

ECCLESIASTES — PART 2

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The Book of Ecclesiastes was written by “The Preacher” (Qoheleth in Hebrew).

None other than King Solomon.

But **the story of Solomon’s life shows how he sadly departs from God.** Though initially blessed with wisdom ... prosperity and fame — he latterly turned to 1,000 women and their gods. **He became a serial idolater.**

God punished him — took away the Kingdom of Israel from him.

He came to the throne as a teenager ... died 40 years later ... somewhere in his mid fifties?

When he wrote Ecclesiastes ... he was in a very dark place. Cut himself off from God — which was his choice! God was angry with him. He knew he had no future ... was depressed ... almost suicidal.

We should treat his opinions with great caution because they are pretty flawed!

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3

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

2 **“Vanity of vanities,”** says the Preacher;

“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

3 What profit has a man from all his labor

In which he toils **under the sun?** (*“Under the sun” — mentioned 29 times*)

VANITY — ALL IS FUTILITY — POINTLESS!!

Ecclesiastes 1:12-13,

12 I the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I **set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven**; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised.

A major project — experiment by trying everything.

As we saw last week ... **his early wisdom had been corrupted. It was now “earthly ... sensual and demonic”?**

Ecclesiastes 2:1-3

1 I said in my heart, **“Come now, I will test you with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure”**; but surely, **this also was vanity.**

2 I said of laughter—“Madness!”; and of mirth, “What does it accomplish?”

3 **I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine**, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and **how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.** (“Gratify my flesh” — NOT “my spirit”)

Let me try entertainment — fun — pleasure. No responsibilities!

Lots of people might think a life of just amusement would be desirable?
But ... vanity ... pointless!

Ecclesiastes 2:4-9

4 **I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards.**

5 **I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.**

6 **I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove.**

7 **I acquired male and female servants**, and had servants born in my house. Yes, **I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me.**

8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.

9 **So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem.** Also my wisdom remained with me.

ESV: Verse 8 I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines.

NASB: Verse 8 I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines

Will great building projects — parks ... gardens ... bring satisfaction!
Or prosperity? Or music ... orchestras ... singers ... dancers?

Ecclesiastes 2:10-11

10 **Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.**

I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,

For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;
And this was my reward from all my labor.

11 **Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done**

And on the labor in which I had toiled;

And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind.

There was no profit under the sun.

ALL POINTLESS ... WORTHLESS!

He has a spiritual vacuum — spending money on projects and acquisitions is not going to fill it!

Ecclesiastes 2:12-16

12 Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and madness and folly;

For **what can the man do who succeeds the king?—**

Only what he has already done.

13 Then I saw that wisdom excels folly

As light excels darkness.

14 The wise man's eyes are in his head,

But the fool walks in darkness.

Yet I myself perceived

That the same event happens to them all.

15 **So I said in my heart,**

“As it happens to the fool,

It also happens to me,

And why was I then more wise?”

Then I said in my heart,
“This also is vanity.”

16 For **there is no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever,**

Since all that now is will be forgotten in the days to come.

And how does a wise man die? As the fool!

Whether you’re wise (as Solomon still believes he is) ... or a fool —we all have the same conclusion — death!

So what’s the point of being a wise man? And in years to come ... you won’t be remembered any more than a foolish peasant!

Verse 12: who is “the man” who will succeed the king? His own son!
And Solomon dismisses him — he could never do more than I’ve done!

Ecclesiastes 2:17-21

17 **Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind.**

18 **Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me.**

19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. **This also is vanity.**

20 **Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun.**

21 For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not laboured for it. **This also is vanity and a great evil.**

Suicidal? Hated life!

He is bitter he has to leave his projects to “the man” who will come after him. That’s his son ! Will he be as wise as me? Or a fool? Either way ... he’ll rule over all of my works.

He doesn't seem to have much love or respect for his son (Rehoboam).

Most parents want to leave an inheritance to their children? Give them a better opportunity?

Proverbs 13:22

22 **A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,**

But the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

A good man leaves an inheritance! Solomon knew this. He wrote it!!

It seems to be 2 obvious "bad attitudes" that Solomon had?

- i. Life is tedious ... pointless ... may as well be dead.
- ii. Death is final. Whether wise or foolish ... poor or wealthy — death is the end.

But that's not what the Bible reveals!

John 15:10-11

10 **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love,** just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11 **"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."**

Jesus wants us to be full of joy (second fruit of the Holy Spirit)!

Philippians 4:4-8

4 **Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!**

5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;**

7 **and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

8 Finally, brethren, **whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report**, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Rejoice! God will provide peace of mind (sorely lacking in Solomon's life?). **Meditate on what's good and lovely** ... not like Solomon's focusing on everything that's negative!!

As far as death being “final” — not for Christians.

Romans 2:5-10

5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

6 who “will render to each one according to his deeds”:

7 **eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality**;

8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath,

9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;

10 **but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

GLORY AND IMMORTALITY AWAIT THOSE WHO SEEK GOD'S WAY!!
Not “the end”!

Romans 8:16-18

16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God**,

17 and if children, then **heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

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

A GLORIOUS INHERITANCE.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: **We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—**

52 **in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.** For **the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.**

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: **“Death is swallowed up in victory.”**

55 **“O Death, where is your sting?
O Hades, where is your victory?”**

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

57 **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

RESURRECTION TO AN ETERNAL ... GLORIOUS FUTURE!

Solomon should have known this? Probably did at one-time? Abraham looked forward to living in the city whose builder and architect is God — Abraham and Sarah understood their eternal future!

Almost certain that Solomon once knew this — but now separated from God and only the blackness of death to look forward to?

Abraham is in the Heroes of Faith of Hebrews Chapter 11 — but not Solomon.

Ecclesiastes 2:22-23

22 For **what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun?**

23 **For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome;** even in the night his heart takes no rest. **This also is vanity.**

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

1 **To everything there is a season,**

A time for every purpose under heaven:

2 A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck what is planted;
3 A time to kill,
And a time to heal;
A time to break down,
And a time to build up;
4 A time to weep,
And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
And a time to dance;
5 A time to cast away stones,
And a time to gather stones;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
6 A time to gain,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to throw away;
7 A time to tear,
And a time to sew;
A time to keep silence,
And a time to speak;
8 A time to love,
And a time to hate;
A time of war,
And a time of peace.

A well-known pop song from 1965 ... by The Byrds (Turn, Turn, Turn)!

A generally true “observation”. **There are seasons in life which are better than others ... for some purposes.** Easier to study when you’re young and have few responsibilities. Raising a family is easier when you’re young and have plenty of energy!

Ecclesiastes 3:10-13

10 **I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied.**

11 **He has made everything beautiful in its time.** Also **He has put eternity in their hearts**, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

12 I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives,

13 and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.

Man is made in God's image and likeness. It seems there is a yearning in man's heart for "eternity". Most cultures have religious beliefs — often with a future life.

But the truth of our eternal future cannot be discovered by logic and human research? We need the Bible ... to reveal eternal truths to us!

Ecclesiastes 3:16-17

16 Moreover I saw **under the sun:**

In the place of judgment,

Wickedness was there;

And **in the place of righteousness,**

Iniquity was there.

17 I said in my heart,

"God shall judge the righteous and the wicked,

For there is a time there for every purpose and for every work."

All around us ... we see wickedness and injustice where we would hope to see truth and integrity?

Ecclesiastes 3:18-20

18 I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals."

19 For **what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other.** Surely, they all have one breath; **man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity.**

20 **All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.**

Solomon seems to have lost all knowledge of man's true potential?

He believes that a man's death is similar to the death of a dog or a cow? All go to the same place — the grave. "The End"!

In Solomon's view ... a man has no advantage over a beast of the field! They have the same destiny!

He can be really morbid at times!

What about:

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

9 But as it is written:

**"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love
Him."**

10 **But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.** For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

God has prepared an incredible ... difficult-to-describe future ... which lies ahead of us! We have an incredible human potential!

Hebrews 2:5-8

5 For **He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.**

6 But one testified in a certain place, saying:

**"What is man that You are mindful of him,
Or the son of man that You take care of him?"**

7 **You have made him a little lower than the angels;**

**You have crowned him with glory and honor,
And set him over the works of Your hands.**

8 **You have put all things in subjection under his feet."**

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

Eventually ... man will rule over the whole universe ... will be crowned with glory.

This is quoted from Psalm Chapter 8 — a Psalm of King David. If David knew this — surely his son Solomon did too?

Solomon is in a very sorry state. Shows the danger of turning away from God ... no matter how much wisdom you start with!