

The Book
Of
Ecclesiastes



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The Book of Ecclesiastes

By Pastor Dr. Ronnie Wolfe – Beginning February 20, 2013

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

A. Challenge of Life

1. Two Ways Of Living Life
 - a. This book gives two options only
 - b. First, live your life in the light of death
 - c. Or, live your life in the light of hope in God.
2. Two Relationships In Life
 - a. Pursue the relationships of the temporal world and its pleasures
 - b. Or, pursue a relationship with God
3. Two Victories For Life
 - a. The world offers only death as the final victory
 - b. God gives eternal life, giving life the victory over death.

B. Message Of The Book

1. From the viewpoint of the teacher
 - a. When the writer is looking at life from the teacher's viewpoint, he uses the first person (I the Preacher, vs 12).
 - b. When the writer is looking at life from the teacher to his son, and he uses the third person (the Preacher, vs 1).
2. The word "Vanity"
 - a. This word is used 29 times in the book of Ecclesiastes.
 - b. This word is used 89 times in the entire Bible: 85 in the Old Testament; 4 times in the New Testament.
 - c. The Preacher is possessed with the attitude that everything under the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit and heart.
 - d. "Vexation" is used 10 times in these 12 chapters, none after chapter 6.
3. Meaning of life
 - a. The Preacher pursues various paths to find meaning in this life under the sun.
 - b. If death is the end of everything, then what purpose is there under the sun?
 - (1) "Purpose" used three times in this book" (3:1, 17; and explained in 8:6).
 - (2) *Ecles. 8:6 Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.*
 - c. That kind of life offers no final enjoyment, only temporal pleasures.
 - d. *Eccl. 2:24 There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.*
 - e. The Preacher gives the conclusion in Eccl. 12:13-14.
4. Comparison of two lives lived:
 - a. The world's way | God's way
 - b. Death has the final victory | Life has the final victory

- c. Life under the sun | Above all principalities and powers
- d. God is Satan | God is Jehovah
- e. Vanity | Purpose
- f. Time | Eternity
- g. Karma, Fate | Hope

II. THE PROPOSITION THAT ALL IS VANITY, 1:1-11

A. Introduction To Vanity, 1:1-3

1. There are arguments for and against the fact that Solomon actually wrote this book. We will consider only those in favor of it, 1.
 - a. 1. The book identifies itself as having been written by Solomon. "I am a teacher, I was king over Israel in Jerusalem." (1:12). Only David, Solomon, and for a very short time, Rehoboam would have been able to make such a statement, that he was king over Israel, in Jerusalem. After Jeroboam's rebellion, the king in Jerusalem was only the king of Judah. Israel had its own kings.
 - b. 2. Hebrew does not have past, present or future tenses, only completed or uncompleted aspects. It would not necessarily be inappropriate to use completed aspect "I was."
 - c. 3. The nature of the book and the perspective from which the author is writing would make the use of the divine name (Jehovah) inappropriate, since he is seeking to discover knowledge of God apart from his revelation to the nation of Israel. Hence also, the lack of mention of the temple, Moses, or Israel's history.
 - d. 4. Likewise, the fact he is not repenting for apostasy is because he is still apostatized, unable to find God or know what God wants, since he has purposely turned his back on divine revelation (see 1:13-14)⁵. The similarities to Greek philosophy and literature are more simply explained by a general similarity in topics than any conscious borrowing. The differences in perspective between Ecclesiastes and Greek thought are far more profound and obvious than the supposed points of confluence.
 - e. 6. Certainly it is to be expected that the Pharisees, Saducees and Essenes would have been influenced by Ecclesiastes; but they were also influenced by the rest of the Old Testament. We are dealing with Jewish people, after all. Such influence is no proof of a late, non-Solomonic authorship.
 - f. 7. Supposed historical allusions are weak evidence at best, since they rely on the assumption that the book is late and are never explicit. Other possibilities are available.
 - g. 8. The language used by Ecclesiastes is not the best evidence for late authorship since the Masoretes have obscured whatever historical development might have at one time existed in the Hebrew of the Bible. They regularized and standardized usage, so that few differences exist between so-called "early" and "late" books.
 - h. 9. David had no problem repenting of his role with Bathsheba, and modern politicians are often quite forward in admitting errors of judgement in their memoirs. Why should it surprise us to find Solomon able to admit that his

administration is not doing well -- especially considering the depressive nature of the book. Depressed people will tend to exaggerate the bad at the expense of the good. His discouragement at conditions are consistent with the tenor of the book as a whole.

2. Vanity of vanities, 2

- a. The word vanity is used four times in this one verse.
- b. The word vanity, HEBEL, means literally “vapor or breath.”
 - (1) James 4:14 *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*
- c. It carries with the idea of temporal, short-lived, coming to an end, etc.
- d. The phrase “vanity of vanities” seems to indicate that this vanity is the worst that can be experienced: the vanity of living life under the sun, or without God.

3. Man’s labor

- a. John 6:27 *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*
- b. 1 Cor. 3:8 *Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*

B. Illustrations Of Vanity, 1:4-11

3-13-2013

1. Generations pass by one after the other, 4

- a. This explains the fleeting days of time; time does not stand still.
- b. Generations go by quickly. One goes away and another comes.
- c. This also explains the world’s definition of “forever.” Forever here on earth means until death. “I will love you forever.”
- d. An old song says, “... and forever is a long, long time.”
 - (1) Song titles: Always and forever - 1978 - Heatwave
 - (2) Could I have this kiss forever - 2000 - Whitney Houston / Enrique Iglesias
 - (3) Could it be forever - 1972 - David Cassidy
 - (4) Diamonds are forever - 1971 - Shirley Bassey
 - (5) 9 songs named simply “forever”
 - (6) Forever and ever, Amen - 1987 - Randy Travis
 - (7) Forever came today - 1968 - Diana Ross & Supremes
 - (8) Forever Love, Forever People, Forever Young, Forever Yours, Friends Forever, etc.

2. Sun rises and goes down, again and again, 5

- a. One song says,

*The sunrise, the sunsets, you're hopeful and then you regret, the circle never breaks
With a sunrise and a sunset, there's a change of heart or address, is there nothing that remains?*

*For a sunrise or a sunset, you're manic or you're depressed, will you ever feel okay?
For a sunrise or a sunset, your lover is an actress, did you really think she'd stay?*

- b. We make our schedules on this very firm, established order of the earth.
 - c. The Bible says in Genesis, “The evening and the morning were the first day.”
3. Wind goes and comes, again and again, 6
- a. Now we have a book and a movie named “Gone With The Wind.”
 - b. Wind attracts the attention of most of us at times.
 - (1) We speak of “three sheets in the wind.”
 - (2) “I can’t change the direction of the wind.”
 - (3) “Kites rise highest against the wind.”
 - (4) “The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.” -by William Arthur Ward
 - c. But one thing we know about the wind: it just keeps coming and going, and no one can change it.
4. Rivers run into the sea, 7
- a. It is the job of a river to run into the sea.
 - b. He says that “all rivers run into the sea.”
 - c. The Colorado River (known as the Nile of North America), they say, runs into a dry bed where it used to run into the Sea of Cortez.
 - d. I was reading an article on this recently, and the writer said, “Indeed, the Colorado River has not reached the sea since 1998 but ends rather in a cracked and desolate expanse of barren mud flats and abandoned boats — a “dry river cemetery,” as Mr. McBride puts it.”
 - e. But we know that it is the tendency of each river to flow into the sea.
 - f. But the sea is not full; that is the wonder.
 - g. Water continues to be supplied at the beginning of the river and go to the sea with an endless supply of water, but this is the way God made his creation.
 - h. His point is that under the sun things continue to go on and on, and nothing changes. This is vanity.
5. Labors continue under the sun, 8a
- a. If man does not work, he does not eat.
 - b. Nothing gets done without work.
 - c. Man cannot utter it, meaning that man cannot describe the fulness of labor.
6. Eyes and Ears, 8b
- a. The eye can never be full of seeing
 - b. The ear can never be full of hearing.
7. No new thing under the sun, 9
- a. The same things repeat themselves over and over again in the earth.
 - b. Generations keep coming; the sun keeps rising and setting; the wind keeps blowing; rivers keep rushing to the sea; labor never ceases, eyes keep seeing, and ears keep hearing.
 - c. This is a strong argument against the theory of evolution.
8. See, this is new! 10
- a. Everyone is consciously skeptical of history. Who wrote it? Who witnessed it? How many documents do we have.

- b. Some things that were thought not to be are really so.
 - (1) Some thought kings did not exist that were found later to exist.
 - (2) Some thought cities did not exist that were found later to exist.
 - (3) He is not speaking of inventions, for man has sought out many inventions, Eccles. 7:29.
 - (4) He is speaking of the natural course of life, the things he has just mentioned. There is no new wind, no new waters to make rivers, no new suns to make sunrises or sunsets, no new kinds of hearing or seeing, etc.
- 9. Remembrances, 11
 - a. Causes and effects in the nature of the world have always been the same, and there is no change in them.
 - b. What causes wind? The same thing that caused it in the beginning.
 - c. What causes rivers to flow to the sea? The same thing that caused it in the beginning. ... and on and on we could go.
 - d. None of us can create a new nature. Nature is what it is, and it does not change.
 - e. Only a miracle on the part of God can make us a new creation.
 - f. We learn here a great truth:
 - (1) John 3:8 *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

III. THE PROOF THAT ALL IS VANITY, 1:12-6:12

A. Proven From Experience 1:12-2:26

1. Striving for wisdom, 1:12-18

- a. I the Preacher, 12
 - (1) Solomon was the last king of Israel and Judah together and ruled from Jerusalem.
 - (2) First was Saul; second was David; third was Solomon.
 - (3) Preachers need knowledge and wisdom
 - (a) Col 2:3 *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*
 - (b) The word *wisdom* is used in Solomon's book of Proverbs 53 times.
 - (c) 2 Tim. 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*
- b. Solomon gave his heart to know wisdom, 13-14
 - (1) This word *gave* in "gave his heart" can also be translated *set*.
 - (2) In other words, he set his heart to know all things that are done under the sun, 13
 - (3) Solomon was inquisitive (having a desire to know). He wanted to know everything that was possible to know.
 - (4) God has given us the ability to investigate his creation, and we are to pursue this. It is our duty as God's creatures to find out as much as we can about his universe.
 - (5) He will investigate all the works under the sun in order to find this wisdom.

- (6) What wisdom did he acquire? He found out that the “works under the sun” is a sore travail, or a terrible pain.
 - (7) Every person needs to *exercise* or *submit himself* to this duty.
 - (8) The word *exercised* can also be translated *humbled*.
 - (9) After Solomon exercised to know wisdom, he found out that all the works done under the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit.
- c. All wrongs cannot be made right, 15
- (1) Crooked things cannot be made straight. In other words, there cannot be absolute peace on earth under the sun.
 - (a) This will, however, happen in the future – Luke 3:5 *Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;*
 - (b) Phil. 2:15 *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*
 - (c) Matt 7:14 *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*
 - (2) Deficient things cannot be numbered
 - (a) Under the sun it is impossible to bring to a total count the things that God has created.
 - (b) This may also imply the bringing together to completion those things that are promised and are not yet fulfilled.
 - (c) Jesus said on the cross, for example, *It is finished*.
 - (d) Everything that God promised can and will be finished to the full.
 - (e) Everything comes short of its total potential under the sun.
- d. Much wisdom is a curse, 16-18
- (a) Solomon admits that he has come to great wisdom and knowledge, 16
 - (b) If anyone could trace down wisdom and knowledge, it was Solomon.
 - (c) God gave him great wisdom and experience, 16
 - (2) But finding this wisdom did not satisfy him, 17
 - (a) He set (or gave) his heart to know wisdom
 - (b) He learned much also about madness and folly.
 - (c) The main thing that he learned was that “this also is vexation of spirit.”
 - (3) Grief and sorrow, 18
 - (a) He found that knowing wisdom is grief.
 - i) This word *grief* can also be translated “anger.”
 - ii) It seems, then, that finding wisdom could have made Solomon angry, probably because it was not what he thought it would be, and that he could not know it all or have it all.
 - (b) He found that increasing knowledge brought sorrow.
 - i) Genesis 3:16 says about the woman: *in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children;*
 - ii) Genesis 3:17 says *cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt*

- thou eat of it all the days of thy life;*
- iii) Sorrow of heart (Lev. 26:16)
 - iv) Sorrow of mind (Deut. 28:65)
 - v) Sorrows of death (Psalm 116:3)
 - vi) Jer. 20:18 *Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?*
 - (c) Acts 1:7 *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*
 - (d) Heb. 3:10 *Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*
 - (e) Rom. 11:33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*
2. Striving for pleasure, 2:1-3
- a. Mirth and pleasure, 1
 - (1) Mirth means *happy or gladness*.
 - (2) Prov 14:13 *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*
 - (3) Mirth is short-lived. It many times ends in sorrow. It can be petty.
 - b. Enjoying pleasure, 1
 - (1) Pleasure can mean that which is good, that which is agreeable, or even that which is prosperous, wealth.
 - (2) When Solomon enjoyed pleasure, he found that this did not satisfy. It was all vanity, emptiness, and sorrow.
 - (3) It is said about Moses in Heb 11:25 *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*
 - (4) 2 Thess 2:12 *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*
 - (5) James 5:5 *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.*
 - (6) 2 Peter 2:13 *And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;*
 - c. Enjoying laughter, 2
 - (1) Luke 6:25 *Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*
 - (2) Prov. 14:13 *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*
 - (3) He said that laughter is mad.
 - d. Enjoying wine, 3
 - (1) 1 Sam. 1:14 *And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. –Speaking to Hannah.*
 - (2) Prov 20:1 *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.*

- (3) Prov 21:17 *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.*
- e. Solomon did all of this, yet keeping his wisdom, 3
- f. He tried to understand folly, also, to see what man should do under the sun.
3. Great Accomplishments, 2:4-17 **3-27-2013**
- a. Great works, 4
- (1) 2 Kings 22:17 *Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.* Also verse 25
- (2) Psalm 28:5 *Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*
- (3) See Eccles. 2:11
- (4) Acts 7:41 *And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*
- (5) Rev. 9:20 *And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:*
- b. Building houses, 4
- (1) Deut. 28:30 . . . *thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.*
- (2) Eccles. 10:18 *By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.*
- (3) 2 Cor. 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*
- c. Planting vineyards, 4
- (1) “A vineyard requires a lot of work but can be a pleasant business.”¹
- (2) “Choose your type or types of grapes, and decide if you want to start a grape vineyard, a winery or a combination of both. This is the very first thing you need to do because you won't know which supplies you will need that are specific to your grapes until you know this.”²
- (3) 1 Cor 9:7 *Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?*
- d. Making gardens, 5
- (1) Making a garden is a lot of work, also. The soil must be prepared; the seed must be chosen; and the planting and watering must be done. The garden must

¹http://www.ehow.com/how_4885582_grow-small-vineyard.html (3-20-2013)

²Ibid

be watched throughout the growing season. But we learn from Paul that one plants, another waters, but God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:7).

- (2) The growing of gardens, it is said, can bring tranquility to a nervous person.
- (3) The fruit of a garden is enjoyed by the gardener and, many times, others as well.
- (4) But the garden cannot bring perfect peace to the soul.

e. Making of orchards, 5

- (1) “eHow.com” says “You may want to plant an orchard to produce fresh food, provide shade or just to beautify your property. To plant an orchard successfully, however, you'll need an understanding of soil, pests, diseases and general care.”³
- (2) Points given for making an orchard:
 - (a) Consider the climate: frost, temperature, daylight, rainfall.
 - (b) Evaluate soil: nutrients, drainage; it must be monitored and tested regularly.
 - (c) Protect orchard from wildlife
 - (d) Reduce area from tall trees that may reduce sunlight.
 - (e) Choose the proper tree to plant. Consider the tree's resistance to disease and pests, size, and bloom dates.
 - (f) The only other reference to an orchard is in Song 4:13 *Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,*
- (3) Solomon planted trees of all kind of fruits. Many are still in existence today.

f. Making pools of water, 6

- (1) Solomon, as we know today, because many of them still exist, had many pools, aqueducts, ditches, and cisterns that watered the fruit trees.
- (2) A man by the name of Rauwolff says “... they show still to this day a large orchard, full of citron, lemon, orange, pomegranate, and fig trees, and many others, which King Solomon did plant in his days; with ponds, canals, and other water works, very pleasantly prepared, as he saith himself, [Ecc 2:5](#); this is still in our time full of good and fruitful trees, worthy to be seen for their sakes, and ditches there:” (See John Gill on this passage).
- (3) Pools about 12 miles from Jerusalem flowed through ditches and aqueducts into the gardens in and around Jerusalem, quite a sophisticated arrangement, especially for his day.

g. Servants and maidens, 7

- (1) Numbering the people who came back from the captivity, Ezra 2:58 says, *All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two.*

h. Great and small cattle, 7

- (1) 1 Kings 4:26 *And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.*

i. Silver and gold, 8

- (1) The price of an ounce of gold today (3-20-2013) is said to be \$1,607.82.

³http://www.ehow.com/how_2164509_plant-orchard.html (3/20/2013)

- (2) Another web site said that the price of gold could drop very soon to \$750.00 per ounce.
- (3) 1 Kings 9:11 (*Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,)* that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.
- (4) 1 Kings 9:14 *And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.*
- (5) Silver is priced today at \$36.95 per ounce, and it is expected to go much higher very quickly due to the fact that silver is a great conductor of electricity.
- (6) “For thousands of years, mankind depended heavily on silver for various needs in the field of medicine, artefacts, ornaments, photography, decorative and tableware etc.”⁴
- j. Treasures of kings, 8
 - (1) These would be jewels and precious stones and other rare things that only kings can afford and gifts given by people like the queen of Sheba.
- k. Singers and instruments, 8
 - (1) Music was needed for the priests in the temple.
 - (2) Music was needed for the many feasts that Israel had.
 - (3) But notice here: Amos 6:3-7 *Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; 4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; 5 That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of musick, like David; 6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. 7 Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.*
- l. Solomon’s wisdom remained with him, 9
 - (1) This was all due to the grace of God and not to his many inventions of pleasure and entertainment.
 - (2) Romans 11:29 *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*
- m. Solomon enjoyed all of this labor, 10
 - (1) But we will find out that this labor, also, is grief to him.
 - (2) Heb. 11:25-26 *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*
- n. Solomon found no profit under the sun, 11
 - (1) Mark 8:36 *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*
- o. Solomon speaks of death in Eccl. 2:12-17
 - (1) The hopelessness of life, 12

⁴<http://price-of-silver-today.com/> (3-20-2013)

- (2) Wisdom is better than folly, 13-14
- (3) Death happens to all, wise and foolish, 15
- (4) The wise and foolish die alike, 16
- (5) Therefore, Solomon hated life (under the sun), 17
- 4. Proven From Experience - Hard Labor, 2:18-23 **4-10-2013 Wednesday**
 - a. Leaving my labor to another man, 18
 - (1) Solomon had built great buildings, beautiful gardens, wells and fountains.
 - (2) He had also written many proverbs and books, which took much weariness of study on the flesh, as the Bible says in Eccl. 12:12 that “much study is a weariness of the flesh.”
 - (3) His great labor had brought him much riches and luxury.
 - (4) John Gill quotes one of the Jewish Targums that says, "because I shall leave it to Rehoboam my son, who shall come after me; and Jeroboam his servant shall come and take ten tribes out of his hands, and possess half the kingdom."
 - (5) He knows that he will leave his kingdom to his son Rehoboam, and he is not sure, evidently, just what he will do with that kingdom.
 - b. This is also vanity, 19
 - (1) Solomon admits that he has “shewed himself wise under the sun,” but his son may not do that. He may use unwise management and have other than godly intentions in what he does with Solomon’s labors.
 - (2) So, Solomon concludes here that this is all vanity.
 - c. Despair of heart, 20
 - (1) The Hebrew for “despair” literally means “no hope.”
 - (2) There was no long hope in Solomon’s labor. It is all labor, since he can enjoy it only for a very short season—his life, after which he will leave it to someone else.
 - d. Solomon recaps his position, 21
 - (1) There is a man whose labor is in wisdom, knowledge, and equity – Solomon
 - (a) Solomon had used every resource that is available to man to learn, apply his wisdom and knowledge, and do the works of his hands with great understanding and human perfection.
 - (2) He lent himself to great study and application of every science known to man.
 - (3) Yet he leaves it to another man. He left his inheritance to his son, who took no pains to produce this fine array of things: beauty, ease, luxury, and comfort with much riches.
 - (4) This is vanity and a great evil. This is vain, because it produces no lasting profitability. It is a great evil, because, when Solomon would think of it, he would be very distressed and in human torments.
 - e. What hath man of all his labor? 22
 - (1) What advantage is it, or what profit is it, if a man should gain the whole world? The world is a fleeting experience and does not endure.
 - (2) Matt 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Also*

Mark 8:26.

- f. Life is full of sorrows and grief, 23
 - (1) Ge 47:9 *And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.*
 - (2) “his heart taketh not rest in the night,” Solomon’s heart cannot be quiet at night for fear of losing his riches and for the substance of his study and his wisdom’s going to waste upon a future generation.
 - (3) He may have also worried about whether he could keep all of these inventions and innovations going throughout his life and into the next generation. He must have had a lot on his mind.
 - (4) Fortunately, the Lord saw fit to preserve his writings for us today, so things were not as vain as he may have thought. The parts of his wisdom that God wanted to preserve are written down in the book that never shall pass away—God’s word.
- 5. Conclusion: then be content, 2:24-26
 - a. Nothing better than to eat and drink.
 - (1) How many of us enjoy eating and drinking? All of us!
 - (2) There is nothing better in this world, Solomon says, than to eat and drink.
 - (3) The next expression may be in apposition to the one just read.
 - (4) “and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour.” Instead of worrying, he says, we should enjoy the fruit of our labor and take advantage of the blessings that God has provided us, whether it be little or much.
 - (5) This, he says, is from the hand of God.
 - (a) So his conclusion is that, although the experiences of this life are all vain and cause us to be weary and vex our souls, yet we can enjoy eating and drinking, the fruit of our labor, which is given to us from God’s hand.
 - (b) Vain in the world, but worth from the hand of God—this is his conclusion.

Tennis star **Boris Becker** was at the very top of the tennis world -- yet he was on the brink of suicide. He said, "I had won Wimbledon twice before, once as the youngest player. I was rich. I had all the material possessions I needed ... It's the old song of movie stars and pop stars who commit suicide. They have everything, and yet they are so unhappy. I had no inner peace. I was a puppet on a string."

Becker is not the only one to feel that sense of emptiness. The echoes of a hollow life pervade our culture. One doesn't have to read many contemporary biographies to find the same frustration and disappointment. **Jack Higgins**, author of such successful novels and *The Eagle Has Landed*, was asked what he would like to have known as a boy. His answer: "That when you get to the top, there's nothing there."

Alexander The Great – “No more worlds to conquer”

- b. Sinners work so the righteous may have, see verse 26.

- c. Man is not naturally good in the sight of God but is good only in the sense that God has given him the good Gospel, the good Spirit of God, the good new birth, a new heart, and wisdom that comes only from God.
 - d. These are given through their regeneration wisdom, knowledge, and joy. Joy is the most important thing here, because the sinner may have a measure of wisdom and knowledge of the earthly sort, but he has no joy in it, for it is all vanity. He may be happy from time to time, but there is no enduring joy in the sinner.
 - (1) To the sinner there is travail (vocation, occupation), and that is to gather and to heap up. But he does all of this work for the righteousness, for God uses sinners to praise him, to do his will, and to bless the righteous.
 - (2) This is vanity to the sinner and a vexation of spirit, because they have no joy in their work, no real, genuine prosperity.
 - (3) The idea that vexes the sinner's spirit is that, when he makes his profit, his believing wife may take some of that profit and give an offering to the church.
 - (4) He gives his children a bonus, and they go and tithe on it.
 - (5) He works only for himself, but God always receives the benefit of the sinner's work.
 - (6) So, people who are vexed in their spirit because of the vanity of the world are people who are seeing things from an earthly view, even Solomon.
 - (7) But when Solomon sees things from God's viewpoint, he has joy so that his soul can enjoy good in his labor (vs. 24).
- B. Proven From Observation, 3:1-22
- 1. Proven by observation – God predetermines life's events, 3:1-9
 - a. The seasons of life, 1
 - (1) John Gill says on verse one, *To every thing there is a season*, "A set determined time, when everything shall come into being, how long it shall continue, and in what circumstances; all things that have been, are, or shall be, were foreordained by God, and he has determined the times before appointed for their being, duration, and end; which times and seasons he has in his own power:"
 - (2) Each thing mentioned in these first nine verses is determined by God.
 - (3) He controls when these things shall be, and he controls the duration of them, or how long they will last.
 - (4) He also determines their end.
 - (5) The beginning of all things was determined by God, both that it should be and how long it should exist. He is the *alpha* and the *omega*, the beginning and the end – Rev. 1:8; 1:11; 21:6; 22:13.
 - (6) He is also the Sustainer of all things: Col 1:17 *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*
 - (7) Everything that happens on earth are under the supervision of the Providence of God.
 - (a) There are some things that happen that is the results of the condition and actions of people on the earth, but even they are under God's supervision,

because God sometimes lifts people up from those circumstances to help or to bring to repentance and faith in Christ.

- (b) There are some things, however, that are predetermined and brought about by God in his determinate will that man cannot change, and his character and conduct have to bearing on them; they are in God's direct will, and these things will happen when and why God so desires, and no man can stay his hand, etc. (Daniel 4:35).
- b. The ebb and flow of life, 3:2-8
 - (1) A time to be born and a time to die, 2
 - (a) This takes in the whole spectrum of life from beginning to end.
 - (b) This is the DASH on the tombstone.
 - (c) God has direct and complete control over your life, when you would be born, and when you would die.
 - (d) John 7:30 *Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.*
 - (e) Job 14:1 *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*
 - i) This is Job's wisdom from God, and Solomon had the same wisdom.
 - (2) A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted, 2
 - (a) This is applicable for trees and other plants that come to ripeness.
 - (b) This is also true in a civil or social sense – Jer. 1:10 *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.*
 - (3) A time to kill, and a time to heal, 3
 - (a) A time of war is a time to kill. God allows wars to happen and directs their outcome.
 - (b) A time for execution of criminals is a time to kill. This is justice and should be done with discretion.
 - (c) A time of war is a time to heal, bringing in the wounded and caring for them.
 - (d) A time of building hospitals and nursing homes is a time to heal. It is our civic duty and our godly duty to heal those who are sick.
 - (4) A time to break down and a time to build up, 3
 - (a) In the time of Nebuchadnezzar it was the time to tear down the walls of Jerusalem and destroy the city.
 - (b) In the time of Zerubbabel it was time to build up, when Israel came back into Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple of God.
 - (c) In general, the time to tear down a house is when it becomes dangerous or when it is useless for some reason.
 - (d) It is time to build up a city, a town, or even to build up people in the churches when the need is there.
 - (e) The normal ebb and flow of life require that we be constantly building up, since by the nature of our fallen race, all things deteriorate with age and need maintenance and replacement.

- (5) A time to weep, and a time to laugh, 4
- (a) We weep when we lose loved ones; we weep when our hearts are broken.
 - (b) Israel wept when they were in Babylon, in captivity – Psalm 137:1 *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*
 - (c) Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:22).
 - (d) When Israel came back to Jerusalem after 70 years of captivity, there was rejoicing (laughing), and he gives us joy in his kingdom – Isa. 61:3 *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*
- (6) A time to mourn, and a time to dance, 4
- (a) Psalm 30:11 *Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;*
- (7) A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather them together, 5
- (a) We cast stones from our fields so that we can make a garden.
 - (b) We gather stones together so that we can put stones around the baptistry here at First Baptist Church for beauty and strength.
 - (c) We gather stones to build houses.
 - (d) Stones were cast down from Jerusalem in 70 AD so that there was not one stone on another.
- (8) A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing, 5
- (a) When our family have small children, it a time to embrace.
 - (b) When family and friends visit us, it is a time of embracing.
 - (c) But there are serious times when we do not embrace but work together to be a help to others, working together, to encourage or to do the normal day-to-day work to sustain our family needs.
 - (d) We refrain from embracing when our son or daughter goes off to war.
 - (e) Sometimes we refrain from embracing when there is tension in the family.
- (9) A time to get, and a time to lose, 6
- (a) There is a time when we are young and energetic. That is the time to get.
 - (b) Then there is the time when we are old. That is the time to lose. We lose our energy, our youth, and even our interests.
 - (c) We get a spouse at marriage; we lose that spouse in death.
- (10) A time to keep, and a time to cast away, 6
- (a) Eccl 5:13 *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.*
 - (b) We keep a garment until it is worn out; then we throw it away.
 - (c) We keep a car until it is worn out; then we get rid of it.
- (11) A time to rend, and a time to sew, 7
- (a) Isa 37:1 *And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the*

LORD.

- (b) Mt 26:65 *Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.*
 - (c) 1 Kings 11:30 *And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him Jeroboam, and rent it in twelve pieces:*
 - (d) Mark 15:38 *And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*
 - (e) But God will sew together the nation of Israel in a spiritual sense, for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; and the middle wall of partition has been broken down.
 - (f) We must sew up contention and be of one mind in the churches of the Lord.
- (12) A time to keep silent, and a time to speak, 7
- (a) When Job's friends saw his calamity, they were silent for seven days (Job 2:13).
 - (b) 1 Cor 14:28 *But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*
 - (c) 1 Thess 4:11 *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;*
 - (d) But there is a time to speak publicly – 1 Thess 4:11 *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;*
 - (e) Acts 4:18-20 *And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*
- (13) A time to love, and a time to hate, 8
- (a) When you are lost in your sins, it is time to love the things of the world, to love the wicked and the things of an evil life.
 - (b) But when a new birth comes, it is time to hate those things that we once loved and to turn from them, trusting in Christ.
 - (c) In comparison to our love for Christ, even the love of our family is called *hate* – Luke 14:26 *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*
 - (d) 1 John 2:15 *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*
- (14) A time of war, and a time of peace, 8
- (a) Matt 24:6 *And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*
 - (b) The ebb and flow of life brings both war and peace.
 - (c) Joe 3:10 *Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into*

spears: let the weak say, I am strong.

(d) *Isa 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

- c. What profit is all of this? 9
- (1) In this ebb and flow of life, we have positives and negatives.
 - (2) In perfect peace, we would have all positives and no negatives.
 - (3) But on earth the ebb and flow are constant. Against every positive there is a negative.
 - (4) One cannot plan a life, because there are too many things that can happen to challenge that plan.
 - (5) So, “What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?”
 - (6) There is no true profit here.
 - (7) There is only profit in God, his kingdom, and his promise of inheritance.
 - (8) In heaven there are only positives:
 - (a) There is birth (the new birth), but there is no death
 - (b) There healing but no killing
 - (c) There is a building up but no braking down
 - (d) There is only laughing, or rejoicing, and no weeping
 - (e) There is only time for dancing (as David danced before the Lord) and no mourning
 - (f) There is only gathering of stones and not casting away of them.
 - (g) There is only a time of embracing and no time when we cannot embrace.
 - (h) There is a time to get (eating of the tree of life with 12 manner of fruit) but no time for losing.
 - (i) There is only a time to keep and no time for casting away.
 - (j) There is a time to sew (putting together all the things the Lord will teach us that we do not know now), but no time to rend through sorrow and brokenness
 - (k) There is no time to be silent that I know of except for that 30-minute silence before the wrath of God is poured upon the earth, but there will be an eternity of praising God through song and testimony.
 - (l) There is always a time to love, and it will be the love of God that has been shed abroad in our hearts being justified by faith (Rom. 5:1); but there will be no time for hate, not even in the lesser meaning of it.
 - (m) There will be a perfect time for perfect peace, but there will be no war. The war in heaven has already been fought and won.
 - (n) There is no profit in the world, but there is much profit in God and his salvation.
 - (o) *1 Cor 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*
2. Proven by observation – God predetermines conditions of life, 3:11-15

- a. The status of man, 11
- (1) The world is beautiful to man
 - (2) Man's heart is set on the world.
 - (3) Man's heart and mind are so much on the world that he cannot find out in the world the work that God does.
 - (a) Jer 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*
 - (b) Satan tried to tempt the Lord with the things of the world – Matt 4:8 *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;*
 - (c) John 7:7 *The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*
 - (d) Joh 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*
 - (e) Eph 2:12 *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*
 - (f) Heb 2:6 *But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?*
 - (4) What God does is from the beginning to the end.
 - (a) Four times in the book of Revelation Jesus says that he is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. – Rev 1:8 *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*
 - (b) Acts 15:18 *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*
- b. The satisfaction of man, 12-13
- (1) God created man so that he could enjoy and be satisfied with some things on the earth.
 - (2) But first Solomon says “I know that there is no good in them (men).
 - (a) Rom 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*
 - (b) Rom 3:11 *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*
 - (c) Rom 3:12 *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
 - (3) The only thing that a man has is the enjoyment and rejoicing and to do good things in his life, though he cannot do any good before God.
 - (4) Man can also enjoy eating and drinking and enjoy his labor. This is a gift that God has given man.
- c. The sovereignty of God, 14
- (1) Now Solomon changes his thoughts from man to God.
 - (2) He notices and speaks of the things that God does.

- (3) Whatever God does, it stands forever.
- (a) We have already read Acts 15:18 *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*
 - (b) Daniel 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*
 - (c) Psalm 90:2 *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.* See also Psalm 103:17; 106:48
 - (d) Heb 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*
 - (e) Even God's word, the Scriptures, are settled in heaven and never change – Psalm 119:89 *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*
 - (f) 1 Chron 16:34 *O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.*
 - (g) Psalm 112:3 *Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.*
 - (h) Psalm 117:2 *For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.*
 - (i) Ps 135:13 *Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.*
 - (j) 1 Peter 1:25 *But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*
- (4) Nothing can be put to it – nothing shall be added to it, 14
- (5) Nothing can be taken away from it, 14
- (6) God does it so that man may fear before the Lord, 14
- d. The severity of God, 15
- (1) That which is now – the attributes, purpose, and the doings of the Lord, is that which has been. He never changes. His plan and purpose is perfect, and he requires that which is past.
 - (2) His decrees, purposes, his determinations are from the past, for God has set them down in timeless eternity past. These are all required to take place, because God never changes, and no one can hinder his work.
3. Proven by observation – God predetermines judgment, 3:16-22 **4-1-2013**
- a. The rigor of God's judgment, 16-17
 - (1) Not only in our own day, but also in days passed, the judicial system almost always grew into corruption and became wicked. High position makes men jealous and selfish; therefore, our judicial or legal system is a corrupting one on a continual basis.
 - (2) We will not soon forget President Richard Nixon and Watergate.
 - (3) "According to Herodotus, Sisamnes was a corrupt judge under Cambyses II of Persia. He accepted a bribe and delivered an unjust verdict. As a result, the king had him arrested and flayed alive. His skin was then used to cover the seat in

- which his son would sit in judgment.” From Wikipedia (4-30-2013)
- (4) Prov. 13:23 *Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.*
 - (5) Also, in the religious places iniquity was there. How many times have we heard of religious leaders being involved in criminal activity and immoral acts?
 - (6) We could mention some preachers who have been involved with women in a loose way, or we could mention religious leaders who steal money or do other immoral things.
 - (7) We could even mention the Pharisees, scribes, and elders of the New Testament.
 - (8) But God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time appointed for that very purpose.
 - (9) Romans 2:2 *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.*
 - (10) John 17:17 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*
 - (11) Everyone will be judged by the truth in God’s word.
- b. The reflection of man’s being, 18
- (1) It is Solomon’s desire that God would “manifest” or bring to light or to test man in his earthly existence.
 - (2) Man would find that in this world he is no more than a beast.
 - (3) In man’s physical form, he is no more than a beast
 - (4) Man breathes the same air as the beast. He eats food as the beasts. He moves about as the beasts, and he will die as the beasts.
- c. The recompense of man’s end, 19-20
- (1) One thing befalls (or happens to) both man and beast.
 - (2) This means that in this world the man has in these things no preeminence over the beasts.
 - (3) That is why that in this world there is only vanity.
 - (4) All in the world go to the same place—death. The body goes back to dust from which it came.
 - (5) Genesis 3:19 *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*
- d. The restriction of man’s understanding, 21
- (1) Man can understand that he, as well as the beasts, will return to the dust
 - (2) But man cannot understand anything about the spirit of man or the spirit of the beast.
 - (3) Here reveals to Solomon concerning the spirit of man and the spirit of the beast and the difference between them.
 - (4) The spirit of a man goes upward. It goes to God who gave it.
 - (5) Ecclesiastes 12:7 *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*
 - (6) The spirit of the beast goes downward. It goes to the earth and lives no more.

- (7) Solomon is explaining this, but he says that man in his nature cannot understand this. God must reveal this to us.
 - (8) 1 Cor. 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
 - e. The rejoicing of man's labor, 22
 - (1) So, what is left for man to do, since he cannot perceive the things of God's spiritual realm?
 - (2) It is for him to rejoice in his own works. That is his portion or part in life.
 - (3) Even without knowing God, man can enjoy his labor, which is what God has given him as a gift.
 - (4) The question "... who can bring him to see what shall be after him?" is meant as a rhetorical question, one that need not be answered, because it means that no one can bring a man to see, or understand, what shall be after him.
 - (5) 1 Cor. 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*
 - (6) Job 28:7 *There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:*
 - (7) Notice what the Bible says about what we do know:
 - (a) John 4:22 We know what we worship ...
 - (b) John 21:24 We know that his testimony is true.
 - (c) Rom. 8:28 We know that all things work together ...
 - (d) 1 Cor. 8:4 We know that an idol is nothing ...
 - (e) 1 Tim. 1:8 We know that the law is good ...
 - (f) 1 John 2:8 We know that it is the last time.
 - (g) 1 John 3:2 We know we shall be like him
 - (h) 1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life.
 - (i) 1 John 3:24 We know that he abideth in us
 - (j) 1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God
 - (k) 1 John 5:20 *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*
- C. Proven By Unfairness - Two Are Better Than One, Eccl. 4:1-16
- 1. A man and his comforter, 1-3
 - a. The oppressions of life and the tears of the oppressed are many.
 - b. The oppressors had much power.
 - (1) They had educational power
 - (2) They had political power
 - (3) They had religious power
 - (4) They had economic power
 - c. But there was no comforter

- (1) Lam. 1:1-2 *How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! 2 She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.*
- (2) John 14:16 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*
- (3) John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*
- d. Two are better than one.
2. A man and his neighbor, 4-6
- Everyone needs a good neighbor, and everyone needs to be a good neighbor.
 - Sometimes we do not have good neighbors.
 - As a result, a man folds his hands and eats his own flesh, which means that the man will not work, and his flesh wastes away from hunger.
 - When he sees his neighbor working hard and making money, he is jealous and refuses to work himself, thinking his neighbor should give him of his abundance.
 - A man without a neighbor is lonely, but verse six says, “Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.”
 - Two are better than one.
3. A man and his heir, 7-8
- Here is a man who is bound up in himself. He has no child, no wife, no family, no heir.
 - He is completely absorbed in his work and his money.
 - He is working for no one but himself. He is alone.
 - Without an heir, he grows richer and richer and has no one to spend his money on.
 - So he is obsessed with his money. He will even starve himself so he will not spend a penny.
 - The people at Falmouth, Kentucky, used to tell a story about a man in the town who was the richest man in town, but he starved to death because he was not willing to spend money for food.
 - When this man dies, his money will go to the state, because no one is in line to get his inheritance.
 - Two are better than one.
4. Two men together, 9-12
- Two are better than one, verse 9 (I told you so).
 - Two have a good reward for their labor.
 - It is better to marry than to be single.
 - It is better to have friends than not to have friends.
 - It is better to go to church than not to go to church.
 - There is a good reward, or a pleasure and help, in social interaction.

- g. We must, however, be careful with whom we fellowship.
 - (1) Amos 3:3 *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*
 - (2) Eph 5:11 *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*
 - h. If two are together and one fall, the other can pick him up, 10
 - i. If two lie together, then they have heat, but one cannot be as warm.
 - (1) Eddie heating blanket and bringing it to the bed before I came to bed.
 - j. If one has a contest with an enemy, two can stand against him, and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Three against one is better than two against one.
 - k. Bro. Walker used to say “What one of us cannot do, all of us together can.”
 - l. Two are better than one.
5. A king and his son, 13-16
- a. Here we have an old and foolish king. He will not be admonished because of his foolishness, 13
 - b. The child comes from a poor background and arises to the position of king or at least assistant to the king, as a prince for his wisdom and conduct such as Joseph and Daniel.
 - c. But he that is born as an heir of the crown may through his laziness become an old and foolish king, 14
 - d. The second child is the one who takes the place of the deserving prince who becomes king; but the wise child takes his place in sovereignty and power.
 - e. A king with a lazy son will not reign, but a king who has a wise son will rule for generations to come.
 - f. But if the son of the foolish king will become king, yet the people will not rejoice in him. This is vanity.
 - g. Two are better than one—a wise king and a wise son.
 - h. Two are better than one.
- D. Proof By Insufficient Religion, 5:1-7 “Obedience In The House of God” **5-15-2013**
- 1. Keep thy foot, 1
 - a. When we go into the house of God, we are to keep the foot, or keep the footing, or correct our way or put our footing toward the worship of God rather than toward the world.
 - b. Prov. 1:15 *My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:*
 - c. When we go into the house of god, we are to remove our foot from evil.
 - d. Prov. 4:27 *Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.*
 - e. Isa 58:13-14 *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: 14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*
 - f. “Keep thy foot” can mean several things:

- (1) The word “keep” can mean to guard. We are to keep, or guard, our feet when we go into the house of God.
- (2) The word “keep” can also mean “to give heed to.” When we go to the house of God, we are to give heed to the word of God.
- (3) The word “keep” can also mean “to watch or observe.” We come to the house of God to observe the ordinances and to be careful of our attitude and motives.
- (4) The word “keep” can also mean “to preserve or protect.” We are to preserve the way of God as it is to be conducted in the house of God, not bringing the world into the church but making the house of God a place of refuge from the temptations of the world.
- (5) There are several more meanings we could consider, but that will suffice.
- g. We are to “keep thy foot.”
 - (1) Psalm 119:105 *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*
 - (2) Prov. 1:10 *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. . . . 15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:*
2. Be ready to hear . . . 1
 - a. Matt 11:15 *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*
 - b. Matt 13:17 *For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*
 - c. James 1:19 *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*
3. Hear more than to give sacrifice of fools, 1
 - a. 1 Samuel 15:22 *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*
 - b. These who give the sacrifice of fools are they who come into the house of God with no sincere desire to hear the word of God but to offer God something.
 - c. You do not come to church to offer God something except yourself and what he commands, such as the tithe, your body, and your attention and praise.
 - d. God has everything he needs. He does not need our contributions of sacrifice.
 - e. These sacrifices of fools are pretended prayers, enhanced worship with added chants, clothing, decor, etc. They seem to think that God will be more pleased with the inventions of man rather than his own word.
4. They consider not that they do evil, 1
 - a. These who give sacrifices of fools regard themselves more important than God.
 - b. They have better theology sometimes than God, they think.
 - c. They have a better way of doing things than God, they think.
 - d. They know the hearts of men better than God, they think; so they become judges of other men’s matters.
 - e. They do not know in their hearts that they sin against God when they do not put him in first place and come humbly before him.
 - f. Micah 6:8 *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD*

require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Trista made a framed picture of her calligraphy with this verse. It is beautiful.

- (1) God wants and deserves humility.
 - (2) Deut 8:2 *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*
 - (3) Deut 8:16 *Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;*
- g. So, they do not consider, or take it to heart or mind, that they do evil.
5. By not rash with thy mouth, 2
- a. We should be very careful in the house of God what we say.
 - b. God is in heaven (this verse tells us), and he knows our hearts.
 - c. We are upon the earth, his creation, and are nothing but little things to God.
 - d. Prov 11:2 *When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.*
 - e. Therefore, Solomon says, “Let thy words be few.
 - f. Again, James 1:19 *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*
6. Dreams and a multitude of words, 3
- a. The person who comes to the house of God with business on his mind will have a mind filled with his business instead of considering the Lord for worship.
 - b. This multitude of business brings confusing dreams to those who are engaged too busily in business.
 - (1) I remember when I did accounting that I would dream of numbers all night almost every night, and I could not sleep well as a result.
 - (2) If these dreams are allowed to come into the house of God, then our minds will be muddled and confused and tired; and we will not be able to worship God appropriately.
 - (3) Psalm 46:10 *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*
 - c. These dreams could also refer to people of business thinking they are well equipped to run the church business and will, as a dream, conduct many things in the church, conducting the church more as a business than as a church.
 - d. These dreamers also desire to have “a multitude of words.” They want to have the last say in many things: in business, in conduct, in worship, and even in theology.
7. When thou vowest a vow, 4-5
- a. When we come into the house of God, we come with the idea that, after we have heard the word of God, then we are going to vow a vow of God that we will obey his commandments—that is the true meaning of worship.
 - b. Worship without commitment is not much worship at all.
 - c. James 1:22 *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

- d. God is not too impressed with hearers only.
- e. Vowing a vow
 - (1) There is no commandment in the Bible that we are to vow a vow.
 - (2) Some think that no vows should be taken due to passages like Matt 5:34 *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*
 - (3) But this is a guarantee that something will happen, and only God knows what will happen.
 - (4) But a vow is a commitment to God that you will in deed, according to your ability, perform a certain duty.
 - (5) There is, therefore, no sin against making a commitment to God.
 - (6) But, if one does make a vow, he is definitely to pay that vow.
 - (7) The warning is not against making a vow but against making a vow and not keeping the vow.
- f. "Pay that which thou hast vowed."⁴
- g. Notice verse 5 – *Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*
- h. A vow to God is a serious thing.
 - (1) Don't say you will do something if you are not going to do it.
 - (2) God knows your heart, and you cannot fool him with your words.
- 8. The mouth causing thy flesh to sin, 6
 - a. This is simply making excuses with your mouth for vows you have not kept, things you have done or have not done that you were to do or were not to do.
 - b. In other words, when you are disobedient.
 - c. You may tell the angel, the pastor, or an angel from heaven who knows, that it was merely an error, or a mistake.
 - d. If it is just an error, why should God be angry at thy voice? 6
 - (1) He should be angry at thy voice, because it is only a voice, only one of those multitude of words that you use to try to get out of your predicament.
 - (2) God is angry with the wicked every day. His anger is a stressful thing.
 - (3) Jer. 3:5 *Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest.*
 - e. God will destroy the work of thine hands, 6
 - (1) What you do on your own, in your own effort and by your own ability, will eventually be taken away; and your reward will be empty.
 - (2) Luke 8:18 *Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*
- 9. Fear thou God, 7
 - a. Yes, in a multitude of dreams and words there are many vanities, for everything under the sun is vanity according to Solomon.
 - b. This is also vanity, to go into the house of God and not take notice of your footing, not turning away from the world but endorsing the world and introducing worldly things into the house of God.

- c. Vanity or fear? Which one?
 - d. We all work vanity in the world, but only those who know God through Christ actually fear him.
 - e. But fear thou God. That is the purpose; that is the essence; that is the fulness of true worship.
10. Marvel not at the matter, 8
- a. Marvel not
 - (1) When you see injustice in the world, do not marvel, or be surprised, at it.
 - (2) John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*
 - (3) Matt 18:7 *Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!*
 - (4) John 1:10 *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*
 - b. He that is higher than the highest (God) regards, or knows, about these things.
 - c. There are things that are higher than they (the injustices and vanities of the world).
 - (1) There is a higher world.
 - (2) There is a higher call.
 - (3) There is a higher power.
 - (4) There is higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26)
 - (5) Psalm 61:2 *From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*
11. Conclusion
- a. So, when we go to the house of God, we are to keep our foot.
 - b. We are to stay our heart and mind upon the Lord.
 - c. Leave the world behind us and use the worship in the house of God as a refuge from the world, expecting church to be different from the world.
 - d. Let us not make vows that we cannot or will not keep—these are very serious things to God.
 - e. Let us use few words and listen speedily to the word of God.
 - f. Thereby we receive blessings and benefits from God both materially and spiritually.
- E. Proof by Insufficient Wealth, “The Profit of the Earth 5:9-20
- 1. The Profit Of Our Gain, 5:9-14
 - a. The profit of the earth is for all, 9
 - (1) God did not make the abundance of the wealth of the earth for a few to hoard up and keep for themselves.
 - (2) Remember the second greatest commandment? “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”
 - (3) Even the king is served by God’s profit from the earth.
 - b. The love of silver, 10
 - (1) If a person loves silver, he can find no real satisfaction in it. He cannot eat silver; and even if he can sell it for food, an abundance of silver cannot satisfy

- his spiritual need, since heaven cannot be bought with silver.
- (2) Those who love abundance of increase (hoarding it to themselves) are seldom satisfied with life, because they mostly want more and more.
 - (3) They crave the prestige, honor, and power that riches give; but riches cannot give them eternal life.
 - (a) Matt 19:23 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
 - (b) Matt 13:22 *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*
 - (4) When Paul speaks of riches, he always speaks of real, spiritual riches.
 - (a) Riches of his goodness, Rom. 2:4
 - (b) Riches of his glory, Rom. 9:23; Eph. 3:16
 - (c) Riches of wisdom and knowledge, Rom. 11:33
 - (d) Riches of his grace, Eph. 1:7
 - (e) Riches of Christ, Eph. 3:8
 - (f) Riches of the full assurance of understanding, Col. 2:2
 - (g) Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, Heb. 11:26
 - (h) One of the very few negative comments about riches that Paul makes is found in 1 Tim 6:17 *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*
- c. Beholding riches with the eyes, 11
- (1) As goods increase, so do the rich increase.
 - (2) But their riches are too much for their use.
 - (3) If they do not share their riches through kindnesses, then all their riches are good for is to see them with their own eyes.
- d. The sleep of the laborer, 12
- (1) Sleep of the laboring man is sweet.
 - (2) Anyone who has done hard work knows this, whether he is hungry or not hungry.
 - (3) But the rich have others to do their work, and they are continually worried what might happen to their riches—whether the crops will fail, whether some horrible weather may ruin his gain, or whether some thief may come and steal his riches.
 - (4) Thus, he finds it very hard to sleep.
- e. The evil of riches, 13
- (1) There is no sin against being rich. There is no harm in having abundant possessions.
 - (2) But when the riches are kept only for the rich, and the rich man does not use his riches to help others, then he is hurt spiritually.
 - (3) Also he may be hurt by theft or bad weather or disease on crops.
 - (4) He may be hurt by eating too much without exercise (being gluttonous and lazy) to his own hurt through his own disease.

- f. Managing of riches, 14
 - (1) This sore evil is the bad management of riches.
 - (2) You have, no doubt, heard of people who have inherited much money and have in a year or two spent it all and are in deep debt.
 - (3) This is certainly a sore evil.
 - (4) By bad management the rich man has nothing to leave to his son.
- 2. The Poverty of the Soul, 5:15-17
 - a. Every person comes into the world with nothing, and he will leave this world the same way, 15a
 - b. He will take nothing of his riches with him, 15b
 - c. This is also a sore evil. It is vanity.
 - d. So what enduring profit is there under the sun? In the long term, we all labor for the wind, don't we? 16
 - (1) We know that man's soul gains no profit here on earth – Matt 16:26 *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*
 - e. In Acts 16:16 a certain woman brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.
 - f. In Acts 19:24 a certain man named Demetrius brought no small gain unto the craftsmen.
 - g. Phil. 3:7 *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*
 - h. Phil. 1:21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*
 - i. 1 Tim. 6:5-6 *Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.*
 - j. Eating in the darkness, 17
 - (1) This, one Jewish commentator says (Eben Ezra), is literally the night time, when the rich man eats and only then.
 - (2) He is so busy during the day conniving to make more and more riches that he does not take the time to eat.
 - (3) The suggestion is that he eats in the dark so that he cannot tell what he is eating, whether it be that which is allowed by law or not, whether it is clean or unclean, whether it is good for the body or not.
 - (4) He eats only to live, because he cannot enjoy his food, since his mind is full of business and not on being thankful to God for his food and his riches.
- 3. The Power of Our Labor, 18-20
 - a. God's portion for man, 18-19
 - (1) There is nothing wrong with eating and drinking. It is God's portion for man to do so. It is also necessary for life.
 - (2) This portion is a gift of God.
 - (3) God has given riches to man, and wealth, and power, or ability, to eat of it.
 - (4) God has also given the ability to rejoice in our labor.
 - (5) These are the things that man is to do:
 - (a) Eat and drink

(b) Accept this food and drink as a portion from God

(c) Rejoice in our labor

b. Man's thoughts, 20

(1) Man does not remember, or dwell on, the hardships of life.

(2) He enjoys the work of his hands; he enjoys the food that he eats with a good conscience, and he can sleep well.

(3) That is all because God answers the righteous man with the joy of his heart.

(4) The joy of a man's heart is God's presence and indwelling.

(5) John 16:22 *And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*

(6) Psalm 32:11 *Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*

(7) Jer 15:16 *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.*

F. Proven From The Inescapable Vanity of Life, 6:1-12

5/29/2013 Wed.

1. Vanity in wealth, 6:1-2

a. Wealth without a purpose; wealth without intention; wealth without humility.

b. Love of wealth (or money). There is no greater sin than this, since it corrupts the soul. Notice verse 2: "... so that he wanteth nothing for his soul."

c. Love of wealth blinds a man to his need for a soul remedy.

d. 1 Kings 10:27 *And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycomore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.*

e. There was so much wealth in Jerusalem that people had no worries about money; therefore, they did not consider the condition of their souls.

f. Verse 2 also tells us that God has given the riches, wealth, and honor. It is not something that man produces or gains without God.

g. They even had money for "all that he desireth." Not only for needs but for all a man's wants.

h. Psalm 73:7 *Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.*

i. Eccles. 5:19 *Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.*

j. God must also give a man the power to eat thereof and to rejoice in his labor. It is a gift of God.

k. Without proper work and proper executing of energy to protect this wealth, a strange nation may take it over, and it would not be enjoyed by those who had it but will go into the hands of strangers.

l. Lam. 5:2 *Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens.*

m. This is an evil disease; that is, of covetousness. This is a spiritual disease. Someone said that it is madness for a man to live poor that he might die rich. He is like an ass that is loaded with figs but is eating thorns. (Juvenal—See Gill)

2. Vanity in children, 6:3-6
 - a. A man has many children
 - (1) Rehoboam had 28 sons and 60 daughters; Ahab had 70 sons and many daughters (2 Chron. 11:21).
 - (2) Psalm 127:3 *Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*
 - b. But life is not filled with good, 3
 - (1) He does not enjoy his life, for he is filled with greed and selfishness and the intoxication of wealth.
 - (2) He has no spiritual good as the grace, mercy, and righteousness of God.
 - c. He has no burial, 3
 - (1) Perhaps he is so disliked by his family that they think he is not deserving of a burial.
 - (2) Or perhaps he dies, as we say, in the gutter; and no one thinks him worthy of a decent burial.
 - (3) Or perhaps he will be killed for his wealth and thrown into a river or a ditch without a burial.
 - (4) Or that burial, which is a memorial to an honored person, is not due him because of his wicked life and the apathy of his family and his so-called friends.
 - d. If Job thought his case of suffering were so great that it would be better for him to have been aborted before he was born, so much more here regarding this man, who is despised and is refused a burial. This is a great evil, 3
 - e. His name will not be remembered, 4
 - (1) This may be speaking of an aborted baby, as was just mentioned
 - (2) No name carved on a stone or written in ink in a book or proclaimed in public for remembrance—out of sight, out of mind, you might say.
 - f. Hath not seen the sun, 5
 - (1) This speaks, also, of the aborted baby—in darkness, but rather rest in death rather than to experience the vanity of this life.
 - g. If he lived a thousand years, 6
 - (1) This would be longer than the oldest man known to live—Methuselah, 969 years.
 - (2) But this wealthy man who has many children may live 1,000 years and not seen any good, or has not enjoyed life at all; especially, he has seen no spiritual good, since his life is spent regarding his children and his wealth.
 - (3) Do not all go to one place? 6
 - (a) The aborted baby goes to death, or the baby who is born dead goes to death.
 - (b) Also the man who lives his life in wealth with many blessings from God also goes to death.
 - (c) Job 30:23 *For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*
3. Vanity in labor, 6:7-8
 - a. Spoken of before, these verses tell us of how vain it is for man to labor in producing

food if he cannot eat his own food, if his appetite is waned, or his mind is filled with worry, or he simply does not enjoy eating.

- b. His appetite is not filled. In other words, he does not eat because he is hungry, because he has labored hard and needs nourishment. He eats whenever he wants, and eating becomes a monotony, not a need.
 - c. He can never be filled, or satisfied, with his eating; therefore, his labor is in vain.
 - d. The wise man and the foolish man both can enjoy eating if they will. There is no difference. They both know how to conduct themselves before men to get along in the world and to produce gain for their living. 8
4. Vanity in the future, 6:9-12
- a. Wandering of the desire, 9
 - (1) It is better to enjoy what you have, or can see with your eye, than to allow your mind to wander far off from your current possessions and become wanton for things that you cannot have.
 - (2) Heb 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*
 - (3) This is vanity, this craving of the mind after things you cannot have.
 - (4) Romans 12:2 speaks of the *renewing of your mind*.
 - (5) 2 Cor. 9:3 speaks of the *forwardness of your mind . . . and your zeal . . . hath provoked many*.
 - (6) Eph. 4:23 speaks of being *renewed in the spirit of your mind*.
 - (7) 1 Peter 1:13 tells us to *gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*.
 - b. Sovereignty of God, 10
 - (1) All things that have been and will be are known. They are all alike pertaining to man, for man is God's creation and has determined his bounds and those things which he must encounter on earth.
 - (2) Neither can man change anything that God has put in his own power. Man cannot contend with God, who is mightier than man.
 - c. Many inventions, 11
 - (1) Man does not change the world to the good but to the bad. He has many inventions
 - (2) Eccles. 7:29 *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*
 - d. What is man the better? 11
 - (1) Of all the inventions of man, all the modern technological innovations, which has made man better? We must say NONE.
 - (2) Man becomes worse and worse without God.
 - (3) His mind wanders into areas of intrigue to satisfy man's curiosity and catches the human mind, tempting the mind to be involved in all kinds of wickedness and corrupts man's whole being.

- e. Who knows what is good for man? 12
 - (1) The answer is well known. No man knows what is good for man. Only God knows that.
 - (2) Man's life is a vain life, which Solomon pounds home to our minds in this book.
 - (3) We spend our lives "as a shadow." Just as the western shadow is long in the morning and gone in the evening, so life, as a shadow, is spent quickly and fades away.
 - (4) Who can tell a man what shall be? Man does not know in himself even what tomorrow may bring.
 - (a) James 4:14 *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*
 - (5) Man lives a "vain life."
 - (6) We do not know what tomorrow may bring, so we must be ready today for whatever it is that will come.
 - (7) 2 Cor 6:2 (*For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*)

IV. THE PRESCRIPTION FOR LIVING WITH VANITY, 7:1 - 12:8

A. Coping In The World, 7:1-9:18 **6-12-2012**

1. Wisdom and folly, 7 :1-14

a. The Good Name of a Man, 1

- (1) There is no good name above God's name. His name is Wonderful, etc.
 - (a) Matt. 10:17-18 *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*
- (2) There is **no** good name above the name of Jesus Christ – Acts 4:12 *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*
- (3) Every believer should have a good name.
 - (a) Matt 26:13 *Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.*
 - (b) 3 John 1:12 *Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.*
 - (c) Psalm 112:6 *Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*
- (4) Death better than birth, 1
 - (a) This is for the man who has a good name.
 - (b) If a man has a good name at death, it is better than his name at birth.
 - (c) No one has any knowledge of the disposition of a man when he is born, but

he has a reputation when he dies.

(d) Therefore, to a person who has a good name, being saved by the grace of God and serving God in his life, being good to others and witnessing of the grace of God, his death is better than his birth.

b. The Mourning & Feasting of a Man, 2

(1) The house of mourning is a place where a person can put to his heart, or to his thinking, the seriousness of disease, heartache, and death.

(2) The house of feasting does not lend to the serious consideration of life's issues but is called *amusement*, because the word means "not thinking." Feasting feeds the lusts of the flesh but does little or nothing regarding the serious nature of life or the need of salvation or a Savior.

c. The Sorrow of a Man, 3

(1) Sorrow, also, brings a serious, considering, thinking heart to a man, wondering about the reasons for sorrow and thinking about the real issues of life.

(2) Sadness makes the world real, but many like to live in a worriless, harmless, almost heavenly world (which does not exist).

(3) Laughter, however, again turns a man's mind away from real thinking and reasoning of eternal things and gives way to non-thinking and frivolity.

(a) We laugh at the craziest things.

(b) Many times today young people, as well as adults, love to laugh at things that are not very spiritual. They laugh at people whom they do not like. They laugh at filthiness in thought and action. They laugh at silly and frivolous sayings and sexual jokes.

(c) Joy comes to God's people through salvation and hope, but simple laughter comes to people through silly and mundane, or earthly, words or actions.

(d) Laughing is also used to persuade a person that he is having fun – Eph 5:4 *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*

(4) Sadness makes the heart better, because through sadness a person takes the time to seriously consider the real meaning of life and eternity.

d. Mourning and Mirth, 4

(1) Mourning

(a) The wise man's heart (or his thinking) is in the house of mourning, because he knows that life is more than having fun, relaxation, entertainment, and things.

(b) He knows that he can learn many of life's lessons in the house of mourning.

(c) But many people do not want to go to the house of mourning, because they are addicted to the world and its entertainment and even lusts.

(d) Going to church can be a house of mourning, because in the house of God a person hears about his heart's need for a Savior, about his sin, and about Hell. But he also hears about the remedy for all of this through Jesus Christ, his death, burial, and resurrection.

(2) Mirth

- (a) Prov. 14:13 *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*
 - (b) Eccl 2:1 *I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.*
 - (c) When you read the prophets of the Old Testament, you find many references to the fact that mirth has ceased, because God took Israel captive. The mirth of the earth will one day cease.
 - (d) Rev 18:22 *And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; This is Babylon.*
- e. Rebuke and Song, 5-6
- (1) Prov 27:5 *Open rebuke is better than secret love.*
 - (2) The rebuke of the wise comes from spiritual understanding; therefore, it is better than the song, or the praise in song, of the fools.
 - (3) The song of fools
 - (a) Most songs written in the world for the world are of small things, things not really worthy of serious consideration except for entertainment.
 - (b) Many country songs speak of broken marriages, lost loves, drunken fights, and jealous people.
 - (c) Most Popular songs and what is shamefully called “rock and roll” music speak of erotic love and sleeping together.
 - (d) Some music speaks horrifically of murder, rape, thievery, cheating, etc.
 - (e) Some have very beautiful music; some have horrid music.
 - (f) But these are the songs of fools, which most of us listen to from time to time.
 - (g) But we are to sing the songs of Zion, as Israel desired when they were in Babylon, but their hearts were sorrowful, and they could not find it in their hearts to sing of Zion.
 - i) When a person is put into prison, the direction of his heart turns. When I have visited prisons and jails, I have noticed a switch from the worldly enjoyments to the more serious things of eternity and proper actions in life.
 - ii) Many listen to the Gospel for the first time in prison. Many are saved while in prison.
 - iii) Israel were singing worldly songs and worshiping God in idolatry and wrong symbolisms; but God sent them into captivity—then their hearts became serious, and they wanted to go back home and sing, not the songs of the world, but the songs of the kingdom of God—Zion.
 - (4) The rebuke of the wise
 - (a) When a wise friend rebukes you, it may hurt; but it is probably for the best.
 - (b) Luke 17:3 *Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.*

- (c) 1 Tim 5:20 *Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.*
- (d) Titus 2:15 *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*
- (e) Rev 3:19 *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*
- (5) Laughter of the Fool, 6
 - (a) The fool laughs at a wise man's rebuke; he will throw it off as nothing.
 - (b) This laughter is foolishness in itself, because, as the thorn burns under the pot, being very tender and useless, so this laughter will be ended once the fool has been thrown into the fire of Hell where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.
 - (c) 2 Sam. 23:6 *But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:*
- f. The Wise Man's Oppression, 7-9
 - (1) Oppression
 - (a) A wise man can remain a wise man until oppression comes.
 - (b) Then it is hard for him to keep his mind upon the Lord and upon his wisdom.
 - (c) We are all human, and any wisdom we have can be interfered by oppression.
 - (d) We stagger at the promises of God sometimes.
 - (2) A Gift
 - (a) If someone gives a gift to us in an attempt to persuade us to do a thing one way or another, this can destroy the wise heart and cause us to do that which we would not normally do.
 - (b) Prov 17:23 *A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.*
 - (3) Patient or Proud in Spirit, 8
 - (a) This is why we need to be patient, remembering the Lord and his word at all times, lest some wicked person make us stagger at God's promises and catch us in a weak moment to do evil.
 - (b) This is better than a proud spirit, which comes by way of a gift or by way of oppression.
 - (4) The Spirit of Anger, 9
 - (a) In the time of oppression or a gift, we can develop anger.
 - (b) But we are to be careful not to be angry quickly, because anger is the disposition (or in the bosom) of fools.
 - (c) We can only be angry and sin not (Eph. 4:26), but we can grow quickly angry through selfishness, lack of spiritual growth, or simply personal arrogance.
- g. Former and Present Days, 10
 - (1) Everyone seems to think that past days have always been better than present days.
 - (2) When we look at certain trends, we know without a doubt that those past days

were much better than present days.

- (3) But here it seems that the writer is speaking of how that it may be harder to live for the Lord to have wisdom nowadays, because past days were not so wicked, and now we have an excuse not to live for God.
 - (4) Secularists look at current conditions of society and tell us that we need to go back to a better time, perhaps a time when socialism ruled the day, that it is the condition of the times that is causing our major problems.
 - (5) Some want to blame everyone for the wickedness of a few, not realizing that wickedness has always been in the world and will be until the end.
 - (6) Man sinned in the Garden, and he has never got over it. We are all sinners by nature, and wickedness ends only when God ends it.
 - (7) Past days were not better in this way than our day; wickedness is in every generation.
- h. Wisdom and the Work of God, 11-13
- (1) Wisdom brings eternal life, so it has a good inheritance, and it is profitable to everyone under the sun. 11
 - (2) Wisdom and money are both a defense to make life better, but there is a more excellent knowledge; that is, to know that “wisdom giveth life to them that have it.” 12
 - (3) Phil 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*
 - (4) So, we are to consider the work of God, because he is the only one who can make straight that which has been made crooked. 13
- i. Prosperity and Adversity, 14
- (1) This is the menu for the day. God has set the one over against the other. This is what life is all about.
 - (2) A man cannot know what is after him, or what comes from day to day.
 - (3) Prosperity may come tomorrow, or adversity may come; but in it all we need to know the work of God and consider it.
 - (4) He is the only answer for the ebbs and flows of this life under the sun.

2. COPING IN THE WORLD – Wisdom and Moderation, 7:15-18 **6-19-2013**

a. The Current Situation, 15

- (1) Solomon has seen all these things, the things that he is mentioning in this book under the sun.
- (2) He has seen good, and he has seen bad; they both grow together. Note the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. 13:24-30).
- (3) He gives an illustration of this: a just man perishes in his righteousness.
 - (a) In other words, his righteousness does not guarantee that he will live a long life and have his troubles greatly eased because of his righteousness.
 - (b) Then we see a wicked man, who we may think deserves to die young, but he lives on and on for many years.
 - (c) Job 14:5 *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*
- (4) This is the current situation: many times the righteous die young, and the wicked live long.

b. The Condescending Religionists, 16-17

- (1) First we have the over-righteous and over-wicked person.

(a) The Over Righteous

- i) Of course, we cannot be genuinely over righteous. We can never reach the perfect righteousness of God in our lives, though we may have the most sincere avocation to do so.
- ii) So this is a righteousness that is not God's righteousness.
 - a) Rom. 10:3 *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*
 - b) Matt 5:20 *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
- iii) These over-righteous people are condescending to other people, pretending that others are not as righteous, as productive, and perhaps as successful as they are.
- iv) They will talk down to other people who profess to believe in Christ, but they want no one to judge their actions, because they eventually become "their own righteousness;" therefore, to them God is not even in a position to judge them. This is being "righteous over much."
- v) This fake righteousness (whether in a lost person or in a saved person) may very well kill them.
 - a) To the lost man, his righteousness is not sufficient to salvation, so he will die in his sins and be eventually cast into the Lake of Fire. But this "die before thy time" is speaking of physical death through all kinds of diseases that may come through their wickedness. His wickedness may also cause him to be convicted of a horrible crime

- and be put to death.
- b) In the saved man, a false righteousness may cause him to be destroyed through losing his reputation, his effectiveness as a witness, a loss of friends through his personal judgments, destroying his opportunities to be an effective teacher to others.
 - c) Matt 10:24 *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.* This fake righteousness goes beyond what God requires of us, inventing our own way of righteousness in our practice.
- (b) The Over Wicked
- i) Matt 23:14 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*
 - ii) 1Thess 4:6 *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.*
 - iii) Luke 11:26 *Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.*
 - iv) This wickedness can end the life of an unbeliever or a believer through illness, accident, or premeditation to evil.
- (2) Second, we have the Wise and Moderate Man, 18
- (a) "Take hold of this," this which follows that I will instruct you in, wisdom that comes only from God.
 - i) Job 17:9 *The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*
 - ii) 1 Tim. 6:12 *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.* (See also verse 19).
 - (b) "From this withdraw not thine hand . . ."
 - i) "From this" refers to fear of God – "for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all."
 - ii) We are not to withdraw our hand from the fear of God.
 - a) Psalm 111:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*
 - b) Prov. 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*
 - c) Job 28:28 *And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*
 - (c) Coming forth from them all
 - i) This indicates that, if a believer fears God that these things that may bring death or destruction will be eliminated, and the believer will come

forth at the end of life having escaped the world.

- ii) 2 Peter 1:4 *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*
- iii) Daniel 12:3 *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

c. Conclusion

- (1) Overmuch wickedness may very well take the life of a person early.
 - (a) This wickedness may bring disease or disaster, even death in a confrontation whereas someone is murdered, causing a person to die before his time.
- (2) Overmuch righteousness will bring confusion, hurt feelings, and poor leadership.
 - (a) This righteousness, which is not the indwelling righteousness of Christ within us but is a made-up righteousness from our own fleshly ponderings, will confuse the fundamental doctrines of God bringing legalism to the fore, abusing the Lord's instruction in 1 Peter 5:3 *Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.* In this people will become bosses to those they believe are inferior to them and try to lord it over them.
 - (b) This over-righteousness is also hypocritical.
 - i) Matt 23:3 *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*
 - ii) Matt 23:15 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*
- (3) But moderation will surrender to the will and strength of God through the Holy Spirit, and believers will bypass the destruction that can and will come as a result of overmuch righteousness.
- (4) Phil. 4:5 *Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*
 - (a) We need to be temperate (self-controlled) in all things – 1 Cor 9:25 *And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*
 - (b) We need to be obedient in all things – 2 Cor 2:9 *For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.*
 - (c) We need to have understanding in all things – 2 Tim. 2:7 *Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*
 - (d) We need to glorify God in all things – 1 Peter 4:11 *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

3. COPING IN THE WORLD – Searching For Wisdom, 7:19-29

- a. Man Is Imperfect, 19-22
- (1) Wisdom is strong, 19
 - (a) Wisdom is more powerful and secure than 10 guards “Mighty Men.”
 - (b) Eccles. 9:16 *Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man’s wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.*
 - (c) Eccles. 7:12 *For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*
 - (d) So this wisdom is the wisdom of Jesus Christ and the wisdom of God.
 - (e) Read Eccles. 9:14-18
 - (2) Man is weak, 20
 - (a) 1 Kings 8:46 *If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;*
 - (b) Rom. 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
 - (c) Eccles. 7:20 implies that a man sins through his entire life and never ceases sin through his life on the earth.
 - (3) So think nothing when people speak evil things, 21-22
 - (a) Pay no attention, or (as the Hebrew language brings out) “do not take to heart” the words that people say. We are often too easily offended.
 - (b) And why?
 - (c) Because the time has been that you have also cursed others, or said negative or offensive things about others. We are all sinners.
- b. Wisdom Is Infinite, 23-24
- (1) Solomon said to himself, “I will be wise.” 23
 - (a) This is quite an arrogant statement, and it is made under the impression that there is no wisdom greater than man’s wisdom.
 - (b) This is at the heart of the religion of Humanism, Scientism, and even Deism and Atheism.
 - (2) But wisdom was far from him. 23
 - (a) The Hebrew word RACHOQ for “far” means “remote, far abroad.”
 - (b) Wisdom is not just a little piece from him, but it is far from him, at a long distance.
 - (c) It is distant from all men, not being had or reached by any man except by the Holy Spirit and the fear of the Lord.
 - (d) Through his efforts Solomon could prove only one thing: that wisdom was not easily acquired and was more than any man could do.
 - (3) Who can find it? 24
 - (a) I took a moment and searched “who can find” in the entire Bible and found that there are only three references to this phrase.
 - (b) Prov. 20:6 *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?*
 - (c) Prov. 31:10 *Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.*

- (d) Eccl. 7:24 *That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?*
 - (e) The question is “who can find wisdom?” The answer is “no one can find wisdom by looking.”
 - (f) Paul said concerning Israel in Rom. 11:7 *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*
 - (g) But what did Pilate find in Jesus? John 18:38 *Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*
 - (h) Phil. 3:9 *And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*
- c. Finding Wisdom Is Impossible, 25-26
- (1) Verse 25 indicates that Solomon wanted to find out wisdom by “reason,” or by reckoning or figuring it out with his own mind in a scientific way.
 - (2) Paul warned Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:20 *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:*
 - (3) Turn to 1 Corinthians, and let us read some verses:
 - (a) 1 Cor. 1:20 *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?*
 - (b) 1 Cor. 2:6 *Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:*
 - (c) 1 Cor. 3:19 *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.*
 - (4) Job 37:23 *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.*
 - (5) Eccl. 8:17 *Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.*
 - (6) In his quest for wisdom Solomon finds that a godly man might resist the lure of women, but a sinner shall be taken by her. This was the scourge of Solomon, since this was, no doubt, his greatest sin. 700 wives and 300 concubines, 26
- d. Real Wisdom Is In Christ, 27-29
- (1) Solomon did find out a thing as he is recording one by one the things that he has found, 27
 - (2) And though his soul is still seeking, because he cannot find out what he wants: the answer to life’s questions, 28a
 - (3) He did find out one thing: a man among a thousand, 28b. This is the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He has found one man, but he cannot find a woman with the wisdom that he is looking for. Only Jesus Christ has this wisdom.

- (a) 1 Cor. 2:7 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*
- (b) Eph 3:10 *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,*
- (4) Solomon repeats the one thing he has found in different words in verse 29.
 - (a) “that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”
 - (b) Psalm 106:29 *Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.*
 - (c) Prov. 8:12 *I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.*
- e. Conclusion
 - (1) So, no matter how much man looks for wisdom, he will never find it unless God gives it to him by his grace by way of the Holy Spirit and the new birth through faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (2) At least Solomon found this one thing—Christ.
 - (3) But, since we cannot search out wisdom except through Christ, what should we seek after? Psalm 27:4 *One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*
 - (4) And there is one thing that we must do: Phil. 3:13-14 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*
- 4. COPING IN THE WORLD – Submission to authority, 8:1-10 **7-3-2013**
 - a. The Standard of Righteousness, 1-5
 - (1) “Who is as the wise man?” 1
 - (a) That is, who is as the first man who was made by the hand of God?
 - (b) Who is without sin?
 - i) 1 Peter 2:22 *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*
 - ii) Heb 4:15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*
 - iii) 1 John 3:5, etc.
 - (c) Who is righteous?
 - i) 1 John 3:7 *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*
 - ii) Rom. 3:25 *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*
 - (d) Who is as God is?
 - i) Matt 1:23 *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a*

- son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*
- ii) Heb 3:4 *For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.*
- (e) Who is in the perfect image of God?
- i) 2 Cor. 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*
 - ii) Heb 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*
- (2) “Who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?” 1
- (a) Dan. 2:28 *But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;*
 - (b) There is a God in heaven who knows the interpretation of a thing.
 - (c) Solomon did not know the interpretation of the works on the earth, because he saw it all as vanity.
- (3) Wisdom makes the face shine, 1
- (a) Moses’ face shown when he received the wisdom of God’s ten commandments and the law of God.
 - (b) Stephens’s face shown as he was preaching and dying, because he had God’s wisdom.
 - (c) Our countenance may not glow as did theirs, but our countenance will shine with assurance with God’s wisdom.
- (4) The King’s Commandment, 2
- (a) This could mean the king of a nation, or this could also refer to Jesus as the King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - (b) Whichever it is, or maybe both, it is done according to the oath of God.
 - i) This could be our oath taken when we trust in Christ and commit ourselves to Christ’s service, or this could be according to God’s oath that he made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, etc.
- (5) “Be not hasty to go out of his sight” 3
- (a) To go out of God’s sight is to stand in an evil thing, as the verse goes on to say.
 - (b) We are to stand in his sight, because God does whatever he desires.
- (6) There is power in the King’s word, 4
- (a) When God speaks, it is with power
 - i) God (Christ) spoke the worlds into existence by his word
 - ii) Heb 11:3 *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

- iii) Heb 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*
 - (7) So who can say to him “What doest thou?” 4
 - (a) Dan. 4:35 *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*
 - (8) Keeping the commandment, 5
 - (a) This could mean the commandment of man, who is given his authority as king or magistrate by God himself; for God tumbles and raises kings.
 - (b) Or this could mean the commandment of God himself, who gives his commandment, the word of God, to us to obey.
 - (c) Either way, this is the standard of righteousness. Christ is the ultimate standard of God, and God’s written word is the standard of righteousness for all who follow him.
- b. The Problem With Death, 6-10
 - (1) To every purpose there is time (see Eccles. 3:1), 6
 - (a) Time is given to every person who is born on the earth. His time may be short, or it may be long; but the time is temporal, short, mundane, earthly.
 - (2) To every purpose there is judgment, 6
 - (a) Matt 10:15 *Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.*
 - (b) Mat 12:36 *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*
 - (3) The misery of man is great, 6
 - (a) Job 14:1 *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*
 - (4) Man cannot tell what shall be, 7
 - (a) He cannot tell where he came from by his own wisdom
 - (b) He cannot tell what dangers lie around him.
 - (c) He cannot tell what dangers may accompany him tomorrow.
 - (d) He cannot tell what will come in the future.
 - (e) He cannot tell what day he will die.
 - (f) He cannot tell what hardships he may leave his family after he dies.
 - (g) John 12:35 *Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*
 - (h) 1 John 2:11 *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*
 - (5) No one has power over death, 8
 - (a) No one has power to “retain the spirit.”

- i) Eccl. 3:21 *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?*
 - (b) Man does not have power in the day of death, 8
 - i) That day will come when there is nothing but weakness, nothing but fading shadows and lonely hours or sudden death.
 - ii) Eccl. 7:1 *A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.*
 - (c) There is no discharge in that war, 8
 - i) Death, then, is a kind of war.
 - ii) Heb. 2:14 tells us that Satan has the power of death, and he always wins that war unless God intervenes, which he does seldom.
 - iii) It is appointed to men once to die (Heb. 9:27).
 - iv) Rom. 5:14 *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*
 - v) Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
 - (d) No wickedness can deliver from death, 8
- (6) The ruling of one man over another, 9
 - (a) Solomon has seen all of this on the earth.
 - (b) One man rules (a king) over others; but if he does it haphazardly, he will do it to his own hurt. Sometimes the people rise up against him. Sometimes he is killed, and death takes him away even if he is a good king.
 - (c) A king has a great responsibility; and even if he rules well, his enemies may come against him and kill him. That is the vanity of this life.
- (7) The Death of the Wicked, 10
 - (a) These wicked ones are implied to have a high place among the people. It could be a wicked king, magistrate, or some other important person.
 - (b) He dies, as everyone does.
 - (c) Solomon saw the wicked buried. All of the wicked will one day be buried, either in a grave, or in the ashes, or in hell's burning flame.
 - (d) But he saw an earthly burial, one of great pomp and circumstance. Those coming from the place of the holy, or the holy place, came because the king went to and from the holy place from time to time to know better the people over whom he reigned.
 - (e) These wicked kings throughout history have had their glory day, and they have died, and they have been forgotten in the city where they had reigned.
 - (f) This is also a great vanity, as Solomon closes verse 10.

5. COPING IN THE WORLD - Ignorance of God's work, 8:11-17 **7-17-2013**

a. The Depraved Way of Man, 11

(1) The Sentence

- (a) Man is initially and inherently wicked.

- (b) Man has committed crimes against the laws of God
- (c) God has sentenced man to receive judgment and punishment
- (2) The Speed
 - (a) But God does not execute this speedily, or quickly.
 - (b) This gives man courage to sin more and more.
 - (c) They are “fully set in them to do evil,” or “they are full of evil.”
 - (d) This is because they seem to think that God is excusing evil, so they are emboldened to do evil more and more.
 - (e) See Deut. 7:8-11
- b. The Determined Judgment of God, 12-13
 - (1) It is well with God’s children, 12
 - (a) But God says that, even though a sinner does evil and his day is prolonged, still it will be well with those who fear God.
 - (b) In other words, God will eventually condemn and punish the sinner, so he will eventually bless and reward those who fear him.
 - (c) It will not be well with the wicked, 13
 - (d) His days will not be forever. They will come to an end, and judgment is sure to the sinner, though he know it not.
 - (e) As sure as it will be evil against the sinner, it will likewise be well with the righteous, who have received their righteousness from God. He is not slack concerning his promise
 - (f) 2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*
 - (g) Rom. 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*
 - (2) It is not well with the wicked, 13
 - (a) His days will not be prolonged. He cannot by virtue of food, medicine, vitamins, exercise, or any other thing be able to prolong his life.
 - i) Job 14:5 *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*
 - (b) It is not well with the evil, because he has no fear to sin, since he does not fear God. If he feared God, then his wickedness would be hated by him. He would repent, turn from his sins and turn to Jesus Christ.
- c. The Drastic Comparison Between Evil and Good, 14
 - (1) In our earthly judicial courts there is a system that sometimes rewards wicked people and condemns just people.
 - (2) This reveals the inability of this lower system to get justice correct. Men make mistakes, and evil is praised and righteousness condemned.
 - (3) This shows the importance of a future life where the wicked and righteousness will both be judged correctly according to the justice of Almighty God.
 - (4) There is no real justice in the earth. Real justice belongs to God.
- d. The Deepened Good of Merriment, 15

- (1) There is only one thing that every righteous man has under the sun that will make him merry: the joy of living while tethered to the world.
 - (2) There is joy in the world, but the world does not give eternal peace and joy.
 - (3) The only joy the believers can have in this life is made up of these three basic things in life:
 - (a) To eat
 - (b) To drink
 - (c) To be merry (See the rich man in Luke 12:19).
 - (4) Anyone can do these, especially if he is a believer, with no great investment except to trust in God and obey him.
 - (5) He can enjoy the labor of this life – Eccles. 2:24 *There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.*
- e. The Darkened Mystery of God’s Work on Earth, 16-17
- (1) The Search, 16
 - (a) Solomon sought out to find out the wisdom and work of God on earth, which every believer really should do.
 - i) Search the Scriptures – John 5:39 *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*
 - ii) Seek the Lord – Psalm 105:3; Prov 28:5; Acts 17:27
 - a) Psalm 105:3 *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.*
 - b) Prov. 28:5 *Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.*
 - c) Acts 17:27 *That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*
 - iii) Seek the law – Mal. 2:7
 - a) Mal 2:7 *For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*
 - (b) Solomon was trying to relate the wisdom of God with the wisdom of the world, the knowledge of God with the science of the world, the religion of the world with the truth of God.
 - (c) Solomon slept neither day nor night, as he was very serious about finding out these things, trying to reconcile God’s things with man’s things.
 - (2) The Summation, 17
 - (a) Solomon beheld all the work of God.
 - i) His sovereignty
 - ii) His attributes
 - iii) His superior knowledge and wisdom
 - iv) His Providence, or his work among men on the earth
 - v) This beholding of the work of God is what kept Solomon from going absolutely crazy, or from becoming humanistic in his thoughts.

- (b) Man in himself can search and work his entire life to find the reasons for God's Providence, but he will never understand the way of God.
 - i) Job 9:10 *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.*
 - ii) Rom. 11:33 *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*
 - (c) Then there are wise men, the academics, the scholars, the intelligentsia, the college presidents, the pedantics, the apologists, and others who think they know everything there is to know and have many letters after their names.
 - (d) Even though they, as Solomon, may have the greatest wisdom among men, they still cannot find the meaning and reason of the Providence of God.
 - (e) They must simply believe it and accept it.
 - (f) Many think they know God
 - i) Titus 1:16 *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*
 - ii) 2 Tim. 3:7 *Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
 - (g) That's why Paul told Timothy to "preach the word." It is the only wisdom we have. It is the only connection to God's wisdom that exists. We cannot find it out, so we must pray that God will teach us through his Holy Spirit.
 - i) Isaiah 8:20 *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*
6. COPING IN THE WORLD – Judgment to all men, 9:1-6
- a. The Declaration, 9:1
 - (1) Solomon again states that he has been searching out (or purging out, which means to make clear) the things of God in his Providence in the workings of man.
 - (a) He considered it in his heart, or he was serious about his endeavors. He was not slipshod or careless about his work.
 - (b) He was searching out these things for his own good and for the good of others, because he was the king.
 - (c) He was searching these things in order to declare them.
 - (d) Eccles. 7:25 *I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness:*
 - (2) Everything is in the hands of God, 1
 - (a) The righteous, the wise, and their works are in his hands.
 - i) John 10:29 *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*
 - ii) Deut. 33:3 *Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words.*

- iii) Even our guidance is in his hands – John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*
 - (3) No man knows love or hatred, 1
 - (a) No man knows his own love or hatred. He knows not whether his reaction will be peaceful or vengeful. His sudden reactions to the affairs of this life are uncertain to him.
 - (b) No man knows the love or hatred of another person. He does not know truthfully whether his friends are really his friends. Others may be deceiving him. How can we know for sure who our real friends are? We must simply believe that a person is a friend until we find out different.
 - (c) No man knows the love or hatred of God. We cannot determine by human means whether God loves or hates a thing or even a person. That is God's prerogative. Therefore, we cannot judge whether a person is saved or lost, whether a person is going to Heaven or hell, whether a person is right or wrong in his motive for doing a thing. We must leave all judgment to God.
- b. The Distribution, 2-3
 - (1) Everything happens to everyone alike, no, not in specific things, but in general.
 - (2) ... *to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.*
 - (3) "riches, honour, health, wisdom and learning, fame and reputation." (Gill)
 - (4) Abraham was rich, but so was Nabal and the rich man in the gospels.
 - (5) Joseph and Haman alike were advanced in dignity in Egypt.
 - (6) Moses was a wise man, but so were the magicians in Egypt.
 - (7) But there is one event that happens to all, 3
 - (a) Man is evil in his heart by nature
 - i) Jer. 17:9 *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*
 - ii) Matt 15:18 *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*
 - iii) Mark 7:21 *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*
 - (b) There is madness in man's heart
 - i) Eccles. 10:12-13 *The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.*
 - ii) Wicked men are mad against God, the saints, and all that is good.
 - (c) The evil go to the dead.
 - i) Matt 22:32 *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*
 - ii) The saved are called "the living," not the dead, because we have been translated from death unto life.

- iii) Rev. 11:18 *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*
- iv) Rev. 20:12-13 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*
- v) Speaking of evil, Prov. 2:18 says, *For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.*
- vi) That is, a place where the evil ones will be among the dead spiritually , not among the living. This is not speaking of the body in the grave but the soul among the dead in hell.
- vii) But even the saints will meet death – Psalm 116:15 *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*

I Have A Rendezvous With Death

By Alan Seeger (1888 - 1916)

I have a rendezvous with Death
 At some disputed barricade
 When Spring comes round with rustling shade
 And apple blossoms fill the air.
 I have a rendezvous with Death
 When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand
 And lead me into his dark land
 And close my eyes and quench my breath;
 It may be I shall pass him, still,
 I have a rendezvous with Death
 On some scarred slope of battered hill,
 When Spring comes round again this year
 And the first meadow flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep
 Pillowed in silk and scented down,
 Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
 Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
 Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
 But I've a rendezvous with Death
 At midnight in some flaming town,
 When Spring trips north again this year,
 And I to my pledged word am true,

I shall not fail that rendezvous.

c. The Determination, 9:4-6

- (1) Him that is joined to all the living
 - (a) That is, a person who is still “among the living.”
 - (b) It is better for him, because there is hope.
 - i) Job 14:7 *For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.*
 - ii) As long as there is some life in a person, there is still hope
 - iii) There is hope that he may be saved.
 - iv) There is hope that he may at least overcome his tendencies of evil and live a good a decent life.
 - v) There is hope that he may accomplish to gain some wisdom and do some good in his life, whether it be for good charity or to make some great invention, or of something else.
- (2) A living dog is better than a dead lion.
 - (a) A lion is known as the king of beasts, strong and majestic in his beauty and his wanderings, walking about seeking whom he may devour.
 - (b) A dog is frail compared to the lion. He is tender, loving, kind, and faithful unless he is not treated well.
 - (c) But a living dog is better (or stronger) than a dead lion, for the lion can do nothing while dead, while the dog can be of a benefit to a man.
 - (d) It is better for a person to be living rather than dead, because there is hope.
 - i) A living dog may be trained; a dead lion may not.
 - ii) A living dog may grow from a small puppy into a handsome dog; a dead lion may not.
 - iii) A living dog may become better trained and learn; a dead lion may not.
 - iv) A man may become a better man, more learned, and have more wisdom both humanly and godly, but a dead man may not.
 - (e) As long as you are alive, there is hope that you will accomplish more and more if you try; but if you are dead, there is no more hope.
 - (f) The living know that they shall die (5). We all know that. But the dead know nothing; that is, nothing in this life. They know nothing and would know nothing in this life, for this life is over.
 - (g) They have no more reward in life, because their memory will quickly fade. The time will eventually come when no one will remember them.
 - (h) They have no more love or hatred or envy. They have nothing else to do with this present life. That is all past.
 - (i) Rev. 22:11 *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*

7. COPING IN THE WORLD – Enjoy life while you have it, 9:7-18

- a. We are to enjoy life, even though it is sometimes confusing and hard, and justice hardly seems to be executed rightly, 7
- b. This is what God wants: “for God now accepteth thy works.”
- c. All believers are accepted in Christ
 - (1) Eph 1:6 *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
 - (2) God accepts no man’s person: Gal 2:6 *But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:*
- d. White garments and head ointment, 8
 - (1) The white garment was used in these times for special festive occasions.
 - (a) The Lord wants us to be festive, rejoicing each day as though it is a holiday to praise him for all his goodness and for the bounty he is giving us daily.
 - (b) This also has a spiritual significance, that each person who believes wash his garments white, or daily cleanse his hands to keep them from sin. This is done through the word of God.
 - (c) John 15:3 *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*
 - (2) Ointment on the head
 - (a) Psalm 133:1 *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;*
- e. Live joyfully with the wife, 9
 - (1) Prov. 5:18 *Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.*
 - (2) . . . which he hath given thee under the sun” – Did you know that God gave you your wife?
 - (3) *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me.* (Gen. 3:12)
 - (4) Living joyfully with your wife is one of the great blessings of God as we go through this life.
 - (5) *for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.* God wants us to enjoy life as much as is rightfully possible, doing all things modestly and moderately.
- f. Do everything with your might, 10
 - (1) This implies those things that are right and honest and holy, not evil and wicked things.
 - (2) These are not to be done for salvation, for salvation comes because of the grace of God, not from what we do. Not only so, but here God is surely speaking to those who are already saved by grace.
 - (3) This is to be done, because death will soon come when we can work no more.

Work for the night is come; work through the morning hours.

Work while the dew is sparkling; Work 'mid the springing flowers;
Work when the day grows brighter; Work in the glowing sun;
Work, for the night is coming, When man's work is done.

- g. The confusion of life, 11
 - (1) The race is not to the swift
 - (2) The battle is not to the strong
 - (3) The bread is not to the wise
 - (4) Riches are not for men of understanding
 - (5) Favor is not to men of skill
 - (6) But *time* and *chance* happens to them all
 - (a) Time and chance seem to us to be accidental or happenstance
 - (b) But these are merely our running suddenly into the purpose and plan of God.
 - (c) All things are ordered by God's Providence; when we experience these events, they seem like incidentals, but they are *occurrences* with God.
 - (d) The word *chance* is translated *occurrence* in 1 Kings 5:4.
 - (e) In other words, the same kinds of events or occurrences happen to everyone.
- h. Man does not know his time, 12
 - (1) Solomon is here talking about death.
 - (2) Man does not know the time of his death
 - (3) It is like fish taken in a net
 - (4) It is like birds caught in a snare
 - (5) Men are snared in an evil time when it (death) falls suddenly upon them.
- 8. Value of wisdom, 9:13-18
 - a. Solomon saw wisdom as a great thing, 13
 - (1) Prov 2:6 *For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*
 - b. Solomon gives an example of wisdom, 14-15
 - (1) A great king came against a little city, 14
 - (2) A poor wise man was found, and he delivered the city through his wisdom, 15
 - (3) Yet no one remembered that wise man.
 - c. Solomon noticed that wisdom is better than strength, 16
 - (1) Eph 6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*
 - (2) 1 Cor 1:25 *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*
 - (3) True wisdom is despised, and the words of the wise are not heard
 - d. The words of the wise are heard in quiet (or secret) more than the words of the fools who may be rulers of the land. Believers will hear the little wise man rather than the shouting fool, 17

- e. Wisdom can do what war cannot, 18
 - (1) Wars have not been proven to be effective for bringing peace, except for a very short term.
 - (2) *One sinner destroyeth much good* – It takes only one bad apple to ruin the whole bushel. It takes only one pastor, one deacon, one treasurer, one piano player, one teacher, one member of a church to destroy much good.
 - (3) Is that sinner you?

- 9. Counsel For Vanity, 10:1 - 12:8
 - a. Counsel For Vanity - Wisdom in its character, 10:1-15
 - (1) Flies and Folly, 1
 - (a) These flies are dead flies, and when they die in the ointment, precious ointment, they send forth a putrid smell, and the ointment is ruined.
 - (b) So it is with folly. When folly falls into a man's wisdom, the wisdom is counted for nothing; it will make a man's wisdom have a foul smell, and the wisdom will lose its effectiveness.
 - (c) Such was the adultery of David
 - (d) Such was the idolatry of Solomon
 - (e) Such was the Jehoshaphat's affinity to Ahab
 - (f) The smallest speck is noticed more upon the whitest garment
 - (g) The smallest flaw is noticed more on a pure diamond.
 - (h) So the smallest folly is more noticed on a man noted for his wisdom and honor.
 - (i) Therefore, those in places of honor should be more careful what they say and what they do lest the enemies of his wisdom find an excuse against him to bring him down.
 - (2) Right and Left, 2-3
 - (a) The wise man's heart is like a right-handed man in a right-handed world. His maneuvers were easily accomplished, for it is God's wisdom that makes the world operate properly.
 - (b) The fool's heart is like a left-handed man in a right-handed world. His foolishness is difficult to make fit in this right-handed world, which God operates with his own wisdom. Foolishness does not fit properly in this world, for it is God's design for the world to be run by his own wisdom.
 - (c) The foolishness of the world is the catalyst to all evils in the world, but it is God's wisdom that makes the world run smoothly and in proper order.
 - (d) So that, when the fool walks down the street, it is well known that he is a fool, for his actions, when compared to the righteousness of God, are known to be foolish.
 - (e) However, in our day much foolishness is never compared to God's word and his righteousness; therefore, evil is called good, and good is called evil. That is the confusion of today's modern world.
 - (f) Prov. 6:12 *A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward*

mouth.

- (3) The Ruler and The Rule, 4-7
- (a) Sometimes the spirit of the ruler (king) can be against his subjects. He can flair up in anger at times; he is human.
 - (b) On those occasions the subject should not leave his post, his job, his place simply because his feelings are hurt, or he feels accused of something perhaps that he did not do.
 - (c) The best thing to do is to stay calm and yield to his lashing tongue, because “yielding pacieth great offences.”
 - (d) His anger will be asswaged if we give a soft and surrendering answer such as “Yes, sir.”
 - (e) Prov. 15:1 *A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*
 - (f) There is a great evil among rulers, as is explained in verse six.
 - (g) Verse six tells us that folly is set in great dignity by kings and others in power.
 - (h) This is great folly, because the effect can be catastrophic. This is done due to the fact that the ruler was educated with a person, due to payment of money or some trade-off of benefit, because of personal acquaintance (nepotism) or of some personal benefit that the ruler can receive.
 - (i) Some of these are wicked men, foolish men to say the least, weak men (people) who cannot do the job at hand, etc.
 - (j) The rich men, rich in position so that they can give themselves to a job without mean labor on the side, or men rich in wisdom and knowledge, are put in low places, places with little effect or no effect.
 - (k) This is a great evil of which Solomon has not seen any greater.
 - (l) Solomon has seen servants upon horses (verse 7) and princes walking as servants, which is an example of this great evil.
- (4) Six Facts of Life, 8-11
- (a) If a man digs a pit, he will fall in it, 8
 - i) The teaching is that, if a man plots evil against another man, he may very well fall victim to his own scheme, as Haman against Mordecai. Haman was hanged on his own gallows.
 - (b) If a man cut through a hedge, a serpent may bite him, 8
 - i) This is the custom of serpents, to hide in the hedges.
 - ii) Sometimes we just have a bad day: Amos 5:19 *As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.*
 - iii) These are the trends of the vanity under the sun.
 - (c) If a man moves stones, he will be hurt by them, 9
 - i) Stones are moved for building buildings and for making landmarks.
 - ii) Sometimes people move the ancient landmark, moving the stones away from the mark where they indicate the proper portion of land to an

- owner.
- iii) This can cause great hurt. There is a story written in the local newspaper in Falmouth, Kentucky, where I was raised about two men who had adjacent land, and the two neighbors got into an argument over where a fence should be. Mr. Sade shot Mr. Hutchinson and killed him. Then Mr. Hutchinson's son went to the house and got a gun and shot Mr. Sade. They both died over where a fence should be. I have the newspaper picture of Mr. Sade that was taken while he was in the hospital just before he died.
- (d) If a man cuts wood, he will be in danger of cutting himself or of burning himself on the fire that he builds, 9-10
 - i) The word for "cleaveth" has to do with heat, so many think this has to do with sowing discord among the brethren as mentioned in Proverbs 6:16.
 - ii) If a man has a blunt iron ax to cut the wood, he will need more strength to do the job, 10
 - iii) But wisdom will direct him to whet and sharpen the ax so that the work will be easier and more pleasing.
 - iv) Wisdom is better than strength, says Eccles. 9:16.
 - (e) The serpent and the babbler, 11
 - i) The serpent bites without enchantment, or without a warning sound.
 - ii) Prov. 23:32 *At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.*
 - iii) So, the babbler is no better than the serpent, because no one can guard against a babbler. He or she goes about telling tales of whatever brand, going from house to house, as it were, to bring a low reputation to his victim. This is the poison of words.
- (5) The Character of Wisdom, 12a
- (a) The wise man is a gracious man according to his own words.
 - i) He speaks well of those in leadership, the magistrates, the rulers, the preachers, and the common men, the rich and the poor.
 - ii) He speaks attractively to the animals and is well pleased with them.
 - iii) He speaks well in the marketplace as he deals justly with men of business.
 - iv) He speaks to his children with instruction and love and kindness.
 - v) He speaks to his own wife with praise and tenderness.
 - vi) He speaks of the doctrines of Christ as something to be loved, cherished, sought out, and obeyed.
 - vii) He speaks of the Son of God in truth of grace and salvation.
 - viii) He speaks of God in regard to grace, knowing that God is the sovereign of the universe.
 - ix) He speaks of sanctification of life, teaching others to follow the teachings of God's law.

- x) He speaks of the salvation of the soul to men who need salvation.
 - xi) He speaks as pleasing God in all his words.
- (6) The Character of a Fool, 12b-18
- i) But fool's lips will swallow him up, 12b
 - ii) The fool will get himself in trouble by his own words.
 - iii) His own words will reflect on his own character and bring him to a low estate, revealing his foolish heart and his evil intentions.
- (b) The beginning of the fool's speech, 13
- i) As soon as he opens his mouth, he speaks like a fool, and his foolishness is quickly noticed.
 - ii) When he is finished talking, there is no doubt of his foolishness. His whole speech is mischievous madness. He may end with anger or cursing.
- (c) The fool is full of words, 14
- i) He has something to say about everything, and he cannot express a cogent opinion, so he continues to talk and talk trying to persuade men that he is very intelligent, when everyone knows better.
 - ii) No one can tell what he is talking about, because he speaks in circles. No one can tell what will be next. What other story will he tell? What is the next yarn he will make up and spill onto the ears of his hearers.
- (d) The fool wears out everyone, 15
- i) He talks and talks until he wears out everyone. He speaks about things that he knows nothing about.
 - ii) He speaks of knowing so much, but he cannot even find his own way to the city.
- (7) Here we have a comparison between wisdom and foolishness.
- (a) We have spoken of dead flies, and the fool is like the dead flies that make the ointment stink.
 - (b) He walks and talks, and everyone but he knows that he is a fool, 16-18
 - (c) In foolishness we see the servants upon horses and rich sitting in low places.
 - (d) But wisdom is gracious. This graciousness comes from the grace of God which saved the believers.
 - (e) James 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*
- b. Counsel For Vanity – Wisdom in Business, 11:1-8 **8-14-2013**
- (1) The Powerful Investment, 1-2
- (a) This casting of bread is a business venture.
 - (b) The word "bread" has to do with the sustenance of life. This could be literal bread or anything else, including meat, that is used for life and health.
 - (c) This bread could also be money (Matt. 25:14-29–parable of talents)

- (d) This is not gambling; it is an investment expecting a return.
 - (e) Gambling is betting on the fact that many will lose money in order for you to win it. It is almost like stealing.
 - (f) An investment is based on the idea that much hard work is to be done, and there will hopefully be a gain from the labor, not on the idea that, the more people lose, the more the winner can gain.
 - (g) After many days, the one who plants will receive his reward. This is the fruit of his labor. He will receive, not the same that he cast upon the waters, but he will hopefully and prayerfully receive more than he cast upon the waters.
 - (h) We are taught here to disperse our possessions all over the world, including the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the greatest investment that any man can do.
- (2) The Prominent Impulse, 3-4
- (a) It is the impulse of every farmer to go ahead and plant, even though he may be slowed by late spring rains or despite the winds or other poor conditions. He must plant his crops.
 - (b) He knows that, when the clouds are full of rain, they will empty themselves on the earth wherever they are.
 - (c) The Lord sends rain upon the just and the unjust – Matthew 5:45.
 - (d) So that, when a man dies (falls to the ground like a tree), he can no longer do his work, but his posterity, his children, and his community may still enjoy the work of his hands, because where he worked, there will he die, and his influence will be in that very same location; thus will the tree lie where it falls.
 - (e) However, if a man is afraid of the wind and the rain, that they may bring a curse upon his crop, then he will not sow, 4
- (3) The Pertinent Insight, 5
- (a) There are some things we do not know, 5
 - i) The way of the spirit – John 3:8 *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*
 - ii) The way the bones grow in the womb –Job 31:15 *Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*
 - iii) Luke 6:35 *But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: 38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*
 - (b) The works of God who makes all things, 5

- i) Prov. 16:4 *The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*
 - (4) The Personal Incentive, 6-8
 - (a) The Command, 6
 - i) God’s command here from Solomon is that a person is “In the morning sow thy seed,” and we are to continue to work through the evening.
 - ii) Go and preach the Gospel to every creature, and you will reap – Gal. 6:9 *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*
 - iii) Matt. 24:44 *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?*
 - (b) The Condition, 7
 - i) Life (the light) is sweet, and to see the sun is pleasant.
 - ii) So, enjoy life by eating, drinking, being merry, planting, and sowing.
 - (c) The Confusion, 8
 - i) This is done among the vanity of the world, for “everything that cometh is vanity.”
 - ii) There are many vanities in the world, but among those vanities, there is life, the true life that is lived in obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and serving him as Lord of lords and King of kings.
 - iii) Vanities will not cease as long as we live. This world delivers up vanities in dainty dishes, and we must be careful not to get caught up in the vanity traps that are spread along the way.
 - iv) Psalm 104:27 *These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.*
- c. Council In Vanity – Wisdom and youth, 11:9 - 12:8
 - (1) Rejoice in your youth, 11:9-10
 - (a) Rejoice, Oh young man (person), 9
 - i) This may be referring to believers only.
 - ii) But every person should rejoice in youth, although the youth who are

- not born again will not be able to do all that is mentioned here.
- iii) Evil days are coming; these are the days of old age.
 - iv) In those older years, you will say “I have no pleasure in them.”
 - v) Just ask an old person how it is to live in an old body. Most will tell you that it is not an easy existence. There are some exceptions.
- (b) Walk in the ways of your heart, 9
- i) If a lost man walks in the ways of his heart, he will surrender to all the lusts of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life.
 - ii) But if a saved person walks in the ways of his heart, his heart has been made new by the Spirit of God, and he loves to do the will of God.
 - iii) His eyes will be made to see from a different perspective, and he will be able to see the prospect of a bright, eternal future in Christ.
- (c) But know God’s judgment, 9
- i) God will judge his people.
 - ii) Psalm 50:4 *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*
 - iii) Isaiah 5:16 *But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.*
- (d) Remove sorrow from your heart
- i) The word *sorrow* also indicates *anger* and is translated such in some passages and is the primary meaning of the word
 - ii) Youth tend to become angry quickly. The youth should learn not to burst out in angry words or in angry actions.
 - iii) Gen. 49:5-7 *Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. 6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*
- (e) Childhood and youth are vanity
- i) Childhood seems to be so slow when you are a child, but after a few years and growing into adulthood, the person looks back on childhood and realizes that is passed so quickly.
 - ii) Youth does not last long. Baby looks disappear, acne vanishes away, maturity comes quickly. Then old age sets in.
 - iii) Youth too many times think that their youth will last their entire life, but it is too soon passed away. Then comes old age and death, so quickly, so silently, so creeping, so haunting, so sudden and surprising.
 - iv) That is why it is vanity: we cannot trust in childhood and youth. It goes far too fast to benefit from it for very long.
- (2) Remember in your youth, 12:1-8
- (a) Remember the Creator, 1
- i) Remember that the Creator is one God

- ii) Remember that this one God is three-in-one: Father, Son, and Spirit.
 - a) The Father chose us, gave his Son, sends the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The Son is our surety, assumed our nature, died in our place, paid our sin debt.
 - c) The Spirit regenerated us, made us new creatures in Christ, enlightens our minds, quickens our souls, and sanctifies our hearts.
 - iii) Remember his main three attributes: omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.
 - iv) Remember that he is holy, just, and true.
 - v) Remember that we are made of dust and will return to dust.
 - a) Eccles. 3:20 *All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*
 - b) Eccles. 12:7 *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*
 - vi) Remember to love the Lord with the whole heart.
 - vii) Remember to worship him in spirit and truth.
 - viii) Remember to put God first
 - ix) Remember to never forget God.
- (3) Remember the evil days will come, 2-8
- (a) While the evil days come not, 1
 - i) These are the days of old age.
 - ii) The evil is the “evil of affliction and trouble,” weakness of body and mind, etc.
 - iii) Believe me, they are coming, and they are coming fast.
 - (b) While the sun . . . be not darkened, 2
 - i) This is the light of the eyes. In old age, the light through the eyes becomes dim, and seeing is hindered—not in all, but in many.
 - ii) This can also refer to the dimness of understanding, judgment, will, and affections.
 - (c) Clouds return after the rain, 2
 - i) This means that one trouble comes; and when it is passed, another problem comes, one after the other.
 - ii) Last week you may have had one prescription. This week you have 10 prescriptions.
 - (d) Keepers of the house, 3
 - i) The house refers to the body. That is your house.
 - ii) 2 Cor. 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*
 - iii) The keepers are the bones. Many think particularly the ribs, as they hold in the entrails of the body.
 - iv) These keepers (bones) will tremble from old age, and soon it will come.
 - (e) Strong men, 3

- i) These strong men are the muscles, most believe the muscles of the thighs, since they are the strongest muscles in the body, holding up the body.
 - ii) They will bend low, or become weak.
- (f) The grinders, 3
 - i) These grinders, of course, are our teeth.
 - ii) As you get older, your teeth will begin to rot, break, have cavities, even fall out.
 - iii) John Gill classifies our teeth as *foreteeth*, in the front; the *eye teeth*, which are called *canini*, or the bruising or breaking teeth; and the *double teeth*, which we call molars, which are the grinders of our food.
 - iv) When you get old, the grinders will cease to grind properly, because they will be few. All of us older people know about that.
- (g) Those that look out the windows, 3
 - i) The windows are the holes or sockets that hold your eyeballs.
 - ii) The eyes are those that look out the windows.
 - iii) The eyes will be darkened so that the sight will not be sharp.
- (h) The doors, 4
 - i) This can illustrate our lips, the doors of our mouth, which in old age will not be so busy around the community as it was before we were unable to go out so much.
 - ii) This can also illustrate literal doors, which are shut from the outside, the older people staying in the house more due to age.
- (i) Sound of grinding, 4
 - i) If the grinders are the teeth, then the grinding must be the eating.
 - ii) The appetite is subdued in old age normally; older people do not eat as much as younger people do.
 - iii) Also, this could mean the voice of a person. A person uses the teeth to help him talk, so the grinding is low, because the older person does not talk as much.
- (j) The daughters of music, 4
 - i) These daughters could be the vocal chords, the throat, the teeth, mouth, lips that are used in making music, or in singing.
 - ii) These daughters could also be literal “daughters of Jerusalem,” or singers that go about in the streets singing. They will be low due to the weakening of the hearing.
- (k) Afraid of that which is high, 5
 - i) The older a person gets, the less sure-footed he is; so he is afraid to climb to high places lest he lose his footing and fall.
 - ii) This is not always so, but it is generally so; and every young person needs to know that the old days will come to them and youth will flee away quickly.
- (l) The almond tree, 5

- i) The almond tree is the hoary head, or the gray hair.
 - ii) Gray hair looks very nice on some people, but it usually indicates an older age in a person, though it does not have to indicate a weakness or a senility.
- (m) The grasshopper, 5
- i) If a grasshopper jumps on this old man or woman, it will be a burden. Everything bothers the old person.
 - ii) This could also indicate the eating of the locusts, which was known in Solomon's day. If a person eats locusts, it may not agree with him; it will be a burden.
- (n) Desire shall fail, 5
- i) This could be the desire for eating, the appetite.
 - ii) This could be the desire of bodily pleasure (you name it).
 - iii) This could be the desire of sexual gratification.
 - iv) It, no doubt, includes all of these.
 - v) Desire shall fail. When young, a person has many aspirations; he wants to do everything there is to do.
 - vi) When the young get old, they desire to do nothing. Our plight today is that even young people don't want to do anything.
- (o) Man goeth to his long home, 5
- i) Man's long home is the grave and the life hereafter.
 - ii) A man may lie in the grave for centuries (that is, his body) before the eventual resurrection of the body.
 - iii) Eternity certainly is a long time, and that is the home of all who die.
- (p) The mourners
- i) When you die, the mourners will go about in the streets.
 - ii) Perhaps there will be so many that the waiting line at your visitation may circle around the funeral home in a large circle. I have seen this happen.
 - iii) They will mourn either professionally or personally. Hopefully somewhere will be mourning personally.
- (q) The silver cord, 6
- i) The silver chord is that which keeps the body and spirit together, binding them together to cause you to live.
 - ii) James 2:26 *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*
 - iii) "Or ever the silver cord is broken" means your death.
- (r) The golden bowl, 6
- i) This, most think, is your head or skull, in which your brain, the computer of your body, is kept.
 - ii) It is called *golden* because it is so precious to our life.
- (s) The pitcher, 6
- i) The pitcher, some say, is the heart, especially the right ventricle of the heart where the blood, the fountain of life, is received and distributes the

- blood to the body.
- (t) The wheel, 6
 - i) The wheel is said to be the artery attached to the left ventricle of the heart, which takes the blood received in the left ventricle and rotates the blood throughout the body.
 - ii) We do not know where every part of this description belongs, but we know that the entirety of this description deals with old age and death.
 - (u) Body returns to dust, 7
 - i) Every body that is created by God will eventually return through death to the dust from which it was taken.
 - ii) This is where we really see the vanity of life on earth.
 - iii) All life comes to an end in death. We spend our lives in busy pursuits, and then life ends in dust.
 - (v) Spirit returns to God, 7
 - i) This spirit of ours is the part of us that stands before God to receive judgment for the deeds in the body.
 - ii) Rom. 2:6 *Who will render to every man according to his deeds:*
 - (w) Vanity of vanities, 8
 - i) Solomon has proven by wisdom the vanity of this life as best a man can with God's illumination.
 - ii) True wisdom cannot be found in these vanities.
 - iii) Everything in this world is vanity—they have no real worth.
 - iv) Every person on the earth is “subject to vanity” (Rom. 8:20).
 - v) We live, we move, we have our being, then we die.
 - vi) Our youth is so precious, and that is when we need to serve the Lord, while we have the strength, the will, the fortitude, the mind, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts.

V. THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN OUR LIVES, 12:9-14

A. The Wise Preacher, 9

1. Solomon was given much wisdom
 - a. 1 Kings 3:12 *Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.*
 - b. 1 Kings 4:34 *And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.*
 - c. Matt. 12:42 *The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*
2. Solomon was extraordinarily wise, and he knew it; because he received his wisdom from God.
 - a. Prov. 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

- b. In this verse Solomon summed up his life. He had wisdom from God, but he seems to have departed from it. Then, in his old age, he evidently regained the use of this wisdom; and now he is teaching the people knowledge. He also set in order many proverbs, verse 9
- B. An Orderly Preacher, 9
- 1. He set in order many proverbs.
 - 2. 1 Kings 4:32-34 *And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. 33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. 34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.*
- C. A Truthful Preacher, 10
- 1. He sought to find acceptable words. He is the one who said . . .
 - a. Prov. 25:11 *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*
 - b. But he also said in Prov. 17:27 *He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.*
 - c. So words were important to Solomon. Prov 22:12 *The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.*
 - d. Words must be chosen properly. Prov. 29:20 *Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*
 - e. As preachers should, he preached constantly, continually, incessantly, in season and out of season.
 - f. Prov. 2:1-5 *My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.*
 - 2. He had confidence that his words were words of truth, 10
 - a. Prov. 8:7 *For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.*
 - b. Prov. 12:17 *He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.*
 - c. Prov. 22:21 *That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?*
 - d. Prov. 23:23 *Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*
 - e. Jesus said in John 8:32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*
- D. The Goats and Nails, 11
- 1. Goats
 - a. Goats are used to prod cattle, to steer them in the right direction.
 - b. These goats are good for rebellious and disobedient cattle, to continually prod

them, opening sores on them to correct their disobedience.

- c. These goads are good for good and faithful cattle, to encourage them to continue in the path of righteousness.
 - d. We as God's people need to be prodded from time to time, even more than we think.
 - e. The good and pleasant doctrines of the Scriptures are a fine diet of delicacies, but sometimes we need to have a diet of things we need and may not particularly like.
 - f. We as Christians sometimes act the same as the world, and we need to be corrected.
 - g. Many times preachers, when they are preaching a sermon, are opening their own wounds, pouring correction and rebuke upon themselves.
 - h. Goads are also used to drive away those who would hurt or steal the flock. So the word of God drives away false prophets and false doctrine.
2. Nails
- a. Nails are put in the wood to hold pieces together to build a pleasing or a beneficial structure.
 - b. So, the true words of the doctrines of Christ are preached to us that we might be built together as believers into a local church of Jesus Christ
(1) Eph 2:21-22 *In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*
 - c. The engrafted word of God is like a nail pushed into our soul by the Spirit of God to save us and give us the ability to serve him.
(1) James 1:21 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*
 - d. Just as goads are used to drive away thieves, so the nails are used to build a sheepfold to protect the sheep at night.
 - e. The word of God is given to us so that we are protected against the wiles of the devil. Doctrine is so important to us today, to keep us strong and protect us from being tossed to and fro on the waves of the sea of doctrines.
3. These words are given from one Shepherd, 11
- a. John 17:8 *For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*
 - b. 2 Tim. 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*
 - c. Jesus is the Good Shepherd, John 10:11
 - d. Jesus is the Great Shepherd, Heb. 13:20
 - e. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, 1 Peter 5:4
- E. The Admonishing Of These Words, 12
1. By the true words of Solomon and of God, his son, Rehoboam, can be, as well as we, admonished, or built up to maturity through growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2. The making of books.
 - a. Solomon says there is no end to the making of books.
 - b. There are so many books in the world that, after one book has been used a few times, or for a few years, it is almost worthless unless men make it a classic.
 - c. Here I think Solomon is telling his son to be aware that the words of Solomon are not the same as the words in the many books that have been, are being, and will be written.
 - d. There will be books of false doctrine.
 - e. There will be books of demonology.
 - f. There will be books of science falsely so called.
 - g. There will be books that lead young minds into lasciviousness.
 - h. There will be books that teach people how to cheat and steal.
3. But these are “my words.”
 - a. These are the words of God and the words of Christ, as we have already noticed.
 - b. But notice what Solomon said concerning God and his words.
 - (1) Prov. 1:23 *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.*
 - (2) Prov. 2:1 *My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;*
 - (3) Prov. 4:4 *He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.*
 - (4) Prov. 4:20 *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.*
 - (5) Prov. 7:1 *My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.*
4. Much study
 - a. Study is work.
 - b. Solomon says that “much study is a weariness of the flesh.”
 - c. I can account for that. Studying makes me tired.
 - d. The 64-year-old lady who just swam from Cuba to Florida in 54 hours, 112 miles, was very tired and weary when she completed her trip; but she did not allow that to allay her determination to do that ridiculous thing.
 - e. The benefit of studying God’s word and words is worth the weariness that it may entail. It is worth getting tired, eyes bulging if necessary, head hurting.
 - f. I remember when my friend, Bro. Demas Brubacher, was studying for his PhD in history, he read so much that his eyes were actually swelling from reading; but that did not deter him from going forward with the task.
 - g. If God’s words are worth reading, then we should do our best to take the time and effort to read them.
 - h. This will protect us from all of the books that are so prevalent in the world that subtly teach us false doctrines when we don’t even realize it.
 - i. Common, acceptable books on the shelves of Christian bookstores can be a hindrance to learning the truths of God’s word.
 - j. Examples
 - (1) Many very interesting books that teach some very practical and spiritual things

will at the same time deceitfully teach Arminian doctrine.

- (2) Even some doctrinal books that are beneficial in many ways will use the word church with a capital "C." This implies strongly the doctrine of the universal, invisible church.
- (3) Other books on Christian unity will, without the knowledge of the reader many times, teach ecumenism; that is, that one church is the same as another church.
- (4) It's true! You cannot judge a book by its cover. Many are about more than the title says.

F. The Conclusion, 13-14

1. We see in verse 13 the most famous verse in this book.
2. First, fear God, for it is the beginning of wisdom.
3. Second, keep his commandments, for they are, indeed, commandments, not simply words on a page.
4. This is the whole duty of man.
5. This may seem to be a very short recipe to a very important product, but it is actually a very serious and involved thing.
6. Notice, though, that the words "fear" and "keep" are in present tense. That simply means that they show ongoing action.

a. Fear

- (1) John Gill says on this verse: "the fear of God" includes the whole of internal religion, or powerful godliness; all the graces of the Spirit, and the exercise of them; reverence of God, love to him, faith in him, and in his Son Jesus Christ.
- (2) We do not fear God once in one day and then expect that once-offered fear to last throughout eternity.
- (3) This fear is a fear that goes on and on throughout eternity. Every day we are to fear God. Every day we are to respect him for who he is and for what he has done for us.
- (4) Your salvation is not something that happened to you; it is something that is happening to you and will continue to happen throughout eternity.

b. Keep

- (1) The Hebrew word for KEEP is SHAMAR and means *observe, heed, preserve, mark, wait, watch*.
- (2) It also in translation has the meaning of *to have charge of*.
- (3) We are to have charge of the commandments of God.
 - (a) We are to obey them ourselves, and we are to give them to others that they may live a peaceable life.
- (4) This is also a continual obedience, not a one-time obedience.
 - (a) John 8:31 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

7. God's Judgment, 13

- a. Solomon wisely ends this book with God's judgment, since that is the final act of God's dealing with people.
- b. He will bring every work into judgment, making all things right, not in this world, but in the world to come.

- c. Even the things done in secret: thoughts, intentions, motivations, plans, secret loves and hates, those things done in the dark, secret clubs and societies are, no doubt, included in these.
 - d. The judgment will be whether these things be good or evil.
 - (1) The atheist will be judged and surprised that there is, in fact, an afterlife.
 - (2) The Sadducees will be judged of thinking there is no resurrection.
 - (3) The arrogant will be made low.
 - (4) The humble will be exalted.
 - (5) All impurities and imperfections will finally be placed into God's perfect plan and purpose so that, hopefully at least, we as his people can see how the puzzle actually fits together for his glory and for our good (Rom. 8:28).
8. Conclusion
- a. In all of this "proverbializing" Solomon has fed us with ups and downs, ins and outs, vanities and purities. He has instructed us with wisdom pure and powerful.
 - b. Now he tells us that the reason we need to understand the difference between wisdom and vanity (or foolishness) and the difference between good and evil is because that is the very foundation upon which God will judge all things, for he is the great Judge of all.

APPENDIX A

Arguments against Solomon's being the author of this book:

1. The words "I the preacher was king over Israel" (1:12), seeming to indicate that his reign was in the past, could not have been written by Solomon, who never ceased to be king as long as he was alive.
2. It seems odd that a book purportedly coming from the son of David should omit the divine name Yahweh which appears commonly in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also seems odd that there should be no mention of the history of Israel, Solomon's work in building the Temple, or his palaces and gardens.
3. If written during Solomon's old age it seems puzzling that he merely sighs over the emptiness of life instead of repenting of his apostasy.
4. As merely the second king of his dynasty, it seems odd that he should speak of "all that had been before him" as if there had been a bunch.
5. The book describes the disorder and corruption of the government (4:1, 5:8, 8:9, 10:5). This seems unexpected, since if such evils existed, then Solomon was responsible for them.
6. The book seems to present striking parallels with the language of Malachi, which is generally dated to a time after the Babylonian Captivity, perhaps as late as 390 BC.
7. The book seems to contain allusions to events in the history of Persia. Some think it may even refer to the history of Egypt under the Ptolemies (4:13, 5:8, 9:14, 10:7, 16, 17, 20)
8. Some scholars see the germs of three tendencies which later developed in Judaism: Pharisaism, Sadducaism, and the asceticism of the Essenes (3:19-21, 7:1-6, 16).
9. Several passages seem to betray a writer influenced by Greek philosophy and literature (1:3-11, 2:24, 3:20, 5:18, 6:6, 12:11-12).

Of course, I believe that Solomon did write the book; but the author was God Almighty. RWW

T H E E N D