and so there is never contentment.
  - When this happens Solomon says this is futility and striving after wind.
- v.10 What is true about the created world? (Whatever exists has already been named)

- What does it mean when someone has the right to name something?

**Gen. 1:5** God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

**Gen. 1:8** God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

**Gen. 1:10** God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.

**Gen. 2:19** Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

**Gen. 2:20** The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.

- God created and therefore God has the right to name everything in His creation.
  - God allows man to name what God created.
- Eccl. 6:10 What has God said about man? (and it is known what man is)
  - Why can't man argue with God? (for he cannot dispute with him who is stronger than he is)
  - The one who names is the stronger one.

**Is. 40:21** Do you not know? Have you not heard?

Has it not been declared to you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

**Is. 40:22** It is He who sits above the circle of the earth,

And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers,

Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain

And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

**Is. 40:23** He it is who reduces rulers to nothing,

Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.

**Is. 40:24** Scarcely have they been planted,

Scarcely have they been sown,

Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth,

But He merely blows on them, and they wither,

And the storm carries them away like stubble.

**Is. 40:25** "To whom then will you liken Me

**That I would be his equal?” says the Holy One.**

**Is. 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high**

**And see who has created these stars,**

**The One who leads forth their host by number,**

**He calls them all by name;**

**Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power,**

**Not one of them is missing.**

- Man is not equal to God. To demonstrate His great authority, God says to look up to the heavens. God says I created these stars and I have the right to name the stars.

**Is. 43:1 But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob,**

**And He who formed you, O Israel,**

**“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;**

**I have called you by name; you are Mine!**

- God identifies that He is the Creator of Jacob. As the Creator, God has the right to name, and He does.
  - John 10:3 “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
  - Jesus says He call us by name. Jesus is the creator and yet He calls us by name. What a humbling recognition of who God is and who God is to us!
- Eccl 6:11 When men speak many words what is true? (For there are many words which increase futility.)
  - When man speak many words, what is the rhetorical question? (What then is the advantage to a man?)
    - Man’s words do not create anything.
    - Man’s words increase futility.
  - What is futility? (emptiness or uselessness)
    - Men can speak many words, but that only increases their emptiness or uselessness.
    - Man can disagree or agree with God all he wants, but it does not change the outcome and therefore is not an advantage to man.
- v.12 What is the first question man can’t answer? (For who knows what is good for a man during his lifetime, during the few years of his futile life?)
  - God says what is true how? (He will spend them like a shadow.)
  - What is ‘them’ referring to? (The years)
    - The years will be used up like what? (a shadow)
  - What is a shadow? (A shadow is a reflection that does not make an impact.



- It is not the real substance of anything.
- It is only what an eye sees for an instance then it is gone.
- What is the ultimate question for men? (For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?)
  - The clarifier is 'under the sun'. What did under the sun mean? (Here on earth)
  - Man cannot know what comes after him here on earth or what impact his life will have on things or people after he leaves.
- The point is, not to spend our lives as if this world is our focus. Believers are to spend our minutes, days, and years in pursuit of following a sovereign God working through us for His sovereign purposes.

- Time for our review of Ecclesiastes:
  - This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
    - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an *advantage in life*.
  - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth and seeking an earthly legacy are meaningless in understanding an *advantage in life*.
    - There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
  - God has allowed wicked men to oppress others. Do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
  - Approach God in reverence seeking only to know His will in every situation. Be satisfied in what God provides. In that is true contentment.
- Chapter 6 highlight. Solomon understood all things come from the hand of God because God is sovereign over His creation. Man was not created to change the mind of God, and his efforts are futile when he tries. Man is created to understand all things are from God and to be content in every situation God has ordained all the days of his life.

**Ecc. 7:1 A good name is better than a good ointment, And the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth**

**Ecc. 7:2 It is better to go to a house of mourning Than to go to a house of feasting, Because that is the end of every man, And the living takes it to heart.**

**Ecc. 7:3 Sorrow is better than laughter, For when a face is sad a heart may be happy.**

**Ecc. 7:4 The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, While the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.**

**Ecc. 7:5 It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man Than for one to listen to the song of fools.**

**Ecc. 7:6 For as the crackling of thorn bushes under a pot, So is the laughter of the fool; And this too is futility.**

- v.1 How does Solomon continue to demonstrate the reality of how man is to respond when he is aware of God's sovereignty? (A good name is better than a good ointment)
  - What is meant by 'a good name'?
    - A name represented by a good reputation.
  - How is a reputation established? (Over a long period of time)

- We might say a man or a business has a good reputation—what one is known for.
- What is meant by ‘a good ointment’?
  - Other places in scriptures this word is used?

**Dan. 10:3 I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed.**

**John 11:2 It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.**

- This would best be described as a perfumed oil. It soothes the skin and covers adverse odors. It was a luxury item. It is used topically and its affects were temporary.
  - A man’s reputation, or his good name, is based on who he is. It is what a man will be remembered as. That is considered far more valuable than an expensive yet surface and temporary scent.
- v.1 How does this verse end? (And the day of one’s death is better than the day of one’s birth)
  - How does the day of one’s death parallel with the previous part of the verse? (A good name)
  - When ultimately is a man’s good name established? (After he is gone)
    - When the story is completed, then the judgement can be made, whether he had a good reputation or not. Many men stumble before the end and that can affect their reputation.
    - A man who has a good reputation is better off at the end of his journey where he can’t ruin this reputation than a man at his birth who has his whole life ahead of him to create a bad reputation.
  - Do you see why it is important to see the correlation between the beginning of the verse and the end of the verse as well as to follow the context of the writer?
- v.2 What two extremes does Solomon compare next? (It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting)
  - What is a house of mourning? (The house of mourning is where living people go to lament or grieve when someone has died.)
    - We now often say we are having a celebration of life for that person.
  - What is a house of feasting? (A house of feasting is a place to celebrate an event.)
- v.2 Why is the house of mourning better? (Because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart.)
  - What happens at a house of mourning when it is the end of a man? (That man is remembered by those who are left behind, his reputation is what he is remembered by.)

- Those who are left behind are referred to as what? (the living)
  - What do those left behind do? (take it to heart)
  - What is the 'it' referring to? (the end)
- The end of a person's life can have a profound effect on those who are left behind. It can impress on us to want to be like that person in our lives or it can warn us to not be like that person in our lives. Either way we take it to heart.
- v.3 When one takes these things to heart, what can be true? (Sorrow is better than laughter, for when a face is sad a heart may be happy.)
  - When someone dies why are those left behind sorrowful? (We want them back)
  - When someone dies and there is only laughter why would this be true? (Those left behind will be better off)
    - We find the true definition to this sorrow in the second half of the verse which says what? (For when a face is sad a heart may be happy)
    - When the person who is gone was a person with a good reputation, spirituality speaking, one who is a believer, we are still sad in our temporal circumstances but in eternal measurement we can be happy in our hearts.
  - There is no other time I can think of where a sad face appears when the heart is happy. That is not a common experience. This also stays with the context of the preceding verses.
- v.4 How does this theme continue? (The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.)
  - A wise man will embrace death where? (in the house of the mourning)
  - What will a fool embrace? (in the house of pleasure)
    - The fool will escape to a place of pleasure instead of embracing the mourning. The fool tries to run away from the death in every way.
- v.5 What will the wise man in the house of mourning find? (It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man.)
  - Those who speak of death will embrace the good things and the bad things demonstrated in the life of the one who has died.
  - A wise man will find the rebuke of wise counsel in the house of mourning. In contrast to wise men finding counsel from wise men, the fool sought after the house of pleasure and found what? (Than for one to listen to the song of fools.)
  - A wise man will seek counsel in the tough times while the fool continues to drown out counsel and only run away to escape with pleasures or even with soothing songs to feel better temporarily. The sting of the reminder that death awaits us all should be sobering and cause men to reflect on their short lives.

**Psa. 90:10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,  
Or if due to strength, eighty years,  
Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow;  
For soon it is gone and we fly away.**

**Psa. 90:11 Who understands the power of Your anger  
And Your fury, according to the fear that is due You?**

**Psa. 90:12 So teach us to number our days,  
That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.**

- Eccl. 7:6 What picture does Solomon give us to make his point? (For as the crackling of thorn bushes under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool; and this too is futility.)
  - What is the picture of the crackling of thorn bushes? (The crackling of the bushes being on fire)
    - Why do you put fire under a pot? (To heat the contents)
    - What type of wood actually heats a pot? (Chunks of real wood)
  - The thorn bushes are only crackling to look like a fire but do not produce the actual heat to cook anything.
  - In the same way of only looking like something real what does Solomon conclude with? (So is the laughter of the fool.)
    - The laughter of the fool is a disguise of what is real.
    - The laughter makes it look like the fool is happy but he is not.
    - This disguise for the fool is what? (Futility)

**Eccl. 7:7 For oppression makes a wise man mad, And a bribe corrupts the heart.**

**Eccl. 7:8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning; Patience of spirit is better than haughtiness of spirit.**

**Eccl. 7:9 Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, For anger resides in the bosom of fools.**

**Eccl. 7:10 Do not say, “Why is it that the former days were better than these?” For it is not from wisdom that you ask about this.**

**Eccl. 7:11 Wisdom along with an inheritance is good And an advantage to those who see the sun.**

**Eccl. 7:12 For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.**

- v.7 What does Solomon say next in regards to men’s hearts being tested? (For oppression makes a wise man mad)
  - What can cause a wise man to turn away from his madness at oppression? (And a bribe corrupts the heart.)
    - A wise man can fall into this trap of looking the other way and ignoring the oppression.
- v.8 How is the difference finally proven out? (The end of a matter is better than its beginning)
  - What end of the matter is presented first? (Patience of spirit is better)

- The matter of what? (Dealing with oppression)
  - Patience in dealing with this matter of oppression is better than what? (haughtiness of spirit.)
- What is haughtiness? (unsympathetically proud or egotistically arrogant)
- Who is to be shown the patience of spirit? (The oppressor)
  - The patience is to be given to the oppressor, not the oppressed.
- v.9 What does Solomon warn against? (Do not be eager in your heart to be angry)
  - What is this anger a display of? (For anger resides in the bosom of fools.)
- As a recap, man is to be mad when he sees oppression and he is not to be bought out with bribery. He is to be patient with the oppression/oppressor and not haughty, he is also to not allow his anger to overtake him in dealing with the oppression/oppressor.
- v.10 What else does Solomon warn again? (Do not say, “Why is it that the former days were better than these?”)
  - What is meant by ‘the former days’? (Days of the past)
  - What is meant by ‘these’? (The current days)
    - Solomon says man should not look back on the past as being better than what God is providing in the present — wishing for the good ole days.
  - What is lacking when men do this? (For it is not from wisdom that you ask about this.)
    - A man of wisdom does not keep focused on the past. He embraces what God puts before him today.
- v.11 What is good? (Wisdom along with an inheritance is good)
  - What specific wisdom was just defined by Solomon? (Staying focused on the present life)
  - What is an inheritance? (Dictionary.dotcom defines it as a quality, characteristic, or other immaterial possession, received from progenitors or predecessors as if by succession)
    - So, that which a man has now, passed on to him from those who went before him, is an inheritance. This is not limited to financial possessions.
  - For a man to stay focused on what he has in his present circumstances and remember what he has been afforded from the past has what? (And an advantage to those who see the sun.)
  - Those who see the sun are who? (The living)
    - There is wisdom for the living in keeping this focus on daily life.
- v.12 What does Solomon say about this type of wisdom? (For wisdom is protection just as money is protection)
  - First, how is money a protection to the man that has it? (He can use money to buy what he might need now. It keeps him from being in want now for physical needs.)
    - Solomon says wisdom provides for the man in the same manner to the man

who has it now and sees it providing his life focus in the present.

- Solomon says what about looking for an advantage in life? (But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.)
  - For the life of the man who understands this wisdom is preserved.
- What does preserved mean? (make lasting)

**Eccl. 7:13 Consider the work of God, For who is able to straighten what He has bent?**

**Eccl. 7:14 In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider — God has made the one as well as the other So that man will not discover anything that will be after him.**

- v.13 Where does Solomon lead us next? (Consider the work of God)
  - In this quest for wisdom and knowledge Solomon says we are to look at the work of God for our answers.
  - What does Solomon ask us to consider first? (For who is able to straighten what He has bent?)
  - Who is the 'He' who has bent? (God)
    - God has designed something to go a certain way described as bent.
  - What is Solomon's rhetorical question? (For who is able to straighten what He has bent?)
    - If someone does not like the way God designed or bent something and wants it to be another way, described as straightened, Solomon asks, 'Who is able to do this?'
    - The answer is, there is no one who can change this design of God.
- v.14 Since no one can change what God has planned, how are we to respond? (In the day of prosperity be happy)
  - What else are we to do? (But in the day of adversity consider — God has made the one as well as the other.)
  - What is a day of adversity? (When things don't seem to be going well or we are oppressed)
    - In good times and in bad, what are we to remember about God? (God has made the one as well as the other.)
    - Solomon clearly says God made the day of prosperity and the day of adversity. They both come from God.

**Amos 3:6 If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble?**

**If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?**

**Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing**

**Unless He reveals His secret counsel  
To His servants the prophets.**

- God reveals to prophets in advance of a calamity to demonstrate to the people that the calamity is from Him.

**Is. 45:5** “I am the LORD, and there is no other;

**Besides Me there is no God.**

**I will gird you, though you have not known Me;**

**Is. 45:6** That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun

**That there is no one besides Me.**

**I am the LORD, and there is no other,**

**Is. 45:7** The One forming light and creating darkness,

**Causing well-being and creating calamity;**

**I am the LORD who does all these.**

- The LORD says He creates darkness and creates calamity. He does all! He is not a bystander. He says He creates all.
- Eccl. 7:14 Why does God bring both prosperity and adversity? (So that man will not discover anything that will be after him.)
  - God does not give away what His plans are for the future of a man by doing both of these things in all men's lives. It is God's intention to confuse men by doing the unexpected.
  - When there is suffering in our present life, we do not know what that means in regards to our future.

**Rom. 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

- God uses all things for His purposes.

**Rom. 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

- Man can't know his destiny after this life by what God did for him in the temporal life. It is not like only good things happen to men in this life who God has planned to bring to salvation after this life or only brings bad things to men in this life who He is going to bring to salvation. The reverse is true as well.
- The conclusion then is we can't tell what God's plan is for the future, and therefore, we must embrace all God brings us through knowing that He has an unchanging plan.



- We begin again with a summary of Ecclesiastes so far:
  - This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man that God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
    - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an *advantage in life*.
  - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth and seeking an earthly legacy are meaningless in understanding an *advantage in life*.
  - There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
    - God has allowed wicked men to oppress others. Do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
    - Approach God in reverence seeking only to know His will in every situation. Be satisfied in what God provides. In that is true contentment.
  - All things come from the hand of God because God is sovereign over His creation. Man was not created to change the mind of God. Because all things are from God, man is to be content in every situation.
- Chapter 7: What we live for matters. When confronted with pain in life we must embrace it for what it can do in our lives. This is wisdom. Ultimately, everything is from the hand of God. What we endure during this life is not a reward or a punishment indicating our stance before God in eternity, for this is not how God's will is revealed to man.
  - This was Solomon's ultimate frustration as we see in the remainder of Chapter 7.

**Ecc. 7:15** I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

**Ecc. 7:16** Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself?

**Ecc. 7:17** Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time?

**Ecc. 7:18** It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.

- v.15 How does Solomon continue? (I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility)
  - When Solomon says "I have seen" what does this mean? (He is a witness)
    - When did he witness things? (during my lifetime)
  - How does Solomon describe his lifetime? (of futility)

- What 'everything' is Solomon referring to? (What he just revealed in verse 14)
- What was Solomon revealing in verses 13 and 14?
  - God has made both the day of prosperity as well as the day of adversity.
  - What was God's purpose? (Eccl. 7: 14 So that man will not discover anything that will be after him.)
- What happens to a man in this life is not a predictor of what God has prepared for him in eternity.
  - In verse 15 Solomon says he has seen everything.
    - What specific example does Solomon begin to describe? (there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness)
      - The first man described by Solomon is a righteous man.
    - What is a righteous man? (Morally pure or upright by man's standards)
  - What happens to this righteous man? (Perishes in his righteousness)
    - The better way to understand this phrase is that the righteous man perishes because of his righteousness.
    - The righteous man is not protected from perishing because he is righteousness. In worldly views, this would be the guy in the white hat always wins. This is not true, and we see this all the time in our own experiences. Solomon witnessed this during his lifetime.
- v.15 How does this verse end? (and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness)
  - Who is a wicked man? (Those who are morally bankrupt even by man's standards)
  - What does the wicked man do? (who prolongs his life in his wickedness)
    - What does prolong mean? (To draw out like a line into the future)
    - This man with a longer life lives how? (in his wickedness)
  - This a something that is true in our own experiences as well. There are many wicked people who continue to live in their wickedness with what appears to be no restraint. No Godly restraint.
    - I call these lightning bolt moments. Where is the retribution from God? Where is the retribution from righteous men?
    - We do not see swift judgment. We often don't seem to see judgment at all, on earth, during someone's lifetime.
- v.16 Because what one does in appearance does not change what God has planned for our eternal destination, what counsel does Solomon give? (Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself?)
  - What does righteousness look like from God's standard? (Perfection)
  - Can any man be righteous from what he does to God's standard? (No)
    - This is not talking about righteousness from God's standard.
  - What does excessive righteousness look like from man's standards?

- First man establishes what he thinks is righteous.
  - Then man tries to do what he has determined to be righteous.
  - Man in this way creates a checklist for himself.
- When man keeps his checklist he sees himself as righteous. We call this self-righteousness.
  - What do we call this when men live this kind of life? (Legalism)
    - What else does Solomon advise to avoid? (and do not be overly wise)
    - What does one who is overly wise refer to? (wise in one's own estimation)
    - Could this refer to someone who thinks they are wise enough to figure out what pleases God in some external way? What checklist they must keep? If they keep their checklist, then will God certainly reward them in particular ways?
  - Does one bargain with God?
    - If I do this or think that then God will certainly do this or that.
- v.16 What does Solomon say the result of this type of thinking and behavior is? (Why should you ruin yourself?)
  - What does it mean for one to ruin themselves? (To destroy oneself)
  - To not achieve the very thing one thought they were doing or building.
    - Only God can determine righteousness.
    - God does not reward men for their self-determined righteousness. When one defines their own righteousness, they are not looking for true righteousness from God. In this way they destroy themselves.
- v.17 What else does Solomon warn against doing? (Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool.)
  - What is it to be excessively wicked? (To do things one knows are against God's standard for morality)
    - This again requires that one has a checklist of things they would see as wicked and to do those things.
  - What else is one to avoid? (do not be a fool)
    - What is a fool? According to the Psalms...

### **Psa. 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."**

- Solomon says a person should not be a fool or say in his heart, "There is no God." When one says, "There is no god," he will be excessively wicked.
- v.17 What should be on the mind of someone who says, "There is no God," and is excessively wicked? (Why should you die before your time?)
  - What does it imply, that one could die before their time? (That there is a time for one to die)

- Who determines when our time to die is? (God)
  - Solomon already dealt with this in Ecclesiastes 3.

**Eccl. 3:1 There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven —**

**Eccl. 3:2 A time to give birth and a time to die;**

- God has determined the day of our life and death.
  - We do not change God's mind about this day.
- From what perspective has Solomon been speaking of in terms of determining righteousness and wickedness? (Human)
  - Why would a man incite God to destroy him before his time?
  - What perspective then is he describing when he says, "Why should you die before your time?" (Human perspective)
- v.18 What is Solomon's advice? (It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other)
  - Solomon says he has presented two things to be grasped. What are they? Man determined self-righteousness leads to ruin.
  - Man finding his way or his own path to God does not exist.
    - There are some men who then declare, "If I can't get to God my way then I will deny there is a God."
    - Men must remember not to practice *either* of these in their lives. Because both of these are truths, they are not either/or, they are both true at the same time.
- v.18 What is also true? (for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.)
  - Who is the one who fears God? (A believer)
    - A believer then comes forth with both of them.
  - Both of what? (Not a standard of self-righteousness or a denial of God)
    - Who does the believer turn to in determining the proper standards of righteousness and who ultimately determines how those standards will be met? (God)
    - We have a better understanding from Romans 4:1-8. There are sections here quoted from the Old Testament.

**Rom. 4:1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?**

**Rom. 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

**Rom. 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Gen. 15:6)**

**Rom. 4:4** Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

**Rom. 4:5** But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

**Rom. 4:6** just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

**Rom. 4:7** “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

**Rom. 4:8** “BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT.” ([Psalm 32:1-2](#))

- Back in Ecclesiastes we read

**Ecccl. 7:19** Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.

**Ecccl. 7:20** Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

**Ecccl. 7:21** Also, do not take seriously all words which are spoken, so that you will not hear your servant cursing you.

**Ecccl. 7:22** For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others.

**Ecccl. 7:23** I tested all this with wisdom, and I said, “I will be wise,” but it was far from me.

- v 19 When a man turns to God to understand righteousness, what happens? (Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.)
  - This specific wisdom of turning to God for righteousness strengthens a wise man.
  - What is this wisdom compared to? (ten rulers who are in a city)
- The number 10 in the scriptures points to a witness or a testimony about something.
  - In Esther we have the 10 sons of Haman hanged to demonstrate the destruction of the enemies of God’s people.
  - The 10 commandments stand as a witness to man’s inability to meet God’s standards of righteousness. They were just a symbol of righteousness, but that was enough to demonstrate man’s need for God.
    - The book of Ruth demonstrates the practice within cities to have 10 men present when conducting legally substantiated business.

**Ruth 4:1** Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, “Turn aside, friend, sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down.

**Ruth 4:2** He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So

**they sat down.**

- When there are ten men as elders in a city there is a protection over this city from corruption. This was wisdom passed down from Moses.
  - Boaz brought his concerns before the 10 men of his city and this wisdom was seen as great, and yet Solomon says this wisdom he has revealed to men about the folly of self-righteousness and denying God is of greater value to them.
- Eccl.7:20 Why is this true? (Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.)
  - Solomon says there is not a single man on earth who never sins.
  - When a man is called righteous, that is not to be confused with sinlessness or righteousness defined by God.

**Psa. 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”**

**They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds;  
There is no one who does good.**

**Psa. 14:2 The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men  
To see if there are any who understand,  
Who seek after God.**

**Psa. 14:3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt;  
There is no one who does good, not even one.**

- These verses make it clear there is no one who can do good before God, not even one!
- Eccl. 7:21 What other warning does Solomon give? (Also, do not take seriously all words which are spoken,)
  - What specific words is Solomon warning against listening to? (so that you will not hear your servant cursing you.)
  - Why would a servant be heard cursing a master? (When the master did not respond as the servant expected)
    - When a master does not respond the way a servant expects, that does not mean the master gives any attention to what the servant might say.
    - In the same way, when God does not respond the way men believe He should respond, God does not listen to men. He is not swayed by men in the same way a servant will not sway his master. This is how all should approach God.
- v.22 When a master does hear his servant cursing him, what is he to remember? (For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others)
  - The one who has heard the cursing of one about himself has also cursed others. There is no one who has not cursed others.
    - What men will accuse others of, he is guilty of himself.
    - Men in their words have declared their self-righteousness before God. These

words should be ignored.

- Men have declared they do not believe there is a God, and these words should be ignored as well.
- v.23 What did Solomon say he had done in regards to these standards? (I tested all this with wisdom)
  - What is the 'this' Solomon tried to test? (God not responding to the ways Solomon believed God should respond)
    - This would mean both to men who declare their self-righteousness before God as well as those who deny there is a God. This may include those who were righteous yet did not receive what Solomon thought was reward.
  - How did Solomon test these words? (with wisdom)
  - What did Solomon say he tried to be in this regard? (and I said, "I will be wise, but it was far from me.")
    - Solomon dedicated himself to be wise in this estimation or understanding of God's judgment of men here on earth.
  - What was the conclusion of this for Solomon? (was far from me)
    - Solomon was unable to determine by his standard of wisdom what God was doing when He responded to men.

**Eccl. 7:24 What has been is remote and exceedingly mysterious. Who can discover it?**

**Eccl. 7:25 I directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness.**

**Eccl. 7:26 And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured by her.**

**Eccl. 7:27 "Behold, I have discovered this," says the Preacher, "adding one thing to another to find an explanation,**

**Eccl. 7:28 which I am still seeking but have not found. I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a woman among all these.**

**Eccl. 7:29 "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."**

- v.24 What is Solomon's denouncement? (What has been is remote and exceedingly mysterious. Who can discover it?)
  - What is meant by 'what has been'? (That which God had already done)
    - The explanation of what God has already done is described how? (is remote and exceedingly mysterious.)
  - What is remote? (isolated or far off)
  - What is exceedingly mysterious? (Dictionary.dotcom states it is of obscure nature,

meaning, origin, etc.; puzzling; inexplicable)

- God's responses were far off from how men would respond, their meaning is lost on men in their reasoning.
- Man does not have an ability to understand what he sees here on earth in this lifetime in measurable outcomes. God's ways are not man's ways.
- v.24 What is Solomon's rhetorical question? (Who can discover it?)
  - What man can actually discover the measurements of how God works.
    - Paul comes to this same conclusion in Romans 11:33.

**Rom. 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!**

- Eccl.7:25 What did Solomon say his desire was? (I directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and an explanation)
  - Solomon truly wanted an answer to his questions in this regard — to know.
    - He used all the knowledge of his mind, his reasoning, and all his abilities to research or investigate to find an answer to his questions.
  - Solomon desired an answer established in wisdom that would be an explanation to what God secures.
- What was the question in the forefront of Solomon's mind? (and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness.)
  - The trail of folly will lead to evil.
  - The trail of foolishness leads to madness.
    - Solomon's desire to know the end result of folly and foolishness. This was his quest.
- v.26 What example of this does Solomon say he experienced? (And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains.)
  - Solomon knew death could be bitter but what did he determine to be more bitter than death? (the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains.)
  - Is there an example in scriptures of a woman who represents this in Solomon's life? (1Kings 9:16-17, 7:7-8, 2Chr. 8:11, 1Kings 9:24.)

**1Kings 9:16 For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and captured Gezer and burned it with fire, and killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.**

**1Kings 9:17 So Solomon rebuilt Gezer and the lower Beth-horon**

**1Kings 7:7 He made the hall of the throne where he was to judge, the hall of judgment, and it was paneled with cedar from floor to floor.**



**1Kings 7:8** His house where he was to live, the other court inward from the hall, was of the same workmanship. He also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom Solomon had married.

**2Chr. 8:11** Then Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the city of David to the house which he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy where the ark of the LORD has entered."

**1Kings 9:24** As soon as Pharaoh's daughter came up from the city of David to her house which Solomon had built for her, then he built the Millo.

- From these scriptures it is clear that Solomon entered marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. She is not named in the scriptures.
  - He honored her with a great house.
  - Solomon knew this wife was not a follower of God, and he did not allow her to dwell in the house of the king because it was holy and she was not.
    - What was one outcome Solomon says was possible in regards to this woman? (One who is pleasing to God will escape from her)
  - Who is one who is pleasing to God? (One who follows God's ways)
    - The one who follows God's way will escape this woman.
- It would appear at one point in Solomon's life he escaped the evil of this wife by not allowing her to dwell in the house of David, King of Israel.
  - Who else is described? (but the sinner)
  - What happens to the sinner? (will be captured by her)
    - Which outcome do we see Solomon experienced?

**1Kings 9:1** Now it came about when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all that Solomon desired to do,  
**1Kings 9:2** that the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon.

**1Kings 9:3** The LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

**1Kings 9:4** "As for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances,

**1Kings 9:5** then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, just

as I promised to your father David, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’

**1Kings 9:6** “But if you or your sons indeed turn away from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them,

**1Kings 9:7** then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and the house which I have consecrated for My name, I will cast out of My sight. So Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

**1Kings 9:8** “And this house will become a heap of ruins; everyone who passes by will be astonished and hiss and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’

**1Kings 9:9** “And they will say, ‘Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore the LORD has brought all this adversity on them.’”

**1Kings 11:1** Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

**1Kings 11:2** from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, “You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods.” Solomon held fast to these in love.

**1Kings 11:3** He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

**1Kings 11:4** For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

**1Kings 11:5** For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

**1Kings 11:6** Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done.

**1Kings 11:7** Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.

**1Kings 11:8** Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

**1Kings 11:9** Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,

**1Kings 11:10** and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded.

**1Kings 11:11** So the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and you

**have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant.**

**1Kings 11:12** “Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

**1Kings 11:13** “However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.”

- Who was Solomon ‘captured’ by? 1Kings 11:4 (his wives turned his heart away after other gods)
  - There is one wife that is called out specifically, who is that? (Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh)
  - The question is why did Solomon turn his heart away after other gods?
    - What was he looking for?
- Eccl. 7:27 How does Solomon answer what he was looking for? (“Behold, I have discovered this,” says the Preacher, “adding one thing to another to find an explanation,)
  - What one thing was Solomon adding to another? (worshipping other gods)

**1Kings 11:5** For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

**1Kings 11:7** Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon.

**1Kings 11:8** Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

- Eccl. 7:27 What was Solomon seeking? (to find an explanation)
  - An explanation to what question?
    - In v 25 Solomon gave us the question he was seeking an explanation to. What was that? (and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness.)
- v.28 What does Solomon say about finding an explanation to his question? (which I am still seeking but have not found.)
  - Solomon had still not found the answer to his question in all the places he has sought to find his answer in seeking after the gods of his wives.
  - What did Solomon find? (I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a woman among all these.)
    - Where did scripture give us a count of a thousand in regard to Solomon?

**1Kings 11:3** He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

- Solomon had a total of one thousand women who were considered either his wife, princess, or concubine.
  - What single man would have been found among this thousand women? (Solomon)
  - What was this one man seeking? (an explanation to his question)
    - What else did Solomon say he had not found? (a woman among all these)
    - These were all women, so that is not what Solomon is saying.
  - Solomon is saying there was not a woman found among all these thousand women who were seeking what? (an explanation to his question)
- v.29 What one conclusion could Solomon make? (“Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.”)
  - What can God do? (Make men upright)
  - What does man do? (seek out many devices)
    - Man seeks out devices to become upright.
    - This is futility as only God can make a man upright.

- Our review of Ecclesiastes:
  - This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man ever.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
  - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an *advantage in life*.
    - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth and seeking an earthly legacy are meaningless in understanding an *advantage in life*.
  - There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
    - God has allowed wicked men to oppress others, do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
    - Approach God in reverence seeking only to know His Will in every situation. Be satisfied in what God provides. In that is true contentment.
  - All things come from the hand of God because God is sovereign over His creation. Man was not created to change the mind of God, because all things are from God man is to be content in every situation.
    - When confronted with pain in life we must embrace it for what it can do in our lives, this is wisdom. Ultimately both prosperity and adversity are from the hand of God, what we endure during this life is not an indication of our stance before God in eternity for this is not how God's ways are revealed to man.
  - God's measurement of righteousness is perfection while man's measurements are self-righteous often followed by a denial of God. There is no bargaining with God. Solomon reveals his life of seeking explanations to understand or predict God's determinations and it was futile.
    - This conclusion is seen in how Solomon continues.

**Eccl. 8:1 Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a matter?**

**A man's wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam.**

**Eccl. 8:2 I say, "Keep the command of the king because of the oath before God.**

**Eccl. 8:3 "Do not be in a hurry to leave him. Do not join in an evil matter, for he will do whatever he pleases."**

**Eccl. 8:4 Since the word of the king is authoritative, who will say to him, "What are you doing?"**

- v.1 What rhetorical question does Solomon ask? (Who is like the wise man and who knows the interpretation of a matter?)
  - Solomon just explained why he was not a wise man.

**Eccl. 7:23** I tested all this with wisdom, and I said, “I will be wise,” but it was far from me.

- Who can be wise is what Solomon is asking.
  - Who also knows the interpretation of a matter.
  - What matter is still on Solomon’s mind? (He is trying to figure out what God is doing when he rewards evil men and does not reward righteous men, according to what man’s standard would be, here on earth)
- What does Solomon say about man’s wisdom? (A man’s wisdom illumines him and causes his stern face to beam.)
  - What does man’s wisdom do for him? (Illumines him)
  - What does Illumine mean? (Dictionary.dotcom notes illumination as to make lucid or clear; throw light on (a subject).)
    - When a man believes he has found an answer to these types of questions what does that do for him? (causes his stern face to beam)
- v.2 What is Solomon’s advice? (I say, “Keep the command of the king because of the oath before God.)
  - In Israel in this time those elevated to leadership gave an oath before God to the newly recognized king. 2 Samuel 5:1-3, 1 Chronicles 29:23-24.

**2Sam. 5:1** Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Behold, we are your bone and your flesh.

**2Sam. 5:2** “Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. And the LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.’”

**2Sam. 5:3** So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the LORD at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel.

**1Chr. 29:23** Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father; and he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him.

**1Chr. 29:24** All the officials, the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David pledged allegiance to King Solomon.

- When God brought a king to the throne those in leadership acknowledged the king’s authority was given by God by taking an oath before God.
- Eccl. 8:3 What does Solomon say the duty of those men who gave their oath before God to be? (“Do not be in a hurry to leave him. Do not join in an evil matter, for he will do whatever he pleases.”)
  - What would it mean for someone to ‘leave him?’

- To take the loyalty promised to one man as king and to give that loyalty to another man.
- When someone would 'leave the king' what does Solomon call this? (Do not join in an evil matter)
- What right does the king have? (for he will do whatever he pleases.)
  - The king will do whatever he pleases yet because he is placed there by God and men have given their allegiance they are not to abandon their oath.
- v.4 How does Solomon continue this thought? (Since the word of the king is authoritative, who will say to him, "What are you doing?")
  - The word of the king holds authority, God given authority, man acknowledged authority.
    - Because this is God given what is Solomon's challenge? (who will say to him, "What are you doing?")
  - Who would be able to question the king given his authority by God.

**Ecccl. 8:5 He who keeps a royal command experiences no trouble, for a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure.**

**Ecccl. 8:6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight, though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.**

**Ecccl. 8:7 If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen?**

- v.5 What example of following the king's authority is given? (He who keeps a royal command experiences no trouble)
  - A royal command would come from who? (The king)
  - To keep the command is to do what? (To obey the command)
    - When one obeys the command of the king what is the outcome? (experiences no trouble)
  - Why is this true? (for a wise heart knows the proper time and procedure.)
  - What is this time and procedure in regards to? (The command of the king)
    - Do what you are to do in regards to the king and there will not be trouble.
    - Keep in mind this ties back to following the king's command not because of the greatness of his commands but because one took an oath declaring his recognition this man is king only because God made him king.
- v.6 What is true? (For there is a proper time and procedure for every delight,)
  - The truth is there is always a correct time and process for everything that happens.
  - This is true even when what is seen? (though a man's trouble is heavy upon him.)
    - When man is going through trouble it is proper to keep in mind this too is in accordance with an understanding there is a proper time and procedure for this in his life.

- v.7 One must endure what is placed before him why? (If no one knows what will happen, who can tell him when it will happen?)
  - What is meant by 'If no one knows what will happen'? (No man knows what events will happen to him or to any other man)
  - If we can accept that no man can know what events will happen then logically who would say what? (who can tell him when it will happen?)
    - Man is not in a position to predict outcomes. When men claim otherwise they are not speaking truth. When men claim to know what is going to happen to another man or even when events are going to happen to other men they are not speaking truth. Only God knows.

**Eccl. 8:8 No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it.**

**Eccl. 8:9 All this I have seen and applied my mind to every deed that has been done under the sun wherein a man has exercised authority over another man to his hurt.**

**Eccl. 8:10 So then, I have seen the wicked buried, those who used to go in and out from the holy place, and they are soon forgotten in the city where they did thus. This too is futility.**

**Eccl. 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.**

- v.8 What examples does Solomon give to demonstrate man can't change events of life? (No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death;)
  - How does one restrain the wind? (Man can't stop the wind from blowing)
    - Man can create shelter from the wind but he can't stop the wind blowing.
  - What foolishness would there be for man to try to stop the wind by creating a contrary wind. The conclusion is this is impossible.
  - What else does man not have authority over? (or authority over the day of death;)
    - The day of a man's death is just as certain as wind blowing. Man has no more control over this in his life than he has over the wind blowing.
- v.8 What else did Solomon say? (and there is no discharge in the time of war,)
  - A man can't leave his military service during war.
    - One can't wait to see the clear signs of danger and think he can escape then.
  - In the same way that this is true how did Solomon end? (and evil will not deliver those who practice it.)
    - There are men who practice evil and do not seem to endure the consequences during their lifetime. There will be a point when the evil will be judged.



- Paul encourages this perspective.

**1Cor. 4:5** Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

- This would have been good advice for Solomon.
- Eccl. 7:9 What did Solomon say this reminded him of? (All this I have seen and applied my mind to every deed that has been done under the sun wherein a man has exercised authority over another man to his hurt.)
  - Solomon begins with what phrase? (All this I have seen)
  - What did we say this means? (Solomon was a witness to this events)
  - After witnessing these things what did Solomon try to understand? (and applied my mind to every deed that has been done under the sun)
  - What specific events? (wherein a man has exercised authority over another man to his hurt)
    - Solomon applies his mind specifically to situations in which those who are exercising authority over another man to his hurt.
- v.10 What was an outcome Solomon witnessed? (So then, I have seen the wicked buried,)
  - How are these wicked described? (those who used to go in and out from the holy place,)
  - What men would go in and out from the holy place? (Priest)
    - These priests are described as wicked.
    - They also used to go in and out from the holy place. They did at one time and then they did not.
  - They died but what else was true for them? (and they are soon forgotten in the city where they did thus.)
    - These men will not be remembered not even in the city where they committed their acts of wickedness.
  - This is ultimately what? (This too is futility.)
- What event can we find where Solomon has experience with a priest who in the end demonstrated himself to be wicked?
  - We start with David asking Solomon to take out a wicked man in 1 Kings 2:5-6.

**1Kings 2:5** “Now you also know what *Joab* the son of Zeruiah did to me, what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner, and to Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed; he also shed the blood of war in

peace. And he put the blood of war on his belt about his waist, and on his sandals on his feet.

**1Kings 2:6** “So act according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to Sheol in peace.

- Prior to David asked Solomon to do this what other event is recorded that Joab was involved in with a priest? 1 Kings 1:5-7

**1Kings 1:5** Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him.

**1Kings 1:6** His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, “Why have you done so?” And he was also a very handsome man, and he was born after Absalom.

**1Kings 1:7** He had conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest; and following Adonijah they helped him.

- When did Solomon have to deal with these men? 1 Kings 2:22-34.

**1Kings 2:22** King Solomon answered and said to his mother, “And why are you asking Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him also the kingdom — for he is my older brother — even for him, for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah!”

**1Kings 2:23** Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, “May God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life.

**1Kings 2:24** “Now therefore, as the LORD lives, who has established me and set me on the throne of David my father and who has made me a house as He promised, surely Adonijah shall be put to death today.”

**1Kings 2:25** So King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him so that he died.

**1Kings 2:26** Then to Abiathar the priest the king said, “Go to Anathoth to your own field, for you deserve to die; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before my father David, and because you were afflicted in everything with which my father was afflicted.”

**1Kings 2:27** So Solomon dismissed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD, which He had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

**1Kings 2:28** Now the news came to Joab, for Joab had followed Adonijah, although he had not followed Absalom. And Joab fled to the tent of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar.

**1Kings 2:29** It was told King Solomon that Joab had fled to the tent of the LORD,

and behold, he is beside the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, “Go, fall upon him.”

**1Kings 2:30** So Benaiah came to the tent of the LORD and said to him, “Thus the king has said, ‘Come out.’” But he said, “No, for I will die here.” And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, “Thus spoke Joab, and thus he answered me.”

**1Kings 2:31** The king said to him, “Do as he has spoken and fall upon him and bury him, that you may remove from me and from my father’s house the blood which Joab shed without cause.

**1Kings 2:32** “The LORD will return his blood on his own head, because he fell upon two men more righteous and better than he and killed them with the sword, while my father David did not know it: Abner the son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah.

**1Kings 2:33** “So shall their blood return on the head of Joab and on the head of his descendants forever; but to David and his descendants and his house and his throne, may there be peace from the LORD forever.”

**1Kings 2:34** Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and fell upon him and put him to death, and he was buried at his own house in the wilderness.

- What we learn here is that David asked Solomon to bring down the judgement of death upon Joab for his wickedness of killing 2 righteous men, this was to happen after David died.
  - Joab tried to hide in the tent of the Lord, beside the altar. The holy place at this time.
  - Joab and Adonijah had also aligned with the priest Abiathar, he would have been the high priest. We see this clarification in Mark 2:23-26.

**Mark 2:23** And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.

**Mark 2:24** The Pharisees were saying to Him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

**Mark 2:25** And He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry;

**Mark 2:26** how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?”

- Joab and Abiathar the priest had conspired with Adonijah to usher him in as king in Israel to replace David instead of Solomon. 1 Kings 1:18-19

**1Kings 1:18** “Now, behold, Adonijah is king; and now, my lord the king, you do not

know it.

**1Kings 1:19** “He has sacrificed oxen and fatlings and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king and Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited Solomon your servant.

- The sacrifices offered by Adonijah would be overseen or administered by a priest to be seen as legal and honored by God to the people of Israel. Abiathar may have been honoring to David in early years but he abandoned him in his last years and tried to make Adonijah king without David’s consent and obviously without consulting God.
- Eccl. 8:11 What observation was Solomon able to make? (Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.)
  - In the case of Joab he committed his murders when there was conflict after Saul was killed and there was some power struggle where David ultimately became the king. It was 4 decades of time that passed before Joab was brought to justice for the murders he committed.
    - Solomon says this delay of a sentence against an evil was not executed quickly. This was true for Joab.
- v.11 What happens to men where there is a delay in carrying out a sentence? (therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.)
  - There is not a complete list of all the evil Joab did during his lifetime. We do know he was willing to stand up for a son of David, Adonijah, who was not the anointed of God to become king of Israel. Solomon may have been privy to other evils done as well.
  - When men don’t receive justice in the moment of their sin they are inclined to commit more sin thinking they are getting by with something. Just because we don’t see all justice carried out here on earth we are to know there will ultimately be justice.
    - This is what bothered Solomon so much that he could not tell where men stood before God by what was going on here on earth.

**Eccl. 8:12** Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly.

**Eccl. 8:13** But it will not be well for the evil man and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow, because he does not fear God.

- v.12 What does Solomon say next? (Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life)
  - What does it mean ‘a sinner does evil a hundred times’?
    - This is just a way of saying a sinner who continues to do evil, over and over.
    - His evil does not cause him to die. In this way Solomon says ‘may lengthen his life’. Think about a sinner who lies about his sin to keep from being discovered,

or conspires to have someone else convicted for his sin.

- What did Solomon declare? (still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly.)
  - In the end Solomon declares it will be well for those who fear God.
- Who are those who fear God? (Believers)
- How are these men described? (who fear Him openly.)
  - Those who would do what they took an oath before God to do openly or publicly to do.
- v.13 What is the result of the man who will not do this? (But it will not be well for the evil man)
  - What exactly does Solomon say will not go well for this man? (and he will not lengthen his days like a shadow)
    - This man will not lengthen his days.
  - How is the lengthen of days described? (like a shadow)
  - What is a shadow? (The impression of something but not the substance)
    - The impression that a man was extending his life on earth without actually adding another day to his life.
    - This ultimately happens why? (because he does not fear God.)
  - What is one who does not fear God? (He is not a believer.)
  - Can we conclude that one who is a believer can extend his life on earth? (No)
    - Solomon just gives what one might say is obvious to say it is better to fear God than to not fear God. Fear God for others to see 'openly', those who hide their actions do so because they do not fear God. They do not believe there will actually be a day of reckoning.

**Eccl. 8:14** There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

**Eccl. 8:15** So I commended pleasure, for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry, and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.

- v.14 How does Solomon describe what he can't understand? (There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked.)
  - What does Solomon describe first? (There is futility which is done on the earth)
    - This futility is seen by Solomon in men's lives.
  - How is this futility described? (that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens

according to the deeds of the wicked.)

- How are the men described by Solomon? (that is, there are righteous men)
  - What happens to these righteous men? (to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked.)
  - What happens to the righteous men look like what should happen to those who are committing deeds of wicked.
- What else does Solomon describe? (On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.)
- How are the next set of men described? (there are evil men)
- What happens for these evil men? (to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous)
- 'It happens' describes what? (The events that occur for the evil men)
  - The events that occur for the evil men are described how? (according to the deeds of the righteous)
  - The events that happen for the evil men look as though the events should be happening for a righteous man, for the deeds a righteous man would have done.
- When evil men are rewarded as though they were righteous and the righteous man receives as though he was evil what is Solomon's conclusion? (I say that this too is futility.)
  - Solomon says seeing this is futility.
  - Trying to figure all this out is futility.
- v.15 If these reversed appearances of reward are true what does Solomon say? (So I commended pleasure,)
  - Under what condition does Solomon say he commends pleasure seeking? (for there is nothing good for a man under the sun except to eat and to drink and to be merry,)
    - Man can't guarantee he will receive what he deserves out of life.
  - Where is this man described to be by Solomon? (under the sun)
  - Man should do what? (eat and to drink and to be merry)
    - If there is nothing else to consider for man except that which can be measured from his earthly life man should just live for what he can experience in this earthly life.
  - What will this perspective give to man? (and this will stand by him in his toils throughout the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.)
    - The sum of what man accomplishes in this life will be what stands by him in this earthly life.
  - Where is this perspective seen? (That which God has given him under the sun.)
  - What does 'under the sun' refer to? (Here on earth)
  - What is 'under the sun' a reference to? (That which occurs during a man's life on earth)

**Eccl. 8:16** When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the task which has been done on the earth (even though one should never sleep day or night), **Eccl. 8:17** and I saw every work of God, I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, “I know,” he cannot discover.

- v.16 What did Solomon say he did? (When I gave my heart to know wisdom)
  - What did Solomon’s wisdom lead him to observe? (and to see the task)
  - What is a task? (Work)
  - Work done where? (which has been done on the earth)
    - How important is this work? ((even though one should never sleep day or night),
- v.17 Solomon compared this observation to what? (and I saw every work of God,)
  - What did this comparison cause Solomon to conclude? (I concluded that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun.)
  - Where is the work done? (under the sun)
  - Where is ‘under the sun’? (On earth)
  - What is true in regards to man for this work done on earth? (man cannot discover)
    - Man cannot discover work done on earth to match the work of God.
    - Man’s work does not line up with how God responds in terms of rewarding righteousness and wickedness
  - This is true beyond what? (Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, “I know,” he cannot discover.)
    - This is not something given to man to know.

- Time for our regular review of Ecclesiastes:
  - This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man ever.
  - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
  - Solomon began providing proof through the repeating cycles in nature that display a meaninglessness in understanding an *advantage in life*.
    - Solomon continued to establish this by his personal experiences concluding that wisdom and wealth and seeking an earthly legacy are meaningless in understanding an *advantage in life*.
  - There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
    - God has allowed wicked men to oppress others, do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
  - Approach God in reverence seeking only to know His Will in every situation. Be satisfied in what God provides and find true contentment.
    - All things come from the hand of God because God is sovereign over His creation. Man was not created to change the mind of God. Because all things are from God, man is to be content in every situation.
  - When confronted with pain in life, we must embrace it for what it can do in our lives. This is wisdom. Ultimately, both prosperity and adversity are from the hand of God. What we endure during this life is not an indication of our stance before God in eternity, for this is not how God's ways are revealed to man.
    - God's measurement of righteousness is perfection while man's measurements are self-righteousness and can lead to a denial of God. There is no bargaining with God. Solomon reveals his life of seeking explanations to understand or predict God's determinations, and it was futile.
- Chapter 8 review
  - Those who understand the power of the king do not question or abandon him. (This is how man should be with God.) It is impossible for man to know or change the future, those who have tried have failed.
  - It will go well for men who fear God; it will not be well for those who do not fear God. This is true even when we do not see this outcome on earth. We see the righteous receive evil and see good things happen for the wicked. When one tries to explain these things in regards to what God is doing, it is futility.
    - Solomon's writings seem to have many layers. Chapter 8 is a good example of this. The general truth about taking an oath before a king is acknowledged. This was a specific truth Solomon had experience with in his life and we find recorded in scripture. This is also true for how men should approach God.

**Eccl. 9:1 For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men,**



**wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred; anything awaits him.**

**Ecc. 9:2** It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear.

**Ecc. 9:3** This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.

- v.1 How does Solomon begin? (For I have taken all this to my heart)
  - What is 'this' referring to? (the righteous receive evil and the wicked receive what is good on earth)
  - What does Solomon do with this? (and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God)
    - There are two types of men defined how is the first defined? (righteous men)
  - What other men does Solomon define? (wise men)
    - Solomon does not equate the two men as the same. They are different men. What is the same about these men? (and their deeds are in the hand of God)
  - What are deeds? (Work of men during their life)
    - The work of men are in the hand of God.
  - What is being acknowledged by something being in the hand of God? (God is in control of it)
  - What is the 'it'? (their deeds)
    - What is true about these deeds? (Man does not know whether it will be love or hatred; anything awaits him.)
  - God's response to man's deeds can be what? (love or hatred)
  - Because God does not allow man to know how his deeds will be used by God, what is the conclusion? (anything awaits him)
    - Man is truly at the mercy of God in every outcome.
- v.2 What is true about man's physical fate? (It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear.)
  - All men are destined to die physically.
- v.3 What does Solomon say about this fact? (This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men.)
  - This comes from evil or is the result of evil.
  - What else does Solomon say is the same for all men? (Furthermore, the hearts of the

sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.) Psalm 14:1.

**Psa. 14:1** The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

**They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds;**

**There is no one who does good.**

**Psa. 14:2** The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men

**To see if there are any who understand,**

**Who seek after God.**

**Psa. 14:3** They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt;

**There is no one who does good, not even one.**

- This was not a new concept introduced by Solomon but one he completely agrees with that the sons of men are evil. This evil is why all men die physically.

**Eccl. 9:4** For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.

**Eccl. 9:5** For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten.

**Eccl. 9:6** Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.

- v.4 What does Solomon say is one true outcome? (For whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.)
  - Who are ‘all the living’?
  - For the living there is what? (hope)
    - The living then are those who are alive spiritually, those who can have hope.
  - What does hope for the living mean?

**Psa. 39:7** “And now, Lord, for what do I wait?

**My hope is in You.**

**Psa. 62:5** My soul, wait in silence for God only,

**For my hope is from Him.**

**Psa. 146:5** How blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,

**Whose hope is in the LORD his God,**

**Gal. 5:4** You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by

law; you have fallen from grace.

**Gal. 5:5** For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

**Gal. 5:6** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

**Titus 2:11** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

**Titus 2:12** instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

**Titus 2:13** looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

**Titus 2:14** who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

- The hope Solomon refers to is the same hope mentioned throughout the book of Job and in the Psalms. This hope was in God, was from God according to the Old Testament, and then the New Testament clarifies this is the hope of righteousness. For us now, it is the appearance of Christ Jesus, our righteousness.
  - Notice the beginning of the verse started with what? (For whoever is joined with all the living)
    - This would indicate the living is the group to join. One would need to leave another group to join this living group. Before we have hope in God's provision of righteousness, or in Christ Jesus, we were in a group that is dead.
- Eccl 9:4 How does this verse end? (surely a live dog is better than a dead lion)
  - What is meant by a live dog? (In most cultures the dog is a lowly dirty beast, not the dog as we might experience in our culture today.)
    - A person who is considered as a dog would be seen as a lowly, filthy creature. This lowly creature is described by Solomon to be what? (alive)
    - This 'alive' should be tied back to the 'hope' mentioned earlier. The hope in the eternal outcome of life, having righteousness, a hope only found in God.
  - The lion is a creature admired because of what it is physically—a king of the jungle, one to be feared, one at the top of the food chain. No matter what this creature is when it is physically alive, once it is dead nothing of what it was before matters. If dead is a reference to a spiritual reality, then a magnificent creature, like a lion, has no real value spiritually. It is just a dead lion.
  - A lowly creature, from his physical nature, but who is alive spiritually, is better than a physically magnificent creature who is in fact dead (spiritually).
    - This is a confirmation that Solomon is discussing spiritual and not physical awareness.
- v.5 What is true for the living? (For the living know they will die)
  - The term living is still being used for those who are spiritually alive.

- Those who know they are alive spiritually know they will experience physical death.
- What is true for those who are spiritually dead? (but the dead do not know anything)
  - They have no awareness of their spiritual condition.
- What else is now gone when they physically die? (nor have they any longer a reward)
- What reward would the spiritually dead have had? (earthly rewards)
  - The rewards they received on earth will be gone. Those rewards will not follow them in the afterlife.
- What else is true about the spiritually dead? (for their memory is forgotten)
  - They will not be remembered by the spiritually living.
- v.6 What else is true about the spiritually dead? (Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished)
  - Everything they felt, or thought they accomplished on earth, has ceased, or perished with them. Those things will not have any impact on their eternal destination.
  - Is there nothing lasting of them even on earth? (and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun)

**Eccl. 9:7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.**

**Eccl. 9:8 Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head.**

**Eccl. 9:9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.**

**Eccl. 9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.**

- Solomon was speaking to the spiritually living about the fact that they were going to die physically and what the state of those who are spiritually dead truly is.
- v.7 Solomon again speaks to the spiritually living how? (Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.)
  - Those who are spiritually alive should do what while they are physically alive? (Go then, eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart)
    - Enjoy what God has provided. Notice the drinking of wine is with a heart that is cheerful, not a heart that is made cheerful or merry as was described before.)
  - Why can the spiritually alive do this? (for God has already approved your works)
    - There is no pressure, in the work done for God, attached to pleasing God for the accomplishment of true righteousness or salvation.

**Heb. 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

- v.8 What else can the spiritually living do? (Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head.)
  - Is Solomon suggesting that the spiritually alive should walk around each day wearing white clothes? (No)
  - What does it mean to let your clothes be white all the time?
  - When did men wear white clothing? (Special occasions, celebrations)
    - What does oil on one's head mean? Amos 6:6, 2 Samuel 14:2

**Amos 6:6** Who drink wine from sacrificial bowls  
While they anoint themselves with the finest of oils,  
Yet they have not grieved over the ruin of Joseph.

**2Sam. 14:2** So Joab sent to Tekoa and brought a wise woman from there and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning garments now, and do not anoint yourself with oil, but be like a woman who has been mourning for the dead many days;

- Someone would anoint with fine oil as an indulgence, another reference to those who anoint themselves regularly with oil. To go without anointing with oil would be done in times of mourning.
- Eccl. 9:8 Solomon said 'let not oil be lacking on your head', so the conclusion is of one who is not in mourning. The spiritually alive have no reason to live as if they are in mourning.
- v.9 What else does Solomon say the spiritually alive should do? (Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.)
  - Solomon clearly understands God's design for marriage to be between one man and one woman, as he says 'the woman'.
    - This woman is the same woman all the days of one's short life.
    - This woman would be given by God.
    - Enjoying this woman is the reward in one's life.
    - This woman will be there in the toil in which one has to labor here on earth.
  - Solomon might have had the best advantage in life as someone who missed this reward in life by having one thousand women in his life. Much wisdom can be shared from those who learned the lesson by doing things the wrong way.
- v.10 What else does Solomon say to the spiritually alive? (Whatever your hand finds to

do, do it with all your might)

- What work you have been given to do, do it with everything you have; all your time, money, talent and dedication. There is no certain work for all to do, but whatever that work is, we are to give ourselves completely to it while we live out our physical lives on earth.
- What reason does Solomon say we should do this while we are physically alive? (for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going)
  - The time for measured works ends when we die. A time for gaining knowledge of wisdom to change the outcome of a person comes to an end.
  - In Solomon's time, all who died went to Sheol, both the spiritually alive and the spiritually dead. There were two different holding places in Sheol.
  - We see this in what Christ taught in Luke 16:19-26.

**Luke 16:19** “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

**Luke 16:20** “And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

**Luke 16:21** and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

**Luke 16:22** “Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

**Luke 16:23** “In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

**Luke 16:24** “And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’

**Luke 16:25** “But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

**Luke 16:26** ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’

- Eccl. 9:10 Solomon reveals the same truth that at death all men went to Sheol. He had already explained where a man went in Sheol could not be changed once he was there. There is nothing a man can do once he is dead, no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom to be gained.

**Eccl. 9:11** I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all.

**Eccl. 9:12** Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.

- v.11 How does Solomon begin? (I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors)
  - What is under the sun a reference to? (Things seen on earth)
    - Solomon says the race is not to the swift.
  - What race is he referring to? (The race to the end of one's life, what is next)
    - The swift would be those who by the world's standards should be the winner of the race. This race is not won by those the world would expect to win.
  - What is the battle referring to? (The battle to finish well during this lifetime for the next)
  - What does it mean 'the battle is not to?' (It is not won by or given to)
  - This battle is not won by who? (the warriors)
    - This is again a picture of those who win this battle are not to be those the world predicts will win the battle.
- v.11 What else does Solomon say? (and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability)
  - With the same logic applied as before, Solomon says bread can be given to those who are not wise in earthy terms.
    - Wealth does not always go to those with discernment.
    - Favor is not always shown to men with natural ability.
  - What is true? (for time and chance overtake them all)
    - There is no plan of man that can be guaranteed to turn out in a specified way. Many men think that with more time they would come to do the right things.
- v.12 What does Solomon say about the time given men? (Moreover, man does not know his time)
  - What picture of this does Solomon provide? (like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare)
    - Each creature was just moving through its day when suddenly its time was up.
  - How does this relate to men? (so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them)
  - What is the 'it' (The end of life, just like for the creatures pictured)
    - The sons of men are ensnared at an evil time.
    - In their evil time, death suddenly falls on them. There is not always a warning about death's arriving to make one decide that this is the time to live right by God.

**Ecccl. 9:13** Also this I came to see as wisdom under the sun, and it impressed me.

**Ecccl. 9:14** There was a small city with few men in it and a great king came to it, surrounded it and constructed large siegeworks against it.

**Ecccl. 9:15** But there was found in it a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

**Ecccl. 9:16** So I said, “Wisdom is better than strength.” But the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his words are not heeded.

**Ecccl. 9:17** The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

**Ecccl. 9:18** Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

- v.13 How does Solomon continue? (Also this I came to see as wisdom under the sun, and it impressed me.)
  - Solomon starts with ‘also’ this I came to see as wisdom. This means what he just expressed was seen as wisdom and what he shares next is wisdom as well.
    - This was wisdom that he came to see as wisdom.
    - It was not perceived as wisdom to Solomon at some time and then it later came to be seen as wisdom.
  - This wisdom was seen where? (under the sun)
  - This wisdom had what impact on Solomon? (it impressed me)
    - Even men as wise as Solomon continue to learn throughout their lifetime.
    - We never arrive at a place in our lives where we can’t learn from others.
- v.14 Solomon begins a short story how? (There was a small city with few men in it and a great king came to it, surrounded it and constructed large siegeworks against it.)
  - By man’s standards this city is doomed.
- v.15 What happens for the city? (But there was found in it a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man.)
  - A wise man in the city delivered the city by his wisdom.
  - Is there a story with similar details that Solomon would have been familiar with?
    - This story took place during the reign of David. This event occurred after Absalom had been defeated. There was a rift in Israel. Some decided they needed to separate and follow a leader for Israel, a man named Sheba, and let only the tribe of Judah follow David as king. The decision of king David and his counselor was to take out Sheba. 2 Samuel 20:13-22.

**2Sam. 20:13** As soon as he was removed from the highway, all the men passed on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

**2Sam. 20:14** Now he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel, even Beth-maacah, and all the Berites; and they were gathered together and also went



after him.

**2Sam. 20:15** They came and besieged him in Abel Beth-maacah, and they cast up a siege ramp against the city, and it stood by the rampart; and all the people who were with Joab were wreaking destruction in order to topple the wall.

**2Sam. 20:16** Then a wise woman called from the city, "Hear, hear! Please tell Joab, 'Come here that I may speak with you.'"

**2Sam. 20:17** So he approached her, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?" And he answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your maidservant." And he answered, "I am listening."

**2Sam. 20:18** Then she spoke, saying, "Formerly they used to say, 'They will surely ask advice at Abel,' and thus they ended the dispute.

**2Sam. 20:19** "I am of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You are seeking to destroy a city, even a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?"

**2Sam. 20:20** Joab replied, "Far be it, far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy!

**2Sam. 20:21** "Such is not the case. But a man from the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has lifted up his hand against King David. Only hand him over, and I will depart from the city." And the woman said to Joab, "Behold, his head will be thrown to you over the wall."

**2Sam. 20:22** Then the woman wisely came to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, each to his tent. Joab also returned to the king at Jerusalem.

- There are similarities in the stories beginning with: both were called a small city, sought out by a great king, a city surrounded, a large seigeworks or seige ramp was built, and a wise person delivers the city.
  - Solomon refers to a poor wise man where the actual account says a wise woman.
- v.18 What is referred to? (Then she spoke, saying, "Formerly they used to say, 'They will surely ask advice at Abel,' and thus they ended the dispute.)
  - It would appear the advice offered at Abel was sought out and the advice would end disputes. This was the reputation of this city. It would appear there were men and women of Abel who offered their wisdom.
    - It might be possible that Solomon had learned there was a man giving advice and the wise woman spoke for him. This is a possible explanation for the differences but not necessary.
    - Joab reports the crime of Sheba to the wise woman.
  - Why was the city attacked before anyone told the city what the problem was? Had they assumed conspiracy?
    - Also notice, Joab only asks for Sheba to be released to him.

- And the woman said to Joab, “Behold, his head will be thrown to you over the wall.”
- This is indeed wisdom at its finest.
- Joab was not a man to be trusted. Opening the city to him was not safe. Allowing Sheba to live and tell of anything he knew of those in the city would only put them at risk.
  - Allowing there to be any thought that Abel was a place evil men could hide put them in the camp of potential traitors in the future.
  - Sheba’s beheading solved all the problems.
- Eccl. 9:15 What truth did Solomon reveal? (But there was found in it a poor wise man and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man.)
  - This would appear to have been a true story and a wise (person) did deliver the city by wisdom. And no one remembered the poor man.
- v.16 What truth did Solomon take from this account? (So I said, “Wisdom is better than strength.” )
  - Even though wisdom is better, what is often the result for those with wisdom? (But the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his words are not heeded.)
- v.17 What is true when words of wisdom are spoken? (The words of the wise heard in quietness are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.)
  - Speaking words in quietness would indicate words spoken before there is anger or a loud crowd. Waiting until an event is explosive and a ruler must shout to be heard is not the best way to follow wisdom.
    - Notice in the account from the city of Abel, the woman asks to speak with Joab directly. She also came to all the people and they acted together.
- Eccl. 9:18 What is Solomon’s conclusion? (Wisdom is better than weapons of war)
  - This was specifically true in the story referred to in 2 Samuel.
  - When there is one acting without wisdom what can happen? (but one sinner destroys much good.)
    - This was also true in regards to Sheba the son of Bichri. How much chaos did he create in all of Israel with his rebellion? How much destruction came to this small town because he chose to go there?

- Let's review Chapter 1-9 of Ecclesiastes:
  - Chapter 1 – This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man ever.
    - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life, there is nothing new under the sun to give man the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
  - Chapter 2 – Solomon's personal experiences of seeking an answer through wisdom and wealth did not give the answer to understanding the meaning of life also called an *advantage in life*.
  - Chapter 3 – There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
  - Chapter 4 – God allows wicked men with hearts given to self serving motives to oppress others, do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
  - Chapter 5 – Approach a sovereign God in reverence, seeking only to know His Will in every situation, not to change God's plans. Be satisfied in what God provides and find true contentment.
  - Chapter 6 – There is wisdom in embracing pain in life knowing both prosperity and adversity are from the hand of God. Neither is an indication of our stance before God in eternity. This is not how God's ways are revealed to man.
  - Chapter 7 – God's measurement of righteousness is perfection while man's measurements are self-righteousness and can lead to a denial of God. There is no bargaining with God.
  - Chapter 8 – In eternal ways, it will go well for men who fear God. It will not be well for those who do not fear God. This is true in spite of what is seen as an outcome on earth, when we see the righteous receive evil, and good things happen for the wicked.
  - Chapter 9 – Men are born evil; their deeds can't make them righteous. God brings hope or righteousness to some, and they have eternal life (the living). Those without this righteousness are spiritually dead; no deeds can change this outcome. The spiritually alive should do deeds to honor God each day not knowing when their last day may be. This is true wisdom.
    - The last verse of Chapter 9 is the transition to Chapter 10.

**Eccl. 9:18** Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

**Eccl. 10:1** Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.

**Eccl. 10:2** A wise man's heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man's heart directs him toward the left.

**Eccl. 10:3** Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking and he demonstrates to everyone that he is a fool.

**Eccl. 10:4** If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses.

- v.1 What picture does Solomon put forth? (Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink)
  - What is the purpose of perfume? (to give off a pleasant scent)
    - The scent may draw flies who then become trapped and die in the perfume. The result is the decaying bodies of the flies cause the entire perfume to become compromised and the previously pleasant scent now stinks.
    - This small invasion ruins the entire project.
  - This is compared to what? (so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.)
  - Solomon compares the flies in the perfume to what? (so a little foolishness is weightier)
- What does 'weightier mean? (tips the balance of the scale in measurement)
  - What is being measure on the other side of the scales? (wisdom and honor)
    - Just a little foolishness in someone's life can have a bigger impact than all the wisdom and honor they had previously accumulated.
- v.2 What does Solomon describe next? (A wise man's heart directs him toward the right,)

**KJV Eccl. 10:2** A wise man's heart is at his right hand...

**Psa. 16:8** I have set the LORD continually before me;  
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

- The right hand would be a place of protection.
  - This is compared to what? (but the foolish man's heart directs him toward the left.)
    - Opposite from what we learned about the right hand, the left hand would not lead to protection. A foolish man's heart leads him away from safety.
- v.3 What else is true for the fool? (Even when the fool walks along the road, his sense is lacking and he demonstrates to everyone that he is a fool.)
  - What would it mean for someone to walk along a road in this day? (They would be out in public to be seen, not along a private path.)
    - The fool is not self-aware of his situation, and he reveals it for the world to see.
- v.4 What advice does Solomon give? (If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses.)
  - What is the situation Solomon describes? (If the ruler's temper rises against you)
  - Who would a ruler be? (Any with authority over you)
    - What is described happening to this one in authority over you? (his temper

risers)

- What does it mean when one's temper rises? (He is angry)
- What response are you to have when one who is in authority is angry at you? (do not abandon your position)
- What is the position referring to? (the job you hold in regards to the one with authority over you)
  - Do not walk away from the job you are to do.
- v.4 How can staying at the job become beneficial? (because composure allays great offenses.)
  - What does composure mean? (Dictionary.dotcom has it as serene, self-controlled state of mind; calmness; tranquillity)
  - When you stay serene in the face of an authority figure's anger, what can happen? (allays great offenses)
  - What does allay mean? (Dictionary.dotcom has it as to put fear, doubt, suspicion, anger, etc. to rest; calm; quiet)
    - You can put to rest, or calm, or quiet the response of the the one in authority who feels there has been a great offense committed against them. This is true whether there has been a great offense or not. Staying in the good graces of those in authority will always be beneficial.

**Eccl. 10:5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, like an error which goes forth from the ruler —**

**Eccl. 10:6 folly is set in many exalted places while rich men sit in humble places.**

**Eccl. 10:7 I have seen slaves riding on horses and princes walking like slaves on the land.**

- v.5 What connection does Solomon make? (There is an evil I have seen under the sun)
  - What key phrase alerts us to the fact this was something Solomon was a witness to? (I have seen)
  - Where does Solomon say this evil is done? (under the sun)
    - What does it mean when Solomon uses this phrase (It is done on earth.)
    - The evil is compared to what? (like an error which goes forth from the ruler)
- v.6 In error what did the ruler make? (folly is set in many exalted places)
  - The ruler put men of folly in positions of leadership.
  - What else occurred? (while rich men sit in humble places)

**Prov. 14:24 The crown of the wise is their riches...**

- The concept that wise men acquire riches is common in scripture.

- Men of folly have been placed in positions of authority while those who were wise (rich) and should to be considered leaders were not exalted to leadership positions.
- v.7 How had Solomon seen this demonstrated? (I have seen slaves riding on horses and princes walking like slaves on the land.)
  - The roles of these men were reversed from what should have been.
  - Why the reference to slaves riding horses?
    - Why would princes be walking?
    - When would Solomon have seen such an event himself?

**1Sam. 8:10** So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king.

**1Sam. 8:11** He said, “This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots.

- This was the beginning of a list of things God told Samuel to warn the people a king would do to them if they did decide to have a king over them.
  - These things were not compliments but warnings.
    - It would appear that the son’s of David who attempted to make themselves king in his place misunderstood the words spoken by Samuel as a warning and instead thought they were words describing the ‘procedure of the king.’

**2Sam. 15:1** Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him.

**2Sam. 15:2** Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, “From what city are you?” And he would say, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.”

**2Sam. 15:3** Then Absalom would say to him, “See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king.”

**2Sam. 15:4** Moreover, Absalom would say, “Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice.”

**2Sam. 15:5** And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

**2Sam. 15:6** In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.

- v.1 The first thing Absalom did to show himself in the position to be the king was what? (provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him)

- Adonijah did the same thing.

**1Kings 1:5** Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him.

- Both of these men made the same mistake. They took what Samuel spoke that was descriptive and made it prescriptive. They believed it was part of what would make them king in Israel.
  - Those riding the horses here would have been the slaves assigned to this duty by Absalom and later Adonijah
    - This would explain the reference to slaves riding horses.
  - Where was Solomon during the insurrection of Absalom?

**2Sam. 15:14** David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, “Arise and let us flee, for otherwise none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword.”

**2Sam. 15:15** Then the king’s servants said to the king, “Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses.”

**2Sam. 15:16** So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house.

- All of David’s household left Jerusalem with David, this would include all of the princes of Israel. They all left in haste and walked out of Jerusalem into the wilderness. Solomon would have been an eye witness to this event.
  - This would also explain why Solomon said in Eccl. 10:6 ‘folly is set in many exalted places while rich men sit in humble places.’
    - The rightful ruler or king and princes and leaders were in the wilderness or humble places while Absalom and his followers entered into Jerusalem.

**Eccl. 10:8** He who digs a pit may fall into it, and a serpent may bite him who breaks through a wall.

**Eccl. 10:9** He who quarries stones may be hurt by them, and he who splits logs may be endangered by them.

**Eccl. 10:10** If the axe is dull and he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength. Wisdom has the advantage of giving success.

**Eccl. 10:11** If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.

**Eccl. 10:12** Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious, while the lips of a fool consume him;

**Ecccl. 10:13** the beginning of his talking is folly and the end of it is wicked madness.

**Ecccl. 10:14** Yet the fool multiplies words. No man knows what will happen, and who can tell him what will come after him?

**Ecccl. 10:15** The toil of a fool so wearies him that he does not even know how to go to a city.

- v.8 What observation does Solomon begin with? (He who digs a pit may fall into it)
  - Is it ever the goal of someone digging a pit to fall into it? (No)
    - There is a risk that the man who dug the pit could fall into it, but that is not his plan.
  - What else does Solomon say can happen? (and a serpent may bite him who breaks through a wall.)
    - Why would a man break through a wall? In Solomon's time, walls were built to provide protection of property and often built around cities. When a man breaks through a wall, this would be his goal to enter and take something or to invade the city. What an unexpected outcome for a man who has successfully broken through a wall only to have a serpent bite him and most likely cause him extreme harm if not death.
- v.9 What is described next? (He who quarries stones may be hurt by them)
  - What does it mean when someone quarries stone? (They dig around or break up stones from the earth to be moved and used elsewhere.)
    - How can one be hurt in this process? (The stones can become loose unexpectedly and injure or crush the person.)
  - What else is depicted? (and he who splits logs may be endangered by them.)
  - What does it mean to split logs? (taking larger pieces of wood and making them smaller for use)
  - How does one split logs? (with a sharp object like an ax)
    - What danger can happen when one splits logs? (Pieces of the splintered wood can fly up at the person working.)
  - What do all of these activities have in common?
    - They are all unintentional consequences of a work a person can engage in.
    - Each work was performed with a future use in mind.
    - Each work described can be done successfully but through an error or mistake an accident can occur.
    - The worker may not get to see the work completed.
- v.10 What does Solomon say about a tool of use? (If the axe is dull and he does not sharpen its edge, then he must exert more strength.)
  - When a tool is not used properly the worker must work harder.
  - What is the tool compared to? (Wisdom has the advantage of giving success.)



- Just like a sharp ax is best to succeed at a specific job, so is wisdom a tool to be used to help a man's work end more successfully.
- v.11 What example does Solomon relate next? (If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.)
  - When one deals with something or someone dangerous like a serpent there is always a chance the danger will overtake them before the plan to control the danger is completed. The result can be the benefit to the one expecting to control the situation or person is thwarted.
- v.12 What two things does Solomon compare? (Words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious, while the lips of a fool consume him)
  - Words from a wise man are what? (gracious)
  - Words from a fool do what? (consume him)
  - What does consume mean? (To consume is to use up completely, nothing left, or to eat or drink up; devour.)
    - This second description would be a play on words as the lips used for eating and drinking are what speaks the words that also consume the person.
- v.13 The fools starts how? (the beginning of his talking is folly)
  - How does the fool end? (and the end of it is wicked madness)
    - A fool begins with smaller evil and progresses to more significant evil.
- v.14 What does the fool continue to do? (Yet the fool multiplies words.)
  - What indication does Solomon give about the foolish words? (No man knows what will happen, and who can tell him what will come after him?)
    - It would appear the foolish words spoken from the fool indicated he knew what the future would be. Solomon emphatically concludes no man knows what will happen. When a man speaks contrary to this, he is a fool.
- v.15 What happens to the fool? (The toil of a fool so wearies him that he does not even know how to go to a city.)
  - In the end the fool can't keep up the pretense and resigns himself to his fate. These verses parallel a continuation of the story we were following concerning Absalom's rebellion. This follows the connection to Ahithophel.

**2Sam. 15:12** And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom.

**2Sam. 15:31** Now someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness."

**2Sam. 16:15** Then Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, entered

Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

**2Sam. 16:20** Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give your advice. What shall we do?”

**2Sam. 16:21** Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Go in to your father’s concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened.”

**2Sam. 16:22** So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel.

**2Sam. 16:23** The advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom.

**2Sam. 17:1** Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Please let me choose 12,000 men that I may arise and pursue David tonight.

**2Sam. 17:2** “I will come upon him while he is weary and exhausted and terrify him, so that all the people who are with him will flee. Then I will strike down the king alone,

**2Sam. 17:3** and I will bring back all the people to you. The return of everyone depends on the man you seek; then all the people will be at peace.”

**2Sam. 17:4** So the plan pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

- Absalom however took counsel from Hushai the Archite which ultimately resulted in the death of Absalom and the return of David to Jerusalem.

**2Sam. 17:23** Now when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and arose and went to his home, to his city, and set his house in order, and strangled himself; thus he died and was buried in the grave of his father.

- This was a story of a fool whose words consumed him in the end. His advice for Absalom to go in to David’s concubines was folly, but his advice to track down David, the anointed king, immediately and to allow Ahithophel to kill him was wickedness and madness.
  - Ahithophel also spoke his words as if they were acquired from the word of the Lord. He acted as though he knew the future results of actions by claiming they were from God.

**Ecc. 10:16** Woe to you, O land, whose king is a lad and whose princes feast in the morning.

**Ecc. 10:17** Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat

**at the appropriate time — for strength and not for drunkenness.**

**Ecccl. 10:18 Through indolence the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks.**

**Ecccl. 10:19 Men prepare a meal for enjoyment, and wine makes life merry, and money is the answer to everything.**

**Ecccl. 10:20 Furthermore, in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known.**

- v.16 What warning does Solomon issue? (Woe to you, O land, whose king is a lad and whose princes feast in the morning.)
  - What is meant by Woe? (Dictionary.dotcom states an exclamation of grief, distress, or lamentation)
    - What is 'O land' referring to? (a tribe or country of people)
  - How is their king described? (is a lad)
    - A mere child is their leader and those who are in positions of princes do what? (feast in the morning)
  - What is the normal time for feasting? (end of the day when work is completed)
- v.17 Solomon gives a caparison of what? (Blessed are you, O land)
  - Why is this land blessed? (whose king is of nobility)
  - What do these leaders do? (and whose princes eat at the appropriate time — for strength and not for drunkenness)
    - The purpose of the eating and drinking is for doing the work they need to do. They do not participate in eating and drinking for the excessiveness of the experience.
    - The conclusion would be the leaders of the previous group did eat and drink to excessiveness.
- v.18 What observation does Solomon make? (Through indolence the rafters sag, and through slackness the house leaks.)
  - What is indolent? (Dictionary.dotcom states having or showing a disposition to avoid exertion; slothful)
    - When one is lazy and not attentive to the upkeep of a house, the impact is of course apparent. In context, what did Solomon just describe? (two lands with two different style leaders)
    - When leaders do not take care of a kingdom with diligence and hard work but focus on self indulgent behavior, the kingdom will suffer like a house left uncared for.
- v.19 What is the attitude displayed by these men? (Men prepare a meal for enjoyment, and wine makes life merry, and money is the answer to everything.)
  - What is mentioned first? (men prepare a meal for enjoyment)

- What was just mentioned in verse 17 about the purpose of preparing a meal? (for strength)
  - The proper focus of leaders should be to do things to be strong and not purely for self-indulgence; even their daily activities such as meal preparation should be with a higher focus in mind.
- The same is true with what description next? (and wine makes life merry)
- When the term 'merry' is used in the description of wine it always carry a negative connotation of excessive use. We covered that in Ecclesiastes 8:15.
  - The last example used of poor leadership is what? (money is the answer to everything)
  - Leaders who want to throw money at every situation are not good leaders; they are lazy leaders. Good leaders make sacrifices of themselves by finding real solutions to problems. Ultimately they open the door to corruption.
- v.20 What warning does Solomon present next? (Furthermore, in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known.)
  - Solomon warned against a word spoken against rulers.
    - Verses 12-15 dealt with the impact words spoken by fools versus the words spoken by a wise man. In verse 20, Solomon gives a specific example of where words can be spoken by fools.
  - What would it mean to curse a king while in your bedchamber?
  - Who is in the bedchamber? (a Lord of the Bedchamber)

**Wikipedia says their duties originally consisted of assisting the monarch with dressing, waiting on him when he ate, guarding access to his bedchamber and closet and providing companionship. Such functions became less important over time but provided proximity to the monarch and the holders were thus trusted confidants and often extremely powerful. The offices were in the gift of [The Crown](#) and were originally sworn by [Royal Warrant](#) directed to the [Lord Chamberlain](#).**

- This position then was to be held by someone in service to the king. When one holds this position it would be foolish to curse the king.
- v.20 What else should one avoid doing? (and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man)
  - The sleeping rooms would be lesser rooms than the official bedchamber but would be used for those in attendance to the king's business. All these rooms would be in the house of the king.
  - The closest example would be the palace at Versailles. The king of France would require all the men of wealth to travel with him to Versailles when he vacationed there. They were also required to be present in the morning when the king awoke to be sure they were not off plotting against the king.

- These rooms would be where the officials of the court would stay, such as the rich man spoken of in verse 20.
- Solomon is saying these men should not be cursing each other, not tearing down the other leaders of the kingdom.
- v.20 What will happen when these men speak against the king or each other? (for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known.)
  - There will be a bird that will carry the sound.
  - What sound will the bird carry? (the curse spoken against the king and the men of the court)
  - What does the bird do with sound? (will make the matter known)
    - This deception will be made known; it will not stay a secret.
    - We even use the saying, 'a little birdie told me'.
  - This was also demonstrated during the time of Absalom's rebellion.

**2Sam. 15:31** Now someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness."

**2Sam. 15:32** It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head.

**2Sam. 15:33** David said to him, "If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me.

**2Sam. 15:34** "But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so I will now be your servant,' then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

**2Sam. 15:35** "Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So it shall be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

**2Sam. 15:36** "Behold their two sons are with them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything that you hear."

**2Sam. 15:37** So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

**2Sam. 17:17** Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, and a maidservant would go and tell them, and they would go and tell King David, for they could not be seen entering the city.

- Could it be that Ecclesiastes 10:20 is speaking of this same event and how David was

able to learn what plans were being made against him?

- Let's review Ecclesiastes 1-9:
  - Chapter 1 – This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man ever.
    - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life, there is nothing new under the sun to give man the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
  - Chapter 2 – Solomon's personal experiences of seeking an answer through wisdom and wealth did not give the answer to understanding the meaning of life also called an *advantage in life*.
  - Chapter 3 – There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
  - Chapter 4 – God allows wicked men with hearts given to self serving motives to oppress others, do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
  - Chapter 5 – Approach a sovereign God in reverence, seeking only to know His Will in every situation, not to change God's plans. Be satisfied in what God provides and find true contentment.
  - Chapter 6 – There is wisdom in embracing pain in life knowing both prosperity and adversity are from the hand of God. Neither is an indication of our stance before God in eternity. This is not how God's ways are revealed to man.
  - Chapter 7 – God's measurement of righteousness is perfection while man's measurements are self-righteousness and can lead to a denial of God. There is no bargaining with God.
  - Chapter 8 – In eternal ways, it will go well for men who fear God; this is true even when the righteous receive evil while on earth.
  - Chapter 9 – Men are born evil; deeds can't make them righteous. God brings eternal life to some. These should honor God each day by their deeds for this is wisdom.
  - Chapter 10 – A little foolishness in one's life can outweigh much wisdom and consume the fool, like Absalom and Ahithophel. Man can't know or control his future before God.

**Eccl. 11:1** Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.

**Eccl. 11:2** Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.

**Eccl. 11:3** If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth; and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies.

- v.1 How does Solomon continue? (Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.)

- What does bread represent to man? (Sustenance)
  - To cast your bread is to do what? (To not hold on to but to send away)
- What happens to things put on the surface of the waters? (They are carried away)
- What does Solomon say will happen to the bread? (for you will find it)
  - When will you find it? (after many days.)
  - What you do not hold on to will be brought back, even if it takes a long time.
- What happens to bread when put on water? (It soaks up the water and sinks)
- What is bread made from that a can last? (Wheat)
  - How would one put their wheat on the surface of the water? (Wheat in a container or on a ship)
- What will happen to the wheat sent out in a container or on a ship? (for you will find it after many days.)
  - The wheat can be returned when needed.
- v.2 What else does Solomon say to do? (Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight,)
  - What is a portion? (What one has received)
  - What are we to do with what we have received? (Divide to seven or even to eight)
  - What does divide mean? (To separate into smaller sections)
    - Do not hold on to what we have received but divide it out.
  - Why should we divide our portion? (for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.)
    - Because you do not know what will happen on earth, you can't hold on to what you have.
    - You improve your odds of retaining some of what you may need to sustain yourself if you have diversified, like many often do with their financial investments.
  - In the example of the wheat, it would have been sent to 7 or 8 different locations so that when there is an unexpected disaster somewhere on the earth, or to one of the ships, some of the wheat will have survived somewhere.
- v.3 What example in nature does Solomon use to demonstrate what happens when everything is stored in one place? (If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth)
  - When too much has been gathered in one place ultimately it must be emptied, like water out of the clouds.
  - What example in nature does Solomon use to make his next point? (and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies.)
  - After a tree falls what is true? (wherever the tree falls, there it lies)
    - A tree can't move itself once it has fallen.
    - A person can't change events that happen once they have occurred.



**Eccl. 11:4 He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap.**

**Eccl. 11:5 Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.**

- v.4 What word picture does Solomon present next? (He who watches the wind will not sow)
  - What does it mean for one to 'sow'? (To plant seeds)
  - What could wind blowing do to the seeds when one is planting them? (Carry them away)
  - If a person only looks at the wind and tried to decide when to plant based on the wind circumstances he will not do what? (will not sow)
    - The conclusion is to not look at the wind when deciding to sow; sow anyway. Do not focus on the circumstances you can't control.
  - What other picture does Solomon present? (and he who looks at the clouds will not reap.)
  - Why would one look at the clouds when farming? (Trying to decide if there will be rain for the crop)
    - The one waiting to see circumstances like clouds to decide to plant will not do what? (will not reap)
  - What does reap mean? (To harvest what was planted)
    - The farmer must plant his crop even when he does not know what the clouds will do. It is a matter of faith to plant anyway.
    - Only by planting is there ever a chance to reap or harvest.
  - A person needs to move in the direction of planting without knowing the future if there is ever a chance to harvest. From the planting to the harvesting, the farmer is ultimately not in control of the circumstances surrounding the production.
- v.5 What is man ignorant of? (Just as you do not know the path of the wind)
  - This is a statement of fact.
  - What else is a statement of fact? (and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman)
    - These are both statements of fact all men can agree they can't explain.
    - Man can observe aspects of God's creation and yet man can't understand all the intricacies of that creation.
  - What conclusion then does Solomon say is true for men to accept? (so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things)
    - Man can't explain the intricacies of God's activity in what he can plainly feel or observe like wind or the miracle of birth then he must accept he has no chance to try and explain the motivations behind and the plans God has for all He has

done or will do in the future.

**Ecccl. 11:6 Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.**

**Ecccl. 11:7 The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun.**

**Ecccl. 11:8 Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything that is to come will be futility.**

- v.6 Even when you can't explain what God is doing or why He is doing it, what are we to do anyway? (Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening)

This is another example of a merism, meaning not just to work day and night but to work all day.

Why are we to work all day? (for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed)

What could be true? (or whether both of them alike will be good)

You work not knowing what the outcome will be.

v 7 What advantage is there to planting or working during the day? (The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun.)

This could be a play on the words Solomon spoke many times addressing life lived out under the sun, or on earth. It is good for man to see what God is doing.

v 8 What else should man enjoy? (Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all)

What specifically does Solomon warn will happen in many years? (and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many)

Contained in the years to rejoice over will be what? (days of darkness)

Notice not years of darkness but days of darkness compared to years in which to rejoice.

How are the days of darkness described? (for they will be many)

What perspective would the days of darkness be seen with? (Everything that is to come will be futility.)

The days of darkness are futility in the larger picture of life. Do not let those days change your focus of rejoicing in the years given to man.

Eccl. 11:9-10

Eccl. 11:9 Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.

Eccl. 11:10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.

v 9 In futility, how do men respond? (Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes.)

Men do not know the number of years they have been given by God.

When men assume they have many years to live what will they do with the days of their youth? (Rejoice, heart embraces pleasantries, impulses and the desires of the eyes)

Solomon ends with what warning for those who would live this way? (Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.)

A young man is held to the same expectations that older men are held to. There is no acceptable time to be flagrant with the days allotted to any man.

v 10 Because judgment is coming, what are men to do? (So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body)

Do not hold on to grief, anger and pain.

Why are men to not hold on to these things? (because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting)

What we experience in childhood and even in the younger healthier times of life are short lived. This is the time to be in training for how to handle these events. Life is filled with many

unknowns, so rejoice in what God allows always (v.8).

- Review of Ecclesiastes 1-11:
  - Chapter 1 – This book is Wisdom literature, written by Solomon, a man God gave wisdom and discernment greater than any man ever.
    - The book of Ecclesiastes establishes Solomon's theory of the meaning of life, there is nothing new under the sun to give man the meaning of life.
    - The thesis is the meaning of life can't be found in the creation, therefore it is vanity to try and seek for it there.
  - Chapter 2 – Solomon's personal experiences of seeking an answer through wisdom and wealth did not give the answer to understanding the meaning of life also called an *advantage in life*.
  - Chapter 3 – There is a God-appointed time for every event under heaven. Man's purpose in life is to seek God's sovereign will lived out.
  - Chapter 4 – God allows wicked men with hearts given to self serving motives to oppress others, do not be surprised when you witness this truth.
  - Chapter 5 – Approach a sovereign God in reverence, seeking only to know His Will in every situation, not with a heart to change God's plans. Be satisfied in what God provides and find true contentment.
  - Chapter 6 – There is wisdom in embracing pain in life knowing both prosperity and adversity are from the hand of God. Neither is an indication of our stance before God in eternity. This is not how God's ways are revealed to man.
  - Chapter 7 – God's measurement of righteousness is perfection while man's measurements are self-righteousness and can lead to a denial of God. There is no bargaining with a sovereign God.
  - Chapter 8 – In eternal ways, it will go well for men who fear God, this is true even when the righteous men receive evil while on earth.
  - Chapter 9 – Men are born evil; deeds can't make them righteous. God brings eternal life to some, these should honor God each day by their deeds and in this is wisdom.
  - Chapter 10 – A little foolishness in one's life can outweigh much wisdom and consume the fool. Man can't know or control his future before God.
  - Chapter 11 – Embrace the future, here on earth and eternally, by living each day doing the work of God.

**Eccl. 12:1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them";**

**Eccl. 12:2 before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain;**

**Eccl. 12:3 in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble, and mighty men stoop, the grinding ones stand idle because they are few, and those who look through windows grow dim;**

**Eccl. 12:4 and the doors on the street are shut as the sound of the grinding mill is**

**low, and one will arise at the sound of the bird, and all the daughters of song will sing softly.**

**Ecc. 12:5 Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective. For man goes to his eternal home while mourners go about in the street.**

- v.1 What focus does Solomon direct now? (Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth,)
  - What does 'also' refer to?
  - What had Solomon just said in Ecclesiastes 11:10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.
    - The reader is to remove grief and anger from their heart and put away pain from their body and now also remember your Creator.
  - Who is the 'Creator'? (God)
  - Whose 'Creator'? (your)
    - All men are to know this God is their 'Creator'.
    - God is the Creator of all men, the believing and the unbelieving men.
  - How does one 'remember' your Creator? Psalm 143:5

**Psa. 143:5 I remember the days of old;  
I meditate on all Your doings;  
I muse on the work of Your hands.**

- All men are to actively learn of all God has done as Creator and meditate on what God has done. This can be seen in the creation and can be put in perspective by a study of God's word.
  - When is it best for men to know their Creator? (in the days of your youth,)
  - Why is it best to know the creator in the days of your youth? (before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them");
    - What are 'evil days'?

**Eph. 5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,**

**Eph. 5:16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.**

**Eph. 5:17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

**Eph. 6:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.**

- The evil days are the days we live out life here on earth with all of the challenges involved in our day to day exposure to sin and evil. Solomon says we need to know our Creator before we have to deal with these days.
- Eccl 12:1 How does this verse end? (and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no delight in them”);
  - Solomon draws us from pondering the days of evil to the years where we say, “I have no delight in them”. It is best to acknowledge the “Creator” before these years of no delight are upon us.
    - Solomon has moved to describing the years that have no delight in them. The years as the body ages and draws closer to death.
- v.2 What picture is presented? (before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain;)
  - What causes the light of the sun, moon and stars to be darkened from man’s perspective? (Clouds)
    - Solomon is using the picture of the clouds arriving and dimming the light before darkness sets in. The clouds are specifically mentioned as what returns after the rain. The gloom that sets in after a rain verses the clouds clearing out. This is often what happens in Israel during the Fall when there can be days of overcast clouds continually.
  - How is this descriptive of what happens to men as they age? (The loss of clear vision)
    - Solomon begins presenting images descriptive of the aging process.
- v.3 How else is this time described by Solomon? (in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble,)
  - Trembling is a picture of shaking that comes on for many as they age for a variety of reasons in the legs, arms, hands and head they can often be affected this way.
  - What does Solomon add? (and mighty men stoop,)
    - A picture of the body losing height and even bending over from loss of bone strength or use of a walking stick, cane or the helping hand of others.
  - What else does Solomon say? (the grinding ones stand idle because they are few,)
  - What could grinders be referring to? (Teeth)
    - As men lose teeth they often must eat soft foods that don’t require much chewing.
  - What does Solomon describe next? (and those who look through windows grow dim;)
    - What does ‘dim’ mean? (Dictionary.dotcom states as not seen clearly or in detail; indistinct;) Also (not clear to the mind; vague:)
    - This description would cover both the literal ability of the eyes not to see as well but also would describe the inability of the mind to comprehend or retain information as well as it once did.

- v.4 What picture does Solomon describe next? (and the doors on the street are shut as the sound of the grinding mill is low,)
  - When there is not much taken in by the chewing of teeth (grinding mill is low) what other body system can be affected by this? (Digestion)
  - What then might be meant by (the doors on the street are shut)
  - What else happens? (and one will arise at the sound of the bird,)
  - When do the birds begin to sing? (Very early in the morning)
    - As we age the ability to sleep soundly is affected and many wake early.
  - What else is described? (and all the daughters of song will sing softly.)
  - From the person's perspective the song is heard how? (softly)
    - The person can't hear the daughters of song as well anymore as they start to lose their ability to hear.
- v.5 What also happens to men? (Furthermore, men are afraid of a high place and of terrors on the road;)
  - Why do men become afraid of a high place? (A place they could fall from)
    - This could be physical as well as positionally.
    - There are those who would want to replace a man and take him from his high position.
  - What are terrors on the road? (Bandits who would take ones' possessions, or injure and possibly kill a man)
    - Men become more frightened by the possibility of harm coming to them as they age.
  - What is described next? (the almond tree blossoms,)
  - What does an almond tree look like when it blossoms? (Covered in small white flowers)
    - What happens to men as he ages that makes him look like the almond tree when it blossoms? (Hair turns grey or white)
  - What picture is given next? (the grasshopper drags himself along, and the caperberry is ineffective.)
    - Before we look at the definition of 'grasshopper' we will look at what a caperberry is and this will help us see what the 'grasshopper' is referring to.
- [Caperberry](#):
  - The familiar "capers" of commerce are the young buds, but the berries were the parts most used in ancient times; their reputation as excitants of sexual desire is ancient and widespread.
    - This seems to be specific to sexual desire but it might have a broader implication of physical desire in general.
    - The caperberry was not able to help solve the problem of what? (the grasshopper drags himself along,)



- What is Solomon using a grasshopper to represent? (A man's sexual organ and/or his sexual ability)
  - One could say this is a drag.
    - This could be specific or it can also have the broader meaning of inability to enjoy physical pleasure of all kinds.
- What does Solomon state eventually happens to a man? (For man goes to his eternal home)
  - What does it mean for a man to go to his eternal home? (He physically dies and his soul moves on to its destination)
  - What do the physically living do? (while mourners go about in the street.)

**Ecc. 12:6 Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed;**

**Ecc. 12:7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.**

- v.6 What does Solomon encourage men to do faced with the inevitability of death? (Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed,)
  - Who is the Him referring? (God the Creator)
  - What did remember mean in verse 1?
    - Men are to recognize who God is as Creator and life giver from the creation and from the word.
    - This act of 'remember Him' would happen when? (before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed.)
  - What type of bowl would be golden and hanging from a silver chain?
    - This would be a description of a lantern hanging in a room. The bowl is clay or porcelain but is lined with a layer of gold to reflect the flame light throughout the room. The chain would be silver to prevent it from catching on fire.
  - If the chain breaks then the bowl will fall from a height in which it will be crushed. No longer can light be given out to the room.
    - Remember Him before the light of life is extinguished from a person.
    - This may be a picture of the nervous system's connection to the brain and the disconnection before death.
- What is the next picture Solomon gives? (the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed;)
  - The pitcher by the well would be used for what? (To be let down into the well to draw up the water from the depths of the well)
    - If there is no pitcher left by the well then no water can be drawn up.

- What is a cistern? (A storage unit for rainwater or to hold water for home use)
- What is the wheel at the cistern used for? (The wheel operates a pulley system often made of cord or ropes to lower something into the cistern to draw up the water)
  - If the wheel is crushed then one can not draw up water from the cistern.
  - This may be a reference to the heart no longer operating to supply blood to the body before death.
- v.7 After one dies what is described as happening next? (then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.)
  - The physical part of man will return to dust.

**Gen. 3:19 By the sweat of your face**

**You will eat bread,  
Till you return to the ground,  
Because from it you were taken;  
For you are dust,  
And to dust you shall return.”**

**Job 10:9 ‘Remember now, that You have made me as clay;  
And would You turn me into dust again?’**

**Job 34:15 All flesh would perish together,  
And man would return to dust.**

**Psa. 90:3 You turn man back into dust  
And say, “Return, O children of men.”**

**Eccl. 3:20 All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.**

- The physical part of all men return to the dust of the earth.
  - What happens to the spirit of men? (will return to God who gave it.)
  - The Creator God of Ecclesiastes 12:1 is the same God who designates where the spirit of man will go at his death.

**Eccl. 12:8 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “all is vanity!”**

**Eccl. 12:9 In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs.**

**Eccl. 12:10 The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly.**

**Eccl. 12:11** The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd.

**Eccl. 12:12** But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body.

- v.8 What does Solomon conclude? (“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “all is vanity!”)
  - Where did Solomon use this exact phrase before? (Eccl. 1:2 “Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”)
    - The use of the exact words at the beginning of the book and at the end of the book demonstrate a literary device known as an inclusio.

**Wikipedia states in biblical studies, inclusio is a literary device based on a concentric principle, also known as bracketing or an envelope structure, which consists of creating a frame by placing similar material at the beginning and end of a section, although whether this material should consist of a word or a phrase, or whether greater amounts of text also qualify, and of what length the frames section should be, are matters of some debate.**

- The use of this inclusio demonstrates the essence of the entire book of Ecclesiastes are taken together to make Solomon’s point.
  - This would also demonstrate the book has a consistent theme and was written by one man, Solomon.
  - What did we see vanity to mean back in Eccl.1:2?
    - Other translations use futile in place of vanity.
    - The Hebrew word used here is meaningless. Something devoid of value, significance, meaning, without real substance, or permanency.
- This was indeed the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes. Life is short on earth. Most everything men spend their time doing will be meaningless in the measurement of eternity. Focus on pleasing God with the time He has given to you.
  - The same analysis is true of the use of the word ‘Preacher’ to describe the author. See lesson one for a review.
- v.9 What does Solomon the Preacher say about himself and why his words should be taken to heart? (In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs.)

**1Kings 4:29** Now God gave Solomon wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore.

**1Kings 4:30** Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the sons of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt.

**1Kings 4:31** For he was wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman,

**Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was known in all the surrounding nations.**

**1Kings 4:32** He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.

**1Kings 4:33** He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he spoke also of animals and birds and creeping things and fish.

**1Kings 4:34** Men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

- Solomon's words in Eccl. are not bragging they are simply words of truth for all God had given to him to be shared.
- Eccl. 12:10 This is summed up by Solomon how? (The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly.)
  - I think we can agree Solomon was very creative in his approach to sharing his thoughts in Eccl. and if you take the time to read through the Proverbs and the Song of Songs you will find more ways in which Solomon's amazing talent has been saved for us in the scriptures.
- v.11 What was the purpose of Solomon writing these words? (The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd.)
  - What does goad mean? (Dictionary.dotcom says to provoke or annoy (someone) so as to stimulate some action or reaction.)
    - The words have the purpose of causing one to take action in their life once they understand what is at stake.
  - What description is given next? (and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails;)
  - What does one being a master of something mean? (Dictionary.dotcom states a person with the ability or power to use, control, or dispose of something;)
  - Who would 'masters of the collections' be? (Those who not only hear but use and control their actions by what they have learned.)
    - A well-driven nail is the right size for the job, it is pushed in at the exact angle with the needed force to accomplish the intended goal.
- v.12 Where did this wisdom come from? (they are given by one Shepherd.)
  - 'They' refers to what? (The words given as well as the masters of achieving the actions)
  - Both are given by who? (one Shepherd)
    - There is only one God who gave Solomon his wisdom and his words, that is the one Shepherd given here.
    - The truly wise receive their wisdom from Him.
- v.12 What warning does Solomon give on the topic of the use of words?(But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to

books is wearying to the body.)

- There can be the writing of too many books, or an endless supply of books. Books that are not guided by the one Shepherd in particular.
- What can man do with too many books? (and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body)
- What is excessive devotion to books? (Too much time given to the books, the writing and reading)
  - Gluttony in any form should be avoided.
- What impact can this excessive devotion have? (is wearying to the body)
  - This is a way to encourage people to not just know what the books contain but to use their body in a real way to live out the actions revealed in the study of the books and the wisdom demonstrated. See James 1:22-25.

**James 1:22** But prove yourselves *doers* of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

**James 1:23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

**James 1:24** for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

**James 1:25** But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

- This is not just about busy work or physical doing. Our responses can be different to people when our hearts are changed by what we learned as hearers of the word.
  - We can have a different approach to God because of what we have learned about Him as hearers of the word.
    - This would include our heart changes that cause us to do work for others and for God.

**Eccl. 12:13** The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

**Eccl. 12:14** For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

- v.13 Solomon sums up his work how? (The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.)
  - What conclusion does Solomon bring us to? (Fear God)
  - What does it mean to ‘fear God’?

**Ex. 18:21** “Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.

**Lev. 25:17** ‘So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God.

**Deut. 10:12** “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

**Job 1:8** The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

**Acts 13:26** “Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.

**Rev. 19:5** And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.”

- Those who fear God will:
  - Be men of truth
  - Hate dishonest gain
  - Not wrong one another
  - Walk in the ways of God
  - Love God
  - Serve God with all their heart and soul
  - Will turn away from evil
    - The message of salvation has been sent.
    - Give Praise to God
- Eccl 12:13 What else are we to do? (keep His commandments)

**Deut. 8:6** “Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

**Deut. 13:4** “You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep

**His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.**

- There is a summation of the Law given in the New Testament and Jesus was in agreement with this summation.

**Luke 10:25** And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

**Luke 10:26** And He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?”

**Luke 10:27** And he answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

**Luke 10:28** And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.”

**John 14:21** “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

**1John 3:23** This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

**1John 3:24** The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

**1John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

**Eccl. 12:14** Why is it important to fear God and keep his commandments? (For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.)

**Eccl. 3:17** I said to myself, “God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man,” for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.

**Psa. 96:13** Before the LORD, for He is coming,  
For He is coming to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world in righteousness  
And the peoples in His faithfulness.

**2Cor. 5:6** Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord —

**2Cor. 5:7** for we walk by faith, not by sight —

**2Cor. 5:8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

**2Cor. 5:9** Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

**2Cor. 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- There is a judgment coming for all things and Solomon's warning is that while we are still here on earth we are to have a focus in what we do to be pleasing to God with an eternal focus in mind.