HAT THE

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MUCH TO HIS CHAGRIN, SOLOMON FINDS SOMETHING NEW UNDER THE SUN



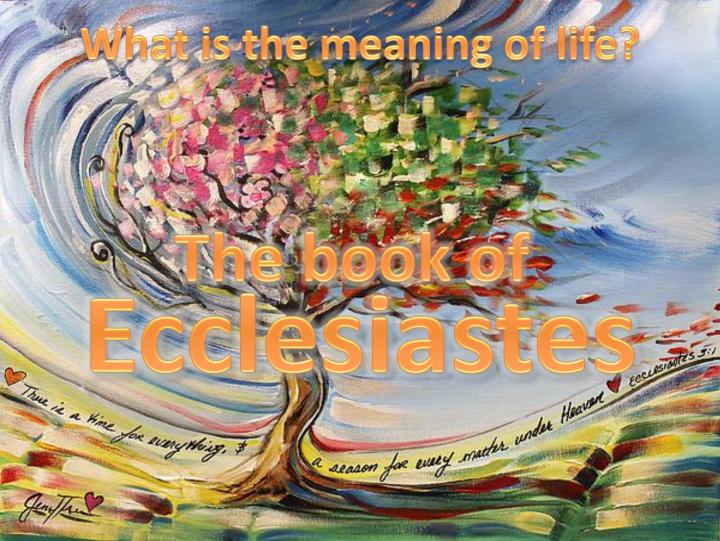
BUBLE IS ABOUT

The book of Ecclesiastes

26She speaks with isdom, and faithful astruction is on her 30Charm is deceptive m all." sed of their fleeting: but a woman who feel LORD is perishing. tons ²⁷She watc's over the affairs of her to be praised. anguish: 31Give her the reward she had ned. usehold eir poverty and bes not eat the bread of and let her works bring he wise at y no more the city gate. idleness. annot speak are poor and **Ecclesiastes** of Noble Wisdom Is Meaningless Eve thing Is Meaningless r who can 12I, the Teacher, was king over I in Te words of the Teacher, a son of Da-Jerusalem. 13I devoted myself to st. and nan rubies. vi king in Jerusalem: to explore by wisdom all that is do nder idence in her 2"Me pingless! Meaningless!" heaven. What a heavy burden Golf as laid ue. on men! 14I have seen all the this hat are say the Teacher. harm, "Utter meaningless! done under the sun; all of the mean-Every ing is meaningless." ingless, a chasing after the 15What is twisted canno traightened; What does an gain from all his labor what is lacking carling counted. ands. at which he oils under the sun? ships, 4Generations col. and generations go, Look, I have afar. but the earth reasons forever.

The sun rises and the sets, 16I thought to sdom more than Il dark; grown and ince Jerusalem beer family and hurries back to when much of wisrvant girls ex ex The wind blows to the south M applied mydom and knowledge. buys it; and turns to the north; self to the understan plants a round and round it goes, also of madness and foll ever returning on its course. this too is a chasing af -uslV:





Fear God

"The remarkable thing about fearing God is that, when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else."

Oswald Chambers

Ecclesiastes is in our Bible because it tells where we'll end up if we don't discover His way to live!

POLYGAMY (700 CHARGES), CONCUBINAGE (300 CHARGES), PROFLIGATE SPENDING, HERESY

WANTED

SOLOMON, KING OF UNITED ISRAEL

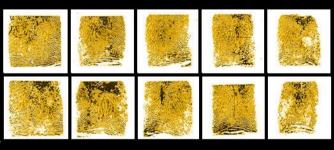
ALIASES: Jedidiah, Kohelet (Koheleth, Qoheleth or Qohelet), Suleiman (Islam).



Left Facing

Front

(current photograph not available)



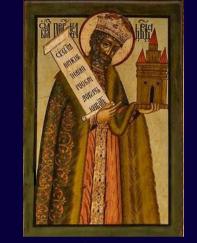
DESCRIPTION

AGE: b. 990 BC, Jerusalem: d. Age 59, 931 BC, Jerusalem, Israel HEIGHT: 5'9" WEIGHT: 150-180 lbs EYES: brown HAIR: brown BUILD: medium COMPLEXION: swarthy NATIONALITY: Israel OCCUPATION: 3rd King of United Israel; Poet; Builder; Songwriter FATHER: David MOTHER: Bathsheba BROTHER: Adonijah WIVES: Ammonite Princess Namaah, Pharaoh's Daughter; +698 KNOWN ASSOCIATES: Queen of Sheba; Zadok the priest; Nathan the prophet; Benaiah the captain of the army;



David

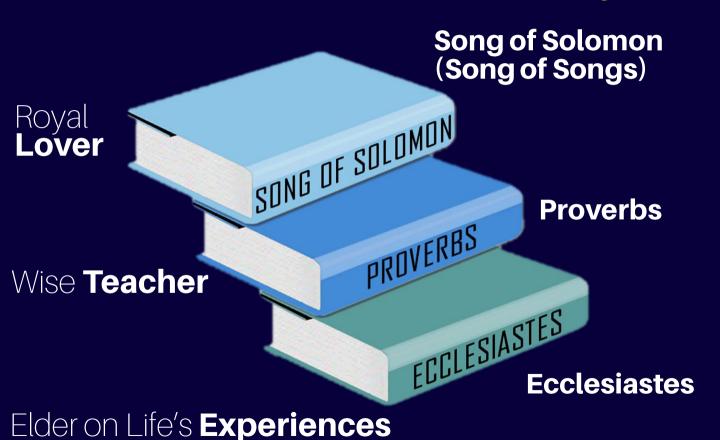
- David made many mistakes and committed many crimes like adultery and murder.
- Yet he continually repented and "was a man after God's own heart."
- The Bible extols David above all others.



Solomon

- Solomon would seem an ideal man, from an earthly perspective.
- But he went away from God and left no record that he returned to God.
- New Testament references to Solomon are derisive.

What did Solomon have to say?



The theme of Ecclesiastes

"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher;
"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun?

One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever.

The Book of Ecclesiastes
Verses 1:2-4

Solomon's term for God



Since Solomon is dealing exclusively with what he sees "under the sun" (i.e., the Creation"), he consistently uses *Elohim*.

What's your perspective?

Perspective

Under the sun HevelAll is vapour(meaningless)

Problem



Gladness in heart to be working with God.

What you see is all in how you look at it!

Is life worth living?



Defining the problem

Ecclesiastes Chapter 1

- Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.
- That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.
- But we all forget the past.
- So is life under the sun really meaningless?
- Solomon applied his heart to know wisdom, but it was not easy. Much wisdom brings much sorrow.



Ecclesiastes Chapter 2

- Does wealth bring satisfaction?
- The richest man in the world tested enjoyment by trying every kind of pleasure; wine, women, song, mirth, all that money can buy. Nothing satisfied.
- He then tested employment, building mega-structures and gardens and becoming even richer and more powerful, and increasing his worries.
- All was meaningless! The wise die like the foolish.
- All we can do is enjoy life while we can. To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness.



The problem defined: is life worth living?

- NO! Life under the sun is not worth living:
- the monotony of life (1:4-11)
- the vanity of wisdom (1:12-18)
- the futility of wealth (2:1-11)
- the certainty of death (2:12-23)

Is life worth living?



Issue 1: The monotony of life

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3

- To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:
 - A time to live, and a time to die.
 - A time to mourn, and a time to dance.
 - A time to love, a time to hate.
 - A time of war, and a time of peace.
- It is the gift of God that man should find pleasure in his work.
- For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?

MONOTONY

Ecclesiastes Chapter 4

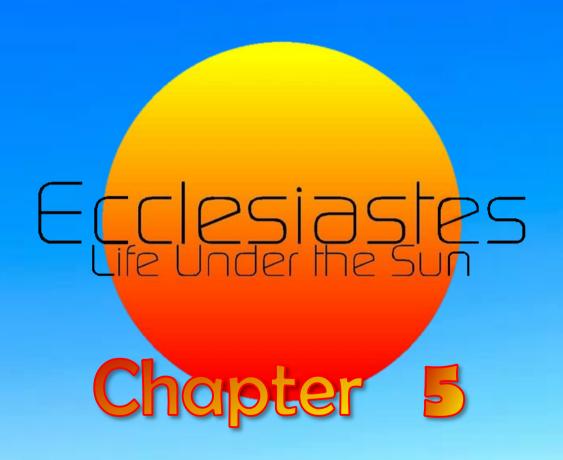
- I saw the tears of the oppressed.
- Two have a good reward for their toil. And a three-fold cord is not soon broken.
- I saw everyone follow a new king. This too is meaningless!
- I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive.



Is life worth living?



Issue 2: The futility of wealth



Don't rob the LORD

Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

² Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.

For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.

³ For a dream comes through much activity,

And a fool's voice is known by his many words.

⁴ When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For *He has* no pleasure in fools.

Pay what you have vowed—

⁵ Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? ⁷ For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity.

But fear God.



SOVIET SAYING:

WE PRETEND TO WORK

YOU PRETEND TO PAY US Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? ⁷ For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity.

But fear God.



ECCLESIASTES:

WE PRETEND TO PRAY

GOD PRETENDS TO BLESS US

Employ wealth

- If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.
- ⁹ Moreover the profit of the land is for all; *even* the king is served from the field.



- He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase.

 This also is vanity.
- When goods increase,
 They increase who eat them;
 So what profit have the owners
 Except to see *them* with their eyes?

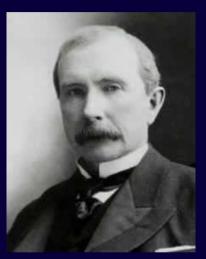


- He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.
- 11 When goods increase,
 They increase who eat them;
 So what profit have the owners
 Except to see *them* with their eyes?
- The sleep of a labouring man *is* sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.
- 13 There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.
- But those riches perish through misfortune; When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand.

Case Study

John D. Rockefeller, Sr. (1839-1937),







In 1892, 53-year-old John D. Rockefeller, the world's only billionaire, earned a million dollars a week. But he was a sickly man living on milk and crackers who couldn't sleep because of worry. When he started giving money away, his health radically improved and he lived to celebrate his ninety-eighth birthday!

AS HE CAME FORTH OF HIS MOTHER'S WOMB, NAKED SHALL HE RETURN TO GO AS HE CAME, AND SHALL TAKE NOTHING OF HIS LABOUR, WHICH HE MAY CARRY AWAY IN HIS HAND.

ECCLESIASTES 5:15 KJV

- 15. As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came;And he shall take nothing from his labourWhich he may carry away in his hand.
- And this also is a severe evil—
 Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.
 And what profit has he who has laboured for the wind?

If your outgo exceeds your income,



Then your upkeep will be your downfall.

All his days he also eats in darkness,
And he has much sorrow and sickness and anger.

Summary of evils under the sun



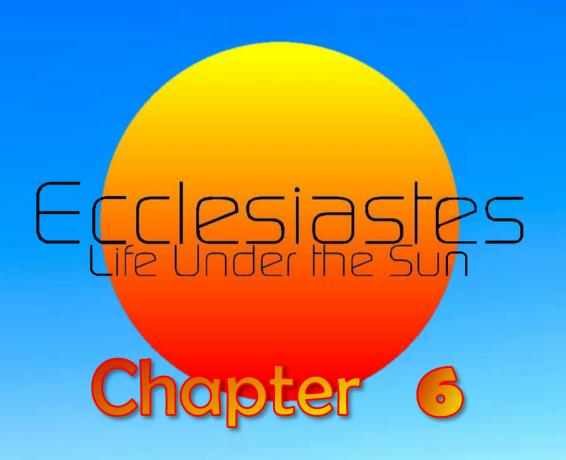
People dying and taking nothing with them from their labours (5:15)

Enjoy wealth

18 Here is what I have seen:

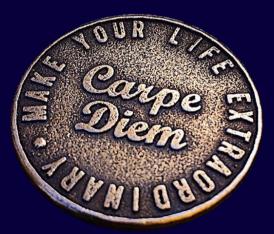
It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage.

- 19 As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labour—this is the gift of God.
- ²⁰ For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.



Three of life's mysteries

- 1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:
- A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil affliction.



- If a man begets a hundred *children* and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say *that* a stillborn child *is* better than he—
- ⁴ for it [the stillborn] comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. ⁵ Though it has not seen the sun or known *anything*, this has more rest than that man, ⁶ even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness.

Do not all go to one place?



- All the labour of man is for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied.
- For what more has the wise man than the fool? What does the poor man have, Who knows how to walk before the living?
- Better is the sight of the eyes
 than the wandering of desire.
 This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.



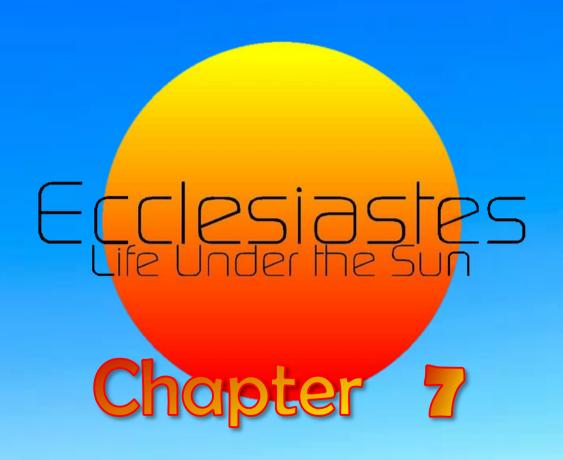
- Whatever one is, he has been named already,
 For it is known that he is man;
 And he cannot contend
 with Him who is mightier than he.
- ¹¹ Since there are many things that increase vanity, How *is* man the better?
- For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow?
 Who can tell a man what will happen after him under

the sun?

Is life worth living?



Issue 3: The vanity of wisdom



Wisdom can make life better

A good name [shem] better than precious ointment [shemen], And the day of death than the day of one's birth;



I'm leaving you a good name, son. Don't stuff it up!

The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.

Proverb 10:7

Wisdom can make life better

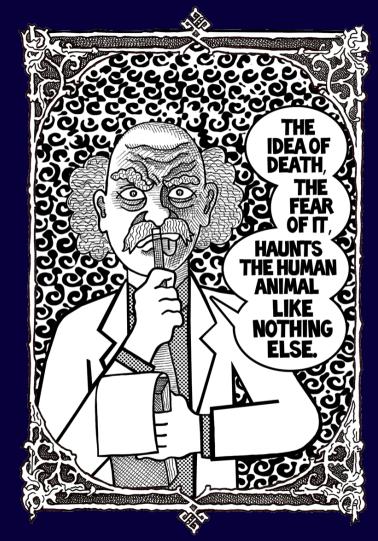
- A good name [shem] better than precious ointment [shemen], And the day of death than the day of one's birth;
- Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting,

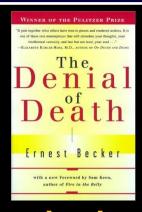
For that *is* the end of all men; And the living will take *it* to heart.

"Everyone has **three names**:

- one we are **born** with,
- one others call us by, and
- one we earn through our actions."

- Sorrow is better than laughter,
 For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.
- The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.





"... the idea of death, the fear of it, haunts
the human animal like nothing else; it is a
mainspring of human activity—
activity designed largely to avoid the
fatality of death, to overcome it by
denying in some way that it is the
final destiny for man"

ERNEST BECKER



It is the denial of death that is partially responsible for people living empty, purposeless lives; for when you live as if you'll live forever, it becomes too easy to postpone the things you know you must do.

--- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross---

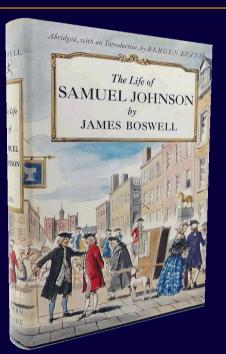


"If the denial of death is self-hatred, as it is to deny our freedom and live in fear of death (which is to say, to live in a form of bondage), then the acceptance and affirmation of death is indeed a form of self-love."

SIMON CRITCHLEY -

- It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise Than for a man to hear the song [shiyr] of fools.
- For like the crackling of thorns [ciyr'im] under a pot [ciyr], So is the laughter of the fool.

 This also is vanity.



British literary giant Samuel Johnson was being showered with compliments by a "celebrated lady" at a gathering.

He asked her to desist, "Spare me, I beseech you, dear madam!" But she "still laid it on."

Finally Johnson said, "Dearest lady, consider with yourself what your flattery is worth, before you bestow it so freely."

- ⁷ Surely oppression [עֹשֶׁק, `osheq</sup>] destroys a wise man's reason,
 And a bribe debases the heart.
- The end of a thing is better than its beginning;
 The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

ROMANS 8:28 NKJV

And we know that all things work together (synergeo) for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.



Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.



Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

Wisdom Helps Us See Life Clearly

¹¹ Wisdom is good with an inheritance, And profitable to those who see the sun.

Wealth

 $\stackrel{12}{\sim}$ For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, But the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it.

Providence 13 Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked?

Adversity & 14 Prosperity

In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him.

Righteousness and Sin

- ¹⁵ I have seen everything in my days of vanity:
 - There is a just *man* who perishes in his righteousness,
 And there is a wicked *man* who prolongs *life* in his wickedness.
- Do not be overly righteous,Nor be overly wise:Why should you destroy yourself?
- Do not be overly wicked,Nor be foolish:Why should you die before your time?
- It is good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all.

Inability to understand what God Is doing

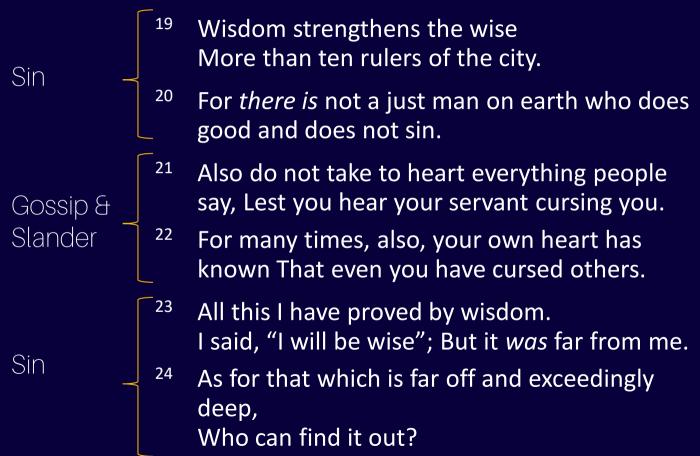
25

- ²³ All this I have proved by wisdom.
 I said, "I will be wise"; But it was far from me.
- As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep,
 Who can find it out?
 - To search and seek out wisdom and the reason of things, To know the wickedness of folly,

 Even of foolishness and madness.



Wisdom Helps Us Face Life Stronger



Sinfulness of people in general

- And I find more bitter than death
 The woman whose heart *is* snares and nets,
 Whose hands *are* fetters.
 He who pleases God shall escape from her,
 But the sinner shall be trapped by her.
- Here is what I have found," says the Preacher, "Adding one thing to the other to find out the reason,
- Which my soul still seeks but I cannot find:
 One man among a thousand I have found,
 But a woman among all these I have not found.
- ²⁹ Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes."



The problem of evil

- Who is like a wise man?
 And who knows the interpretation of a thing?
 A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
 And the sternness of his face is changed.
- I say, "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God.
- Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him."
- Where the word of a king is, there is power;
 And who may say to him, "What are you doing?"
- 5 He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful;

And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, ⁶ Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, though the misery of man increases greatly.

- 7. For he does not know what will happen; So who can tell him when it will occur?
- 8. No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, And no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, And wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.
- ⁹ All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: *There is* a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.

Then I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of holiness, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This also *is* vanity.

양SIGHT

OF MIND

¹¹ Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

- Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times*, and his *days* are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him.
- ¹³ But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow, because he does not fear before God.



Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.

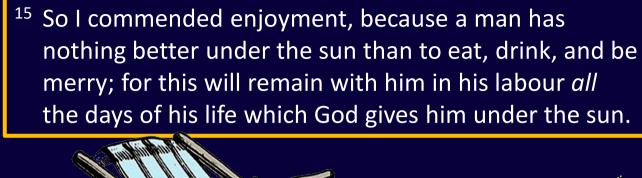
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

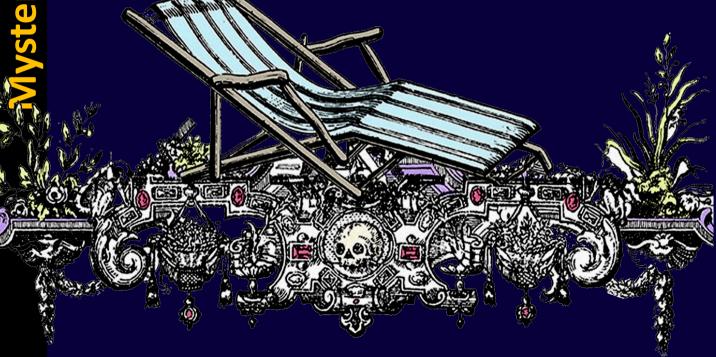
- 14 There is a vanity which occurs on earth,
 - that there are just [righteous] men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked;
 - again, there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous.

I said that this also is vanity.

Laws, like the spider's web, catch the fly and Let the hawk go free.

- Spanish proverb





When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night, ¹⁷ then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun.

For though a man labours to discover *it*, yet he will not find *it*; moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to know *it*, he will not be able to find *it*.

"Reason's last step is the recognition that there are an infinite number of things which are beyond it."

Blaise Pascal

The last enemy - death Meet Your Last Enemy



Is life worth living?



Issue 4: The certainty of death



Death is unavoidable

- ¹ For I considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: that the righteous and the wise and their works *are* in the hand of God. People know neither love nor hatred *by* anything *they see* before them.
- ² All things *come* alike to all:
 - One event *happens* to the righteous and the wicked;
 - To the good, the clean, and the unclean;
 - To him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice.
 - As is the good, so is the sinner;
 - He who takes an oath as he who fears an oath.
- ³ This *is* an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing *happens* to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness *is* in their hearts while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

⁴ But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.



"A LIVING DOG IS BETTER THAN A DEAD LION".

- For the living know that they will die;
 But the dead know nothing,
 And they have no more reward,
 For the memory of them is forgotten.
- Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun.
- Go, eat your bread with joy,
 And drink your wine with a merry heart;
 For God has already accepted your works.
- 8 Let your garments always be white, And let your head lack no oil.

- Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that *is* your portion in life, and in the labour which you perform under the sun.
- 10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.





Enjoy life and receive it as a gift from God!

Life is unpredictable

11 I returned and saw under the sun that—

The race is not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong,
Nor bread to the wise,
Nor riches to men of understanding,
Nor favor to men of skill;
But time and chance happen to them all.

For man also does not know his time:
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men *are* snared in an evil time,
When it falls suddenly upon them.

This wisdom I have also seen under the sun, and it seemed great to me: ¹⁴ There was a little city with few men in it; and a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great snares around it. ¹⁵ Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man.

¹⁶ Then I said:

- "Wisdom is better than strength.
- Nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised,
- And his words are not heard.
- Words of the wise, *spoken* quietly, *should be* heard Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools.
- Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war; But one sinner destroys much good."

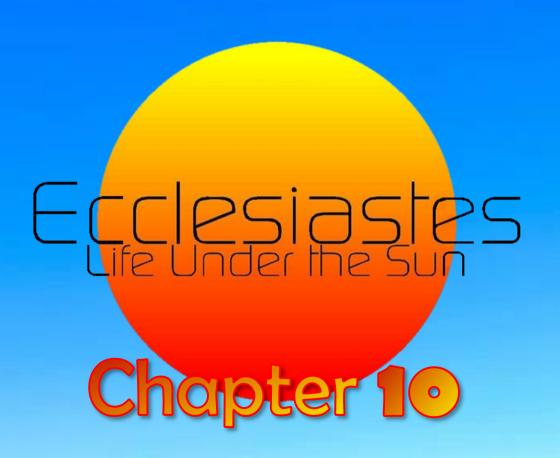
The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

Ecclesiastes 9:17

Daily Bible Meme.com

Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

Ecclesiastes 9:18 (NIV)



Beware of folly

- Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, And cause it to give off a foul odor; So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor.
- ² A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand, But a fool's heart at his left.
- Even when a fool walks along the way, He lacks wisdom, And he shows everyone that he is a fool.

The Foolish Ruler

If the spirit of the ruler rises against you,
Do not leave your post; For healing pacifies great offenses.

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

The Foolish Workers

- He who digs a pit will [may] fall into it, And whoever breaks through a wall will [may] be bitten by a serpent.
- He who quarries stones may be hurt by them, And he who splits wood may be endangered by it.



Whoever digs a pit may fall into it; whoever breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.
Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them; whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.

Ecclesiastes 10:8-5

If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success.

Using a dull ax requires great strength, so sharpen the blade.

That's the value of wisdom; it helps you succeed.

Ecclesiastes 10:10

Foolish Talkers

- 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!

Foolish Officers

Indulgence

- 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!

Incompetence

¹⁸ Because of laziness the building decays, And through idleness of hands the house leaks.

Indifference

¹⁹ A feast is made for laughter, And wine makes merry; But money answers everything.

Foolish Officers

Indisgression

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.



Napoleonic Recruitment Tool

Brilliant

Stupid

Industrious

Those that are brilliant and industrious are fitted for the highest staff positions.

Those who are stupid and industrious represent a danger and must be removed at all costs

Lazy

Those who are brilliant and lazy have the requisite nerve for the highest command positions.

Work can be found for the stupid and lazy.

Is life worth living?



The problem decided