

Ecclesiastes 2.12-26

“I Hate Life!”

Most Books in Bible > God’s Message TO World > KNOW, STUDY, BELIEVE
 Eccles: God’s Message ABOUT the WORLD > World’s THOUGHTS & IDEAS

1. Search Continues

Words of man called QOHELET, Title: Gatherer, Preacher, Searcher

Man with INSATIABLE Curiosity – like 2 yr old Forever ASKING “Why?”

a. Wisdom Revisited - Ch 1 – Looked for MEANING in WISDOM

I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under
 heaven. Ecclesiastes 1.13

INFORMATION Failed to bring TRANSFORMATION

Ch 2 ESCAPE Grief & Despair of life > Turns to Pleasure & Laughter

Shop to MAKE Self FEEL BETTER / Get Something NEW to Eat or Wear

I said in my heart, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself.”
 Ecclesiastes 2.1

Searcher had “Been There, and Done That, got LOTS of T-Shirts!”

Buddies could DOUBLE DARE him to do Anything! He did it ALL!

Nobody tried HARDER to be filled with PLEASURE and PROSPERITY

Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in
 doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was
 nothing to be gained under the sun. Ecclesiastes 2.11

>> So the SEARCHER CIRCLES Back for 2nd LOOK at WISDOM

Gotta ADMIRE his TENACITY, Not giving Up in Search for Meaning

Comes back to FIELD of WISDOM and Turns over FEW More Stones

This TIME QOHELET will COMPARE Wisdom and MADFOLLY

v. 12 Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly.

Compares RIGHT and WRONG ways to Live – Maybe FIND Life’s Purpose
But MADNESS and FOLLY Merged into TERRIBLE EVIL like Sh. described
“a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury” Shakespeare’s Macbeth

b. Wisdom Reveals

v. 13 I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness.

Law of Diminishing Returns – Get it because you LIKE IT! Before Long...

Don’t LIKE SO Much ANY More! – Captivation grows COLD / Love to HATE

My attention span is short...instead of being content when everything is going fine, I start getting impatient and irritable. For me the important thing is the getting, not the having. Donald Trump

v. 14 The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness;
but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.

DARKNESS is Not Just AROUND him but INSIDE him - NO Eyes to See

PRAYS the PRAYER of BART SIMPSON



God, we paid for all this ourselves, so
thanks for nothing! Bart Simpson

The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin. Proverbs 10.8

Throughout his twelve chapters the author argues one main point – it is incredibly difficult for us as human beings to gain a grasp of life that will take us beyond futility.
David Allan Hubbard

2. Somber Conclusions

a. *"I am going to die!"*

vs. 15-16 Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die!

Alexander the Great stood in field near large pile of BONES w/ friend Diogenes

"I am searching for the bones of your father Philip, but I cannot distinguish them from the bones of the slaves"
Diogenes to Alexander the Great

Wise man applied his BUCKS and BRAINS to find LASTING HOPE

BEST Efforts SLAMMED into the SOLID WALL of DEATH

INEVITABLE – INESCAPABLE – INTIMIDATING > All MEANINGLESS

"Maybe people grow steadily better off yet seemingly no happier, because there is a baseline anxiety in all our hearts, and that anxiety is the fear of death"

Gregg Easterbrook, *The Progress Paradox*

"Life has no meaning the moment you lose the illusion of being eternal"

Jean-Paul Sartre

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve immortality by not dying.

Woody Allen

For he sees that even the wise die; the fool and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others.
Psalm 49.10

b. *"I will leave all my toys to someone else!"*

v. 18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.

Solomon's Kingly Reign most Glorious in Israel's History > Greatest Territory
Israeli Politician's Today DROOL to Imagine Having their Nation so VAST
But S's Foolish Son – Whittled Size of Father's Kingdom to less than 1/3 SIZE

Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah...Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than their fathers had done. They also set up for themselves high places...under every spreading tree...the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them... 1 Kings 14.21-27

SHRANK his Father's Kingdom Dramatically > traded GOLD for BRONZE

v. 21 For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

Parable of TEN POUNDS – Man with ONE lost it > GIVEN to Man with 10
MORDECAI Received HAMAN's Signet RING / Haman HUNG on Gallows
ISRAELITES enjoyed FIELDS and CITIES made by Hard-working Canaanites
STUDENTS from Around WORLD Receive Benefits CHINA'S UNI's

Pastor Haddon Robinson conducted Funeral for Man who Spoke 34 Languages!
Doctor who Performed my Surgery last month Done same Procedure 600 X's

ALL OUR SKILLS and ABILITIES will DIE with US

Artist – Surgeon – Linguist – Inventor – Programmer – Mother – Caregiver

NEWBIE will come in their Place – INEXPERIENCED and UNTRIED

v. 19 And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.

If one fate comes to all, and that fate is extinction, it robs every man of his dignity and every project of its point. Derek Kidner

c. *“My job stinks!”*

Many think WORK will give them a sense of PURPOSE

Leading Question of MOST Meet & Greets: “What kind of WORK do you do?”

vs. 20-23 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun... What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.

Up every mornin’ just to keep a job
I gotta fight my way through the hustling mob
Sounds of the city poundin’ in the brain
While another day goes down the drain

The Vogues’ “Five O’Clock World” 1965

DREAM Education / DREAM Job / DREAM Wife / DREAM House / Kids

Wake Up! > NIGHTMARE! WHY? – Good things cannot Hold Weight of Life

By working faithfully eight hours a day, you may eventually get to be a boss and work twelve hours a day. Robert Frost

HUMAN DESIRE > is NEVER SATISFIED – PAINFUL RESTLESSNESS

The more you understand, the more you ache.

J. Moffatt

d. *"I hate life!"*

vs. 17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

No matter WHAT he TRIED he HATED It! Not JUST Work, But ALL of LIFE!

People thought it would be BETTER in the BAHAMAS

But NOW it is just BROKEN in the BAHAMAS

ASK Christian, How are you doing? – Blessed! – Good, by God's Grace!

- Better than I Deserve! ---- Surprised >> "I HATE my Life!"

Call: Lack of SPIRITUALITY – IMMATURITY – DEPRESSION- SUICIDAL!

MIGHT just mean that Christian is HONEST!

I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are a breath.
Job 7.16

ATHEIST: "I hate life, and yet I am afraid to die"

Voltaire

ANOTHER ATHEIST said...

"Come let us curse our Master ere we die / For all our hopes in endless ruin lie / The good is dead. Let us curse God most High" C.S. Lewis (while an atheist)

WHY do Atheists get so WORKED UP? Why Curse God who does not Exist?

Because they KNOW God Exists > SUPPRESS Truth in Unrighteousness

If Communists say there is NO GOD –

Why so much Energy Closing Churches / Mosques / Temples?

"You can't imagine the torment of having had nothing out of life, and of having to look forward to nothing but death, of feeling that there is no other world beyond this one, that the puzzle will never be explained."

Francois Mauriac, Nobel Prize for Literature, 1952

1930's - DEPRESSION in USA > Brilliant PHILOSOPHY Prof OUT of WORK
 Traveled Country w/HOBOS > Sneaking onto RAILROAD Trains BOXCARS
 DARK NIGHT Snuck FREIGHT CAR > FELL into DEEP SLEEP, Exhausted
 TRAIN CLACKING down TRACK > Woke > Discovered in Box Car w/SHEEP
 Train for OMAHA > Biggest SLAUGHTERHOUSE for SHEEP in USA
 Sometime NEXT DAY would arrive, SHEEP Clubbed, Dragged SLAUGHTER
 SHEEP Sound ASLEEP, Full Stomach, Dry, Warm, IGNORANT of their FATE
 FEARFUL Philosopher > Understood Dangers of Tomorrow > NO SLEEP at All
 Sometimes IGNORANCE is BLISS, What DON'T KNOW will NOT HURT

God's hand conducts life's opera but from a score which even the wisest cannot read.

David Hubbard

PREACHER Hated life because of CERTAINTY of DEATH
 ABSURDITY of LOSING All WISDOM and POSSESSIONS from LIFE
 Qohelet's MESSAGE: 'Life is full of troubles and then you die!'

3. Son peeks through the Clouds

ALL peoples "under the sun" or "under heaven" or "on earth" more than 35 X's
 LIMITED Horizon Line of HUMAN Search, Only HOPE beyond our HORIZON

BALANCED View of Eccl > READ Whole BOOK of Eccles & WHOLE BIBLE

A GREATER Wise Man > One GREATER than SOLOMON > God's Beloved

Ecclesiastes > God's Written Word points us to GOD'S WORD Made Flesh

...a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son: hear him"

Mark 9.7

DEFEATED Enemy even SOLOMON could NOT OUTWIT or ESCAPE

Jesus: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

John 11.25,26

a. Work Redeemed

Many don't THANK God for their WORK > Thank God it's FRIDAY!

Don't TRUST the Lord for the FUTURE – HOPE in the LOTTERY

Searcher TRIES to make BEST of a BAD Situation

v. 24 A man can do nothing better than to...

RIGHTLY turns Attention to GOD > Echoes GENESIS > Gifts from Giver

GOD'S VICE REGENT ON EARTH / Kommandant / Steward God's Property

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground"

Genesis 1.27,28

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it"

Genesis 2.15

WORK IS PART OF CREATION, NOT CURSE

SWEAT ON BROW – Trouble IN Work is Curse / Work ITSELF is Gift of God

FIRST Real Positive Experience Qohelet describes...

v. 24,25 ...eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

All References to GOD in Ecclesiastes GENERIC Name 'Elohim'

NEVER Personal, Covenant Name YAHWEH = 'the Man UPSTAIRS'!

v. 26 To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God.

Qohelet believed that God existed but...Qohelet's God is distant, occasionally indifferent, and sometimes cruel. Tremper Longman III

Word MEANINGLESS occurs MORE TIMES in Eccles. than Word GOD

If get on GOD'S GOOD SIDE, Maybe Pry some CRUMBS from Clenched FIST

Q. idea of GOD – Common idea in MANY Churches Today – LEGALISM
 “IF you Please God – you will GET Blessings from Him”

Best Known Bible Verse - ‘God helps those who HELP Themselves’

NOT in Bible > OPPOSITE > God helps those who CANNOT help Selves!

Even GETTING these GIFTS is MEANINGLESS

FINAL AFFIRMATION – NOT AMEN or Hallelujah > MEANINGLESS!

v. 26 to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Even PLEASING God is MEANINGLESS > Chasing after Wind > Uncertain!

Of course we HATE LIFE if Spend all of it for EFFORTS to Go up in Smoke

But how GREAT to have ETERNAL Purpose – Citizens of Everlasting Kingdom

Jesus came to Earth as WORKER – 2nd Adam – OBEYED His Father

Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

John 5.17

Jesus: “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” John 6.38-40

That's WHY Paul urges those who BELIEVE in Risen Christ to keep Working
NOT on Building our OWN CASTLES – but GOD'S KINGDOM

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in
the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15.58

Because Jesus is alive, the grave is not the end for anyone who is wise enough to
trust in him.

Philip Ryken

b. Wisdom Redefined

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do
abominable deeds; there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from
heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek
after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there
is none who does good, not even one.

Psalm 14.1-4

This FOOL might be Your PRESIDENT or your Physician or your Professor

Maybe the PASTOR of a church or a NOBEL PRIZE Winner

From God's Perspective WISDOM is connected to KNOWING/Following Him

Do NOT KNOW God you are FOOL – NOW and ETERNALLY

Don't KNOW True & Living God: Corrupt, Not Good, No Knowledge, Evildoer

NOT my Accusation – I'm just READING what the BIBLE Says

"You can go to your college, you can go to your school, but if you don't have
Jesus – you're an educated fool!"

Barry McGwire

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this
age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the
wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God
through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe...we preach Christ
crucified...Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1.19-25

ONLY By ENROLLING in the School of Christ
Will you Graduate w/ True Wisdom/Knowledge

...to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is *Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*
Colossians 2.2,3

Although there is an important place for 'dialogue' with men of other faiths... there is also need for 'encounter' and even 'confrontation,' in which we seek both to disclose the inadequacies and falsities of non-Christian religion and to demonstrate the adequacy, truth, absoluteness and finality of the Lord Jesus Christ.
John Stott

c. Worship: Life's Reason

WHY am I HERE? WHO am I? Great Questions of PHILOSOPHY

Some: IDENTITY and PURPOSE defined by STATE > Relation as CITIZEN

- Others defined by THINGS, POSSESSIONS > Stroll the Malls for MEANING

- Others defined by FAMILY > LOYAL Daughter or Son gives MOONCAKES

- HEDONIST defined by SEX > HAPPINESS comes from HOOK-UPS

ALL these SLIP through our FINGERS like SAWDUST > No LASTING Worth

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.
C.S. Lewis

The purpose of man – the meaning of man – is to stand in love as a creature before the Creator.
Francis Schaeffer

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed. Proverbs 3.13-18

In world of IDENTITY Theft - We Need Encrypted Communication

TO Protect our SECRETS – and Keep PRIVATE things that our OURS ALONE

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3.3

Your LIFE is ENCRYPTED in Christ!

God so preserves us in his Son that nothing essential to who we are will be lost forever. God will remember us even when we can scarcely remember him and when we fear no one else will remember us at all. Philip Ryken

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10.31

Ecclesiastes 2.¹²Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom, and also madness and folly. What more can the king's successor do than what has already been done? ¹³I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness. ¹⁴The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both. ¹⁵Then I thought in my heart, "The fate of the fool will overtake me also. What then do I gain by being wise?" I said in my heart, "This too is meaningless." ¹⁶For the wise man, like the fool, will not be long remembered; in days to come both will be forgotten. Like the fool, the wise man too must die! ¹⁷So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. ¹⁸I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. ¹⁹And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. ²⁰So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. ²¹For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. ²²What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? ²³All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless. ²⁴A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, ²⁵for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? ²⁶To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.