

## **ECCLESIASTES — PART 5**

### **CHAPTERS 10 — END**

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We have been looking at the life of Solomon for the last few weeks. The book of Ecclesiastes is about his observations and today we will reach the conclusion.

#### **Ecclesiastes 10:1**

**1 Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment,  
And cause it to give off a foul odour ;  
So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor.**

**People of reputation can be brought low by a moment's foolishness ... or a character flaw.** King David and Bathsheba? In modern times — Tiger Woods ... Kevin Spacey? "Former" Prince Andrew?

#### **Ecclesiastes 10:2-4**

2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand,  
But a fool's heart at his left.  
3 **Even when a fool walks along the way,  
He lacks wisdom,  
And he shows everyone that he is a fool.**  
4 If the spirit of the ruler rises against you,  
Do not leave your post;  
For conciliation pacifies great offenses.

**Even if you set a fool off in the right direction ... he'll get into trouble.  
A fool is a fool.**

#### **Ecclesiastes 10:5-7**

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun,  
**As an error proceeding from the ruler: (like in verse 7)**  
6 Folly is set in great dignity,  
While the rich sit in a lowly place.  
7 I have seen servants on horses,  
While princes walk on the ground like servants.

**A ruler (someone in power) can make very foolish appointments — totally unqualified people given top positions?** Many question Donald Trump's key appointments — Pam Bondi ... Kash Patel ... Pete Hegseth.

In the UK ... Keir Starmer's appointments such as Lord Hermer ... David Lammy ... Peter Mandelson?

### **Ecclesiastes 10:8-10**

8 **He who digs a pit will fall into it,**

And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent.

9 He who quarries stones may be hurt by them,

And he who splits wood may be endangered by it.

10 If the ax is dull,

And one does not sharpen the edge,

Then he must use more strength;

But wisdom brings success.

Exercise wisdom in your dealings! Otherwise you may injure yourself ... or cause extra work.

**A good illustration of danger of digging a pit for someone else to fall into:**

### **Esther 5:9, 13-14**

9 So **Haman** went out that day joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai.

13 Yet **all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.**"

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "**Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high,** and in the morning **suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it;** then go merrily with the king to the banquet."

**And the thing pleased Haman; so he had the gallows made (*digging a pit for Mordecai*).**

### **Esther 7:8-10**

8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I am in the house?"

As the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.  
9 Now Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "**Look! The gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai,** who spoke good on the king's behalf, **is standing at the house of Haman.**"  
**Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"**  
10 **So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.** Then the king's wrath subsided.

Oops!?

### **Ecclesiastes 10:11-15**

11 A serpent may bite when it is not charmed;  
The babbler is no different.  
12 **The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,**  
**But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up;**  
13 **The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,**  
**And the end of his talk is raving madness.**  
14 **A fool also multiplies words.**  
No man knows what is to be;  
Who can tell him what will be after him?  
15 The labor of fools wearies them,  
For they do not even know how to go to the city!

**Dangerous to hang around with foolish people. Watch your company — you don't want their foolishness to "rub off" on you!**

### **Ecclesiastes 10:16-19**

16 **Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child,**  
**And your princes feast in the morning!**  
17 **Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles,**  
**And your princes feast at the proper time**—  
For strength and not for drunkenness!  
18 Because of laziness the building decays,  
And through idleness of hands the house leaks.  
19 A feast is made for laughter,  
And wine makes merry;  
But **money answers everything.**

**The quality of a nation's leader is key to a successful nation.**

And ... in this world ... money is usually the answer to all questions!  
If you want to understand some controversial matter — “follow the money”.

### **Ecclesiastes 10:20**

20 **Do not curse the king, even in your thought;**

**Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom;**

For a bird of the air may carry your voice,

And a bird in flight may tell the matter. (*A little bird told me*)

**Watch your lips!** Secrets are often difficult to keep! “Walls have ears” — a World War II Poster!

### **Ecclesiastes 11:1-2**

1 **Cast your bread upon the waters,**

**For you will find it after many days.**

2 Give a serving to seven, and also to eight,

For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.

It seems to be encouraging a generous heart — share your “bread” — somewhere in the future you’ll reap a harvest. But it may take time. Be patient!

### **Ecclesiastes 11:3-4**

3 **If the clouds are full of rain,**

**They empty themselves upon the earth;**

And **if a tree falls to the south or the north,**

**In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.**

4 He who observes the wind will not sow,

And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

Verse 3-4: Talking of cause and effect.

### **Ecclesiastes 11:5-6**

5 **As you do not know what is the way of the wind,**

**Or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child,**

**So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.**

6 **In the morning sow your seed,**

**And in the evening do not withhold your hand;**

**For you do not know which will prosper,  
Either this or that,  
Or whether both alike will be good.**

**There are many things we don't understand in life.** Best to be busy — be industrious — **“Whatever your hand finds to do — with your might”**.

#### **Ecclesiastes 11:7-10**

7 Truly the light is sweet,  
And it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun;

8 But if a man lives many years  
And rejoices in them all,  
Yet let him remember the days of darkness,  
For they will be many.  
All that is coming is vanity.

9 **Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,  
And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth;**

**Walk in the ways of your heart,  
And in the sight of your eyes;**

**But know that for all these  
God will bring you into judgment.**

10 Therefore remove sorrow from your heart,  
And **put away evil from your flesh,**  
For childhood and youth are vanity.

Life (light) is good — especially when you're young! Fit ... healthy ... carefree — before adult responsibilities! Enjoy your youth and activities ... **but don't forget that God is watching! Judgment — good or bad — may follow!**

#### **Ecclesiastes 12:1-8**

1 **Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth,  
Before the difficult days come,  
And the years draw near when you say,  
“I have no pleasure in them”:**

2 While the sun and the light,  
The moon and the stars,  
Are not darkened,  
And the clouds do not return after the rain;

3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble, *(the arms?)*  
 And the strong men bow down; *(the legs?)*  
 When the grinders cease because they are few, *(teeth?)*  
 And those that look through the windows grow dim; *(eyes?)*  
 4 When the doors are shut in the streets,  
 And the sound of grinding is low;  
 When one rises up at the sound of a bird, *(a lot of old people can't sleep)*  
 And all the daughters of music are brought low.  
 5 Also they are afraid of height, *(not steady on your feet any longer)*  
 And of terrors in the way; *(don't like leaving the house)*  
 When the almond tree blossoms, *(white hair?)*  
 The grasshopper is a burden,  
 And desire fails.  
 For man goes to his eternal home,  
 And the mourners go about the streets.  
 6 Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, *(spinal cord)*  
 Or the golden bowl is broken, *(cranium?)*  
 Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, *(heart?)*  
 Or the wheel broken at the well.  
 7 **Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,  
 And the spirit will return to God who gave it.**  
 8 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher,  
 "All is vanity."

This passage compares your youth (when you had energy — freedom from aches and pains — could do "fun stuff") — to the aging process. Solomon uses very poetic language to describe aging (perhaps even his own "creaking" body?). There are some old people who are fit and flexible (some folk even in their 90's who run marathons and go dancing) ... but most slow right down. Solomon describes this process — in fairly negative terms ... thus encouraging his younger readers to "make the most" of their youth!

### **Ecclesiastes 12:9-14**

9 And moreover, **because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs.**  
 10 **The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and what was written was upright—words of truth.**

11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.

12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.

13 **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:**

**Fear God and keep His commandments,**

**For this is man's all.**

14 **For God will bring every work into judgment,**

**including every secret thing,**

**Whether good or evil.**

A sort of “epilogue”. **The conclusion to his rambling philosophy — the key to the whole book: “Fear God ...and keep His commandments”.**

It's a fairly good conclusion. Many translations say it's a duty. But it is probably insufficient?

#### **Luke 17:7-10**

7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’?

8 But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’?

9 **Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.**

10 So **likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’ ”**

**Just keeping the commandments — as important as it is — is still being an unprofitable servant!**

There is more than that — other scriptures — **“Love God ... with all of your heart”!**

Also see:

### **1 John 3:21-22**

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

22 And **whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.**

### **Keep the commandments — and please God!**

And so endeth the thoughts of Solomon.

A man who started so well ... but ended up in great darkness — with much of his wisdom corrupted.

It seems to me ... he'll be in the Lake of Fire.

When we last see him in 1Kings Chapter 11 ... we see him with 1,000 women ... who turned his heart to multitudes of other gods ... and set up idols all around Jerusalem.

**God was angry with him. Tore away the House of Israel from his dynasty.**

Solomon died after ruling for 40 years. Probably in his mid-fifties?

I hope I'm wrong about his fate ... but there is no evidence he ever repented. **Consider:**

### **2 Kings 23:3-6**

3 **Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant.**

4 **And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them**

**outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron**, and carried their ashes to Bethel.

5 **Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem**, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven.

6 And **he brought out the wooden image from the house of the LORD**, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground it to ashes, and threw its ashes on the graves of the common people.

**Young King Josiah starts to destroy the pagan idols around Jerusalem.**

#### **2 Kings 23:13-14**

13 Then **the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem**, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, **which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon.**

14 And **he broke in pieces the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images**, and filled their places with the bones of men.

**The high places that Solomon built were still there!** (Approximately 300 years afterwards!). **So ... clearly Solomon had not destroyed them in his day (which I think he would have done if he had repented?!)**

Also ... **if he had repented ... I believe God would have set the record straight ... as he did with King Manasseh.**

#### **2 Chronicles 33:1-11**

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

2 But **he did evil in the sight of the LORD**, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

3 For **he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.**

4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.”

5 And **he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.**

6 Also **he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.**

7 **He even set a carved image, 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 out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever;

8 and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.”

9 **So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.**

10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen.

11 Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon.

**He did great evil — even leading the people into sin. Ended up a prisoner. But:**

### **2 Chronicles 33:12-13**

12 Now **when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,**

13 and prayed to Him; **and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom.** Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

## **REPENTED!**

### **2 Chronicles 33:15-16**

15 **He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast them out of the city.**

16 **He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.**

## **Sought to restore the worship of the true God.**

So ... in this case — God was careful to show not just his evil deeds — but also his repentance and restoration.

## **God has given us the whole story.**

If Solomon had repented ... I believe God would have included that part of his story. It's not mentioned ... however ... so — the Lake of Fire ... I suspect!

Any of us — if we turn our back against God — it can happen to us.