

Day Five—Feast of Tabernacles—2012 It's Not How You Start, It's How You Finish! Part II

Fred R. Coulter—October 5, 2012

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles, day number five, 2012. Here we are on the second half already. We've been covering some things concerning King Solomon. When that was the only time that the children of Israel and the king came close to fulfilling the purpose of why God called Israel and gave them His laws and His commandments.

What a tremendous thing it was, the way that Solomon started out. God loved him! We saw that he was humble! We saw that he asked for wisdom and understanding to be able to judge the children of Israel. He was king over all 12 tribes, the last king to be over the 12 tribes. Let's see what happened to Solomon, because part of this gives us an understanding as to why human nature, after a while when it has everything, becomes—as it says of the Laodiceans—lukewarm, apathetic, taking things for granted, assuming things. Then comes the human sin again of *pride and arrogance*, of trying to understand your life without a real relationship with God, and trying to understand what is the purpose in life.

Solomon could have understood a whole lot more than he did had he really given himself to God the way that he should have. When we come Ecclesiastes 2 what we are going to find out is this: Solomon wanted to find out the purpose of life while still having some connection with God but really not seeking God for the answer. Rather, he was seeking through *experimentation*. Experimentation by men doesn't bring you the understanding of God.

Solomon, we saw, had more knowledge than any other man on earth. We're going to see what that led to. We're going to see that even though in the end he acknowledged the commandments of God, he lost his relationship with God because of what he did when he got old. This was not something that happened to Solomon just over night.

Here's what he endeavored to do. Notice how many times he talks about 'I'; very similar to Job, however, Job repented, but nowhere do we find that Solomon repented

Ecclesiastes 2:1: "I said in **my** heart, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.' and, behold, this also *is* vanity." We need to understand that in God we '*live, move and have our being.*' God made us incomplete. God made us imperfect; though we can function perfectly as a human being as long as everything is right in the

body. But we don't have perfect character and we cannot attain to perfect character without God and His Spirit. This is the whole lesson of the book of Ecclesiastes and what Solomon did. So, he saw that was vanity!

Verse 2: "I said of laughter, '*It is madness;*' and of mirth, 'What does it accomplish?'" He wanted to know.

Let's look at a Proverb here, because this is exactly what Solomon was doing. Solomon was to be wise. He had wisdom, knowledge, understanding, because God gave it. However, in Ecc. 2 and all the way through the rest of the book of Ecclesiastes, though he mentions God and holds onto God he was actually *leaving* God. He was trying to find the purpose in life himself. In the end, we're going to see that Solomon ended up being, rather than wise, *a fool*. Just like the wise in the world who profess themselves to be wise, they're fools. That's what happened to Solomon because he was doing this:

Proverbs 18:2: "A fool has no delight in understanding, but only that his heart may discover itself." This is how Solomon began to lose his understanding; yet, he was trying to find understanding. But he wasn't seeking it with God; he was seeking it with self-experimentation—the fool is trying to *find himself*.

So, here's what he did, Ecclesiastes 2:3: "I sought in my heart to give **myself** unto wine, yet conducting **my** heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, until **I** might see what was good for the sons of men, what they should do under the heaven the few days of their life." That was his purpose. He's going to experiment with everything. Doesn't this happen with a lot of people in the world?

Now, when it comes to the Millennium and we're teaching the people, what we're going to understand is this is not going to be the way they're going to learn of God. We're going to teach them. This is going to be something!

Also, we will need to learn, because when we're spirit beings and immortal and brought into the Kingdom of God, we're going to learn so much more of God, His way and His Truth that it is going to be phenomenal! Just as we're born in the flesh and then we learn and grow in knowledge all of our lives, so likewise when we're born of the spirit and enter into the Kingdom of God and we are completely composed of spirit then we're really

going to learn, because *the knowledge of the Lord is going to cover the earth as the seas cover the earth.*

Who is going to be teaching that to the people? *We are!* This gives us a good understanding of what we need to do. A good understanding of why it's not going to be run like Solomon ran it. The purpose of what we're going to do is to have people enter into the Kingdom of God.

Here's what Solomon did. He had free reign to do it all, v 4: "**I** made great works for **myself**; **I** built houses for **myself**; **I** planted vineyards for myself... [notice self-centered; not God-centered] ...**I** made gardens and orchards for **myself**, and **I** planted trees in them, of all fruit. **I** made pools of water for myself, to irrigate groves of growing trees. **I** bought men slaves and women slaves, and servants *were* born in my house; also **I** had great possessions of herds and flocks, above all that were before me in Jerusalem" (vs 4-7). Not lacking a single thing! Anything he wanted to do or thought of, to experiment with, to find out: Why are we here? Where are we going? What is life?

But we're going to see he never found it! That's why in the Millennium we're going to teach the people the relationship with God. They will have to have relationships with us as their teachers, as well. We're going to teach them that though they have everything they would ever want or desire during the Millennium, *do not look at it through carnal eyes*, as Solomon did.

Verse 8, richest man in the world: "**I** also gathered silver and gold to **myself**... [notice all the 'I' and 'myself'—getting carried away with vanity and stupidity in his own life] ...and the treasure of kings and of the provinces. **I** got men singers and women singers for **myself**, even the sensual delights of the sons of men, and many women." We're going to see that was Solomon's great downfall!

Verse 9: "So, **I** was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also **my** wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired **I** did not keep from them; **I** did not withhold **my** heart from any pleasure; for **my** heart rejoiced in all **my** labor, and this was **my** portion of all **my** labor" (vs 9-10).

You would think after all this striving—it's called 'Striving after wind'—vexation of spirit—he would have learned the lesson to turn to God. In the end he mentions 'the sum of it is, fear God and keep His commandments.' But he never said to love God, have a relationship with Him.

Everything comes from God! This is what we're going to be teaching during the Millennium, as well. This is what we need to learn during the

Feast of Tabernacles, a time of abundance, a time of being able to get together, a time of spiritual understanding if we apply ourselves to it. And a time when we realize that we are absolutely, totally, one hundred percent dependent upon God the Father and Jesus Christ.

- That is the key to *success!*
- That is the key to *eternal life!*
- That is the key to *understanding the purpose in life!*

After he did all of that, v 11: "Then **I** looked on all the works that my hands had done, and on the labor that **I** had labored to do; and, behold, all *is* vanity and a striving after the wind; and *there is* no profit under the sun." That is in the physical pursuits. It all comes to an end.

He could have taken the next step and sought a greater relationship with God. He learned all of this and it didn't amount to what he thought it would. He couldn't discover life through just doing these things by himself. If he did it all for himself, how much did he exclude God?

Verse 12: "And **I** turned to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what *can* the man *do* who comes after the king? Only that which has been already done. Then **I** saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness" (vs 12-13). He learned that lesson, but did that bring him to conversion? Did that bring him to repentance? *Nowhere do we find it!*

Verse 14: "The wise man's eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walks in darkness; and **I myself** also perceived that one event happens to all of them." They all die!

Now, let's come back to where we began concerning Light and darkness. Remember about the Light and the darkness. What we're going to see in the book of Ecclesiastes, ^[transcriber's correction] is that Solomon started in the Light, but in serving *himself* he turned his back on the Light and went *his way*.

John 3:19: And this is the judgment: that the Light has come into the world... [Christ; the Light of men] ...but men loved darkness rather than the Light because their works were evil."

What we're going to see is this: **Whenever anyone turns their back on God and goes out on their own, seeking to do good or find the purpose in life, they are walking away from God!**

Solomon talked about Light and darkness, but he didn't perceive where he was going. When you turn your back on the Light and you look ahead, the Light is still shining out there, but as you walk away from the Light, it gets dimmer and dimmer and

dimmer, and pretty soon you come to the place that you leave the twilight of the Light and you enter darkness. We'll see that's what Solomon did.

Verse 20: "For everyone who practices evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light, so that his works may not be exposed; but the one who practices the Truth comes to the Light... [is coming to the Light and the Light is Christ and the Word of God is Light] ...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God*" (vs 20-21).

Let's see that Solomon was walking away from the Light. We're going to see this inclination is still going to be in people that we're going to be teaching during the Millennium. There are going to be people who will want to do what Solomon did to find out. We'll be there to say, 'No, this is the way, walk in it. Don't turn to the right hand or turn to the left hand.' So, Solomon saw Light and darkness, and fools walk in darkness and they all die.

Ecclesiastes 2:15: "Then **I** said in **my** heart, 'As it happens to the fool, *so* it happens even to me; and why was **I** then more wise?'..." What was the answer? *God gave it to him!* So, you see he's stepping away from God. We can learn this as a lesson in our life, too, as we grow, change and overcome. That we need to realize the only time we're going to have really accomplished what is necessary is when we're raised from the dead and God will accomplish His work in us.

"...And **I** said in my heart that this also *is* vanity. For *there is* no memory of the wise *more than* of the fool forever, since that which is now shall all be forgotten in the days to come. And how does the wise die? **Even as the fool!**" (vs 15-16). His breath goes POOF! *And he's gone!*

Notice what happens when you're out there and you're striving to try and find the purpose in life without God, v 17: "Therefore, I hated life; because the work that is done under the sun *is* grievous to me; for all *is* vanity and a striving after wind." Grab the wind; can you catch it? Run to get out of the wind; can you outpace it? Run into the wind; can you gather it in? *No!* "...striving after wind."

Verse 18: "Yea, **I** hated all **my** labor, which **I** had done under the sun, because **I** must leave it to the man who shall be after me. And who knows *whether* he shall be wise or a fool?... [As it turned out, his son Rehoboam_[transcriber's correction] turned out to be a fool! So did Solomon in his old age.] ... Yet, he shall have rule over all my labor in which I have labored, and have shown myself wise under the sun. This *is* also vanity" (vs 18-19).

Why did he not teach his son Rehoboam?

Think what it would have been if he would have continued to include God in everything. There was nothing that Solomon didn't receive that he didn't get it from God. There's nothing that he could do that would be apart from God. That's why this book is here. This is why it's necessary for us to understand.

As a matter of fact, even the Jews, when they gave the readings for the Feast days, the book of Ecclesiastes was to be read during the Feast of Tabernacles. because when the people had the fullness of everything physically, they needed to know that this was not the end, but only a means of part of living; *that everything comes from God!*

Verse 21: "For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and with skill; yet to a man who has not labored in it, he shall leave it *for* his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil."

Even the pharaoh's wanted to take it with them, but they couldn't do it. Even building pyramids and building great tombs; it's like when the rich man dies, someone whispers in the crowd: How much did he leave? And someone whispers back: *All of it!* This was grieving Solomon. He had all of this and he was wondering what was going to happen.

Verse 22: "For what has man from all his labor, and from the striving of his heart, in which he has labored under the sun? For all his days *are* sorrows, and his labor vexation; yea, so his heart does not take rest in the night. **This is also vanity**" (vs 22-23). He's saying that whether you have a good life with everything, whether you have a bad life with a lot of sorrows and misery, *it's all vanity!* **Because only that which is eternal is not vanity!** Think on that!

Verse 24: "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and make his soul see good in his labor? This **I** also saw, that it *was* from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can enjoy it, more than **I**? For *God* gives wisdom, and knowledge, and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight. But to the sinner He gives labor, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him who is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and a striving after wind" (vs 24-26).

So, Solomon was really perplexed, and here is the lesson that we're going to learn out of it: **You can never discover the purpose of life by experimentation in physical things!** You may learn things. You may have some wisdom and knowledge. You may have some skills and ability. But you don't know why we are here! You don't know why we were born! You don't know what God is doing!

Even in spite of that, Solomon became quite a great philosopher. Gave a lot of Proverbs, but in the end run *he went against everything that he knew and taught!* The same way, spiritual knowledge does not stay in a physical mind. You have to renew it day-by-day and that's why we have the Sabbath and Holy Days, as well.

He continues to muse on, Ecclesiastes 3:1: "To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what *is* planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance" (vs 1-4). All of those!

He's getting to a point, and what he's going to do is show that God put into man to have the ability to think beyond himself. Yet, in striving to find the purpose in life by doing the physical things that God has given without really understanding that it all came from God. You may give lip service to God, like Solomon has done, but to be completely devoted to God in a spiritual relationship, Solomon never attained to.

Verse 5: "A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (vs 5-8). So, he examined all of these things, looking at every human activity, and as king knowing many people, seeing many activities, seeing the works that people did, he had a unique perspective, and yet, *it was missing the devotion to God!*

Verse 9: "What profit does he have who works in that in which he labors? I have seen the task, which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised by it" (vs 9-10). He had it all, but he never learned.

Verse 11: "He has made everything beautiful in its time; He has also set eternity in their heart..." That's interesting. This means that God has given to man the ability to think beyond himself, forward into the future; think in the past, beyond his time which no other of the living creatures of God can do that are on the earth.

This is why man without God will never understand God's eternal purpose. God gave them the longing for eternity in the their heart. He gave them the desire, and everyone wants to live forever. All human being, regardless of what religion there is believe in some kind of afterlife. That's because of v

11. But unless you turn to God you're not going to find the Truth. No man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end. He was in quite a conundrum here, trying to understand what he was doing. He still understood some things of God. Just like people in the world today. There are a lot of people who understand *some* things about God, but they have yet to yield to God *so He can grant them the understanding of His plan and purpose for man.*

Here is the futility of trying to find the purpose of man and God's creation just by experimenting on your own, v 14: "I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it... [he remembered that] ...and God does *it* so that men should fear before Him." Then he makes this statement again, because this is really important to understand. Every generation likes to think that 'we know more than the ones who came before us.' *And that's just not so!*

Verse 15: "That which has been is now; and that which *is* to be has already been; and God requires an account of that which is past." He's still clinging to some knowledge of God.

Verse 16: "And again I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness *was* there; and in the place of righteousness, that wickedness *was* there." He never understood about *the law of sin and death* that we have within. That's why in these places of judgment and righteousness, there's still wickedness that happens. Men sin! They do exactly like Solomon! ***They become complacent in what they have, and they're seeking for greater gratification and satisfaction, and then they end up sinning and getting into perversity!*** Many people go right on into the occult and witchcraft. That's the whole basis of the transhumanist movement:

- to become like God, *but forgetting God*
 - to want to be immortal by human means
- and*
- how can mortal human being make themselves immortal
- Can't do it!*

It's like asking to light a fire by throwing water on it. It won't happen naturally. The only time that happened was when God answered Elijah's prayer when challenged by the prophets of Baal that we find in the book of Kings.

Verse 17: "I said in my heart, 'God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work.'" Yes, indeed! And the time for every purpose for us now is

- conversion
- Truth
- understanding
- God’s Spirit
- humility
- loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and being

Solomon continued his musing and he understood some Truth; the obvious that you can observe, v 18: “I said in my heart, ‘Concerning the matter of the sons of men, may God reveal to them, that they might see, that they themselves *are* but beasts.’” That can’t happen without the Spirit of God.

It’s a shame, notice how close Solomon came to so many things, yet, how far away from it he really was. Here’s what he concludes again. I don’t know how old he was when he wrote this, but he was musing toward the end of his life. We will see that his great experimentations really got him in trouble with God. Likewise, even during the Millennium, there are going to be people who will turn their backs on God by choice—as hard as that may seem. But there will be some it will happen to.

He looks around and sees all of this, v 19: “For that which happens *to* the sons of men also happens to beasts—even one thing *happens* to them. As the *one* dies, so dies the other; yea, they all *have* one breath; so that a man... [physically] ...has no advantage over a beast; for all *is* vanity.... [The reason he doesn’t is because he needs God!] ...All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all return to dust again” (vs 19-20).

Then he talks about the spirit of man and the spirit of beasts, v 21: “Who knows the spirit of man whether it goes upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goes downward to the earth?” He could have known had he consulted God. He could have known had he remained faithful.

Quite a fantastic book— isn’t it? This is what every intellectual in the world needs to read—all the elite; all the scientists; all the professors; all of those who are the ‘wise’ of the world—they need to read this, and they need to understand that what is missing in their lives is God! Here we see Solomon stepping away from God. (You can read chapters four and five, there are other good things in there for us to learn.)

Ecclesiastes 6:1: “There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy upon men: A man to whom God has given riches, wealth, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires for his life, yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a stranger eats it.... [that happens because of sin] ...This *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil disease. If a man beget a hundred children, and lives many years,

so that the days of his years are many, but his life is not filled with good, and also that he has no burial; I say, a miscarriage *is* better than he. For he comes in with vanity and goes out in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness” (vs 1-4). What good is it going to do?

Verse 5: “Moreover he has not seen the sun, nor known *anything*. This one had more rest than the other.” Think about this: Everyone wants to continue to live a longer life— isn’t that true? What did God say the ‘days of man’ maximum would be? *120 days* (*Gen. 6*)! From the time after the Flood, you look at chronologies, the ages went down, down, down gradually.

The reason it went down gradually was so that there would be reproduction of people to refill and replenish the earth. When we get down to David, the father of Solomon, he was called ‘old and stricken in years’ at 70-years-old. It says in one of the Psalms that our days are ‘three score and ten’— that’s 70. If by reason of strength they are four score—80-years-old. How many people reach 120? *Not very many!* That’s the maximum that God has given.

He muses here, v 6: “Yea, even though he live a thousand years twice... [live 2,000 years] ...yet, he has enjoyed no good. Do not all go to one place? All the labor of man *is* for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled” (vs 6-7). Isn’t that true? Got to eat everyday—right?

I’ve often wondered what it would be like if you could give a visual picture this way: Here’s a little infant, showing when a person was born. Here’s an old man/woman showing that they have lived their life. In between, if you could have a train with many boxcars, and in it you had all the food that they would eat, all the drink that they would drink, then you also had in the backside of the cars all the waste that had to be taken care of, as well. I wonder how long that train would be? That would be a good description here.

Everything a person does is for his mouth to eat so he can live another day. “...yet, the appetite is no filled” because everything is processed and digested and he’s hungry for the next meal, six or eight hours later. You go to bed at night, you get up and you have breakfast—that is you break the fast of sleeping.

Ecclesiastes 7:11: “Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance; yea, a profit to those who see the sun. For wisdom *is* a defense, even as money *is* a defense; but the excellency of knowledge *is* that wisdom *which* preserves the life of those who have it” (vs 11-12). In other words, to extend your life.

Then he muses on God again. This is quite a thing. We see a process taking place here, v 13: “Consider the work of God; for who can make straight what He has made crooked?” You can’t!

Verse 15: “All *things* I have seen in the days of my vanity; there is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked one who prolongs *life* in his wickedness. Do not be righteous over much, neither make yourself overly wise; why should you destroy yourself?” (vs 15-16). It’s amazing how much truth that Solomon was really able to record, perceive and write down. But to show that even with all of this, everything was vanity and striving after wind.

Verse 23: “All this I have proved by wisdom; I said, “I will be wise;” but it *was* far from me. That which is far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out? I set my 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” (vs 23-25). And he still did not understand it!

Verse 26: “And what I find more bitter than death is the woman whose heart *is* snares and nets, and her hands are *like* fetters. Whoever pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her. ‘Behold, this I have found,’ says the Preacher, ‘*counting* one by one, to find out the sum, which my soul still sought, but I do not find: one man among a thousand...’” (vs 26-28).

Isn’t that something? He said he didn’t find any among women, and I supposed that he knew something about that. But that was before the giving of the Holy Spirit as we have today. This is quite something! Really quite a book for us to realize!

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Let’s learn the lessons here, brethren. Not only is it for the things that we’re going to teach people in the Millennium, but these are lessons for us. Jesus said, ‘The one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved.’ *This applies to us!*

We have been living in an age where we have everything: modern conveniences, light-switches, cars, electricity, refrigerators, freezers, food brought from the whole world into our supermarkets. We have so many things available to us: television, Internet, computers, cell phones, whatever; great and fantastic things that we have been given.

Yet, because it has been with the nation not procured with the blessing of God, but procured with the devices of men and the debt and the credit things that men have done, *we are on the verge of losing it all*. We need to understand the most important thing

in our lives—individually and all of us combined together—is

- our relationship with God
- the Spirit of God
- the love of God
- the goodness of God
- keeping His commandments
- learning, growing and overcoming

Out of this book of Ecclesiastes we can learn a lot of things. Let’s see what Solomon was doing. We pick up hints about how he was leaving God, but come back a little bit, ready to leave God, but come back a little bit. Then we will see what happened, because his relationship with God was not strong. It could have been! It could have been one of the strongest in the history of Israel and Judah, but it ended up not the way he wanted. He was the victim of his own words, the victim of his own judgments that he learned from God.

Ecclesiastes 9:1: “For all this I took to heart, even to make all this clear, that the righteous and the wise and their works *are* in the hand of God. No man knows either love or hatred *by* all *that is* before them. All things *come* alike to all; *there is* one event *that happens* to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him who sacrifices, and to him who does not sacrifice. As *is* the good, so is the sinner. He who swears is as *he* who fears an oath” (vs 1-2).

Life happens to all. He says in another place, ‘there’s time and chance’ that happens to all. This is why we can understand why supposedly bad things happen to supposedly good people. But ***all of this is so we can learn the wisdom of God!***

Verse 3: “This *is* an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event *that happens* to all. Yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil... [Yes, he got that right, just as Jesus said, ‘From out of the heart, *from within*, come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, and fornications.’] ...and madness *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead” What happens when you’re dead?

Verse 4: “For whoever is among the living, there is hope; for a living dog *is* better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die; but the dead do not know anything, nor do they have any more a reward; for their memory is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is long ago perished; nor do they any longer have a portion forever in all that is done under the sun” (vs 4-6).

The book of Hebrews tells us that ‘it is given to men once to die’ and after that the judgment. Solomon covered a lot of things, went through a lot

of things. Here's another thing that he learned. Very important for us to understand, especially as we look out and see people in the world.

Verse 10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with all your might; for *there is* no work, nor plan, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave where you go." Do it with all your might, do it right, do it good, make it the best that you can, and never be satisfied with whatever level you are able to achieve. We can add that to it. Continuously go forward.

Verse 11: "I returned and saw under the sun that the race *is* not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but **time and chance happens to them all.**" When that happens, what do we do? *We have to make the best of it we can!* We're also going to teach this to people in the Millennium.

It's going to be interesting to see, at that time, how things come about. We're going to have spiritual minds, immortal bodies; we're going to have a lot of discernment. We're going to be able to help answer their prayers to God, even while they're praying! That's going to be quite a thing—isn't it?

Verse 18: "Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war; but **one sinner destroys much good.**" That's quite a statement. Who is the chief sinner in the universe? *Satan the devil!* Did he destroy much good? *Yes, he did!* Is God going to get rid of him? *Yes, He is!* That's why during the Millennium he's not going to be around. But everyone is going to have to learn the lessons of life, and they will have more facts, more advantage, more understanding than anything we can imagine today.

This is why those who are called now and have the Spirit of God now, and are growing, changing and overcoming that we will belong to the superior resurrection, the *first resurrection!* Always keep that in mind. This is also for the youth would that they would listen, would that they would heed. But this whole thing of experimentation in life to try and find out about things can lead to a disaster. Let's also understand right here:

Ecclesiastes 11:9: "Rejoice, in your youth, O young man; and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these *things* **God will bring you into judgment.** Therefore, remove vexation from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh; for youth and vigor *are* vanity" (vs 9-10). And the older you get the more you understand that. too soon old, too late smart! That's one way of putting it.

Then he says, because life is designed to get old and wear out and come to an end. Here's some good advice that Solomon gave. Had he remembered that in his old age, I wonder how different things would have really been?

Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years *of old age* draw near, when you shall say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" When you get old you have your aches, pains, weakness, everything wears out, and then we finally give up the ghost.

Verse 2: "When the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, are darkened... [your vision fails; today we have glasses, but that doesn't take away failing vision, it's just an aide to overcome temporarily] ...or the clouds return after rain, in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men are stooped *over*..." (vs 2-3). When you get old and you get stooped over, when everything is wearing out and you're headed for the time of your last breath. So, Solomon is saying, 'Do what you need to do and do it right—because God is going to call you into judgment—before you get old and everything falls apart. It does!

"...and the grinders cease because they are few... [lose your teeth; yes, we have false teeth today] ...and *the eyes* of those who look out of the windows grow dim, and the doors shall be shut in the streets... [not going to be going out] ...when the sound of the grinding is low, and you shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they are afraid of heights, and terrors along the way..." (vs 3-5). That's what happens; the older you get you are afraid of heights and terrors and things like that.

"...and the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail... [desire of physical love] ...because man goes to his long home... [dies] ...and the mourners go about the streets..." (vs 5-6). Before these things come upon you think about while you're young and change your life now.

"...before the silver cord is loosed... [death] ...or the golden bowl is broken... [death] ...or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern; and the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it" (vs 6-7). Think about your life. A lot of us, when we were younger, never thought we would be old. Here we are old and getting older.

Everyone who is young out there, all you children look at all the old people and you never think in your own mind, 'One of these days I'm going to be like them.' You never think in your

mind, ‘One day all of these old people were little infants, then children, then youth, teenagers and young adults.’ My the time flies! The next thing you know, you’re 40 years old or more and then 50, 60, 70. God doesn’t want us to waste our life in ‘vanity and striving after wind.’

Solomon said, ‘set your life right, set your course right before you get old, because it is going to come!’ He concludes by saying, v 8: “‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher; ‘all *is* vanity.’” He wanted to find out all the things that he could find out by experimentation and he came to the whole conclusion of the matter. You can learn, study, have books, do this, do that, do the other things, but in the final analysis this is the beginning of what you need to do, and you need to follow through with it spiritually with the New Testament.

Verse 13: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments. For this *is* the whole man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, concerning every secret thing, whether *it is* good, or whether it is evil” (vs 13-14).

Now let’s see that Solomon never followed his own advice. Why didn’t he do it? What was the thing that was missing? Yes, he mentions God—true! Yes, he knows things about God—true! But what was it that he was missing? Let’s see what it was that he was missing. Let’s see the one command that God gave to the kings. What was it that He said they should do so they would be faithful and not exalt themselves over the people that they’re serving?

Deuteronomy 17:14—this is quite a passage: “When you come to the land which the LORD your God gives you, and shall possess it and shall live in it and shall say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that *are* around me’... [which they did] ...you shall surely set a king over you, whom the LORD your God shall choose.... [not your own choosing] ...You shall set a king over you from among your brethren. You may not set a stranger over you who is not your brother” (vs 14-15).

He gave instructions on how the king needed to guide his life. Watch the parameters of what was given to him to do. God gave Solomon wisdom, riches, honor more than any king, because he started out right and he asked for judgment and understanding. But this it is not recorded that he did:

Verse 16: “Only he shall not multiply horses to himself... [which he did] ...nor cause the people to return to Egypt... [which he did and even married the daughter of Pharaoh] ...so as to multiply horses because the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall not return that way again.’ Nor shall he multiply wives

to himself, **so that his heart does not turn away.** Nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold to himself” (vs 16-17).

Even though he had all of these things, he should have understood that **IF** he would have done what God says to do here, these things would not have taken place. He would have loved God in return for the love that God had for him. He would have feared God and followed Him instead of trying to find the way of life without God. Even though he mentioned God in passing as he went through his experimentation.

Here’s what God commanded him to do. This is what all of us need to do in preparation for being kings and priests. This is what every minister needs to do as he is serving and feeding the flock of God, as well as read and study and know 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus and the General Epistles—especially what Peter said to the elders.

Verse 18: “And it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall **write for himself a copy of this Law in a book** from that which is in the custody of the priests the Levites.” He was to go to the temple and there they would have a room where the king could come and sit and make himself a handwritten copy of the Law of God—Genesis-Deuteronomy. Why?

Verse 19: “And it shall be with him, and he shall read it **all the days of his life...**”

- Why must you do all the days of your life?
- How many times have you heard us say: ‘prayer and study; prayer, study and fasting’

You’ve heard it! Those are the keys to the relationship—right? *Yes!* But notice why he is to read it all the days of his life. There is something that has to happen on a continuous basis. It’s not just learn once and you know it and it’s over with.

“...**so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God...**” (v 19)—day-by-day as he would read; week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year. How many of the kings of Judah and Israel did this? *Virtually nada—none!*

“...to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them” (v 19). Solomon was on the verge of really learning the purpose of God. But when he set out to do it, on his own—forgetting that he is, everything that he was, everything that he was to be—was all dependent upon God!

Yes, he had to put forth the effort, that is true. But to do things by just giving God lip-service didn’t work. God wants you to love Him with all your heart, mind, soul and being. This is what we

need to learn, coupled with prayer and study is the glue that holds our relationship together with God. That's His Spirit!

Notice what else it would do, v 20: "So that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren..." He stays humble! Humility is not something you say, 'I'm going to be humble.' NO! Humility is a living part of your being when you understand God and His love and understand the brethren and understand what they do. It's part of how you are. It's not something that you put on. It's not something you say, 'Well, when I get around people I'm humble; I assume a humble position here.' NO!

- Humility comes by not exalting yourself.
- Humility comes by loving your neighbor and loving your brethren and even loving your neighbor as yourself, as Jesus said.

"...and that he does not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel" (v 20). That's what Solomon was missing.

Now, in order for us not fall into the same trap as this, we need to follow what is there. That's why study and prayer, study and prayer, living by every Word of God.

Let's see, even though Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs, composed 1,005 songs, wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, was the wisest man who has ever walked the face of the earth, because he didn't follow the instructions of God, He had to take the kingdom from him. When you read the genealogy in the book of Luke, the son of David named *Nathan* was the one through whom the seed came for Christ, not Solomon. That's how great his sin was. We will see here that he did everything God said not to do.

Remember, in the book of Ecclesiastes it says, 'When the sinner turns from his sins, all of his sins that he has done will not be mentioned. But *if* the righteous turn from his righteousness to sin, all the righteousness that he has done will not be mentioned. The Bible doesn't tell us the final disposition of Solomon; it doesn't show that he repented, so we're kind of left hanging in the air concerning God's judgment of Solomon. That's in God's hands. God knows!

But notice how he did many things contrary to what God said to do. That has to be because he did not fulfill the requirement for the king, as we found in Deut. 17.

1-Kings 11:1: "And King Solomon loved many foreign women, even the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites; of the nations which the LORD had said to

the children of Israel, 'You shall not go in to them, and they shall not go in to you; surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.' *But* Solomon clung to these in love" (vs 1-2)—instead of following the Word of God; instead of reading and studying the Word of God everyday so that he would not be lifted up.

Notice how bad it got, v 3: "And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And **his wives turned away his heart.**" Isn't that what God said do not do (Deut. 17) because your wives would turn your heart away from God. Notice how far it went:

Verse 4: "For it came to pass when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God as *was* the heart of David his father, for Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites; and **Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD** and did not *go* fully after the LORD like his father David" (vs 4-6).

Now, if all of that wasn't bad enough, look at what else he did. Since he was the master temple builder, built the Temple of God! Let's understand something here very important. Every time a man tries to build a building for God, or a temple for God, they get in trouble! We even had one exalted church leader who did that. What happened to him? *Same thing that happened to Solomon!*

Verse 7: "Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill which *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." And later, the children of Israel sacrificed their children to Molech; burned them in the fire!

Think of what happened to the population of the children of Israel when they saw that the king was going against the commandments of God. They fell into sin and they said, 'Well, if he does it I can do it.' And look what happens. All you have to do is just look at the governments today—any government in the world—and you can see when they go wrong, the people go wrong. That's what happened here.

Not only did he do that for the Moabite god and the Ammonite god, v 8: "And likewise he did for all his foreign wives, and burned incense and sacrificed to their gods." Think of that! God Who appeared to him in dreams twice and loved him and blessed him, look at what he did!

Verse 9: "And the LORD *was* angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that

he should not go after other gods; and he did not keep that which the LORD commanded” (vs 9-10). Remember: *Everything concerning our relationship with God is always started with the two-letter word ‘IF’!* The conditions are given to us, because God is

- a God of love
- a God of truth
- a God of righteousness

He cannot lie! So, if He gives a promise of blessings, it is always contingent upon that big little word **IF**. How many times did Jesus use it? How many times must we apply it to our lives? *That being on a daily basis!*

Just exactly as has happened to the Churches of God who did not fear the ministers and the members and those people who did not do as God intended them to do. Likewise with all the Protestants and Catholics; they have the Bible; they have the Word of God; they didn’t have to go out and do the traditions of men; they didn’t have to be there to obey what the pastor and the priest said that went against the Word of God. They themselves did not study the Word of God, but the writings of men; they themselves got turned away into sexual sins and abominations—correct? *Yes, indeed!*

Notice, judgment always comes when there is protracted sin and no repentance. Here’s what God said to Solomon directly from one of His prophets, v 11: “And the LORD said to Solomon, ‘Since this has been done by you, and since you have not kept My covenant and My statutes which I have commanded you, **I will surely tear the kingdom from you** and will give it to your servant.’” That servant was Jeroboam; and Jeroboam turned the children of Israel—the ten tribes that God gave him—over to ancient Egyptian calf-worship instead of serving God!

Verse 12: “But I will not do it in your days, for David your father’s sake, **but I will tear it out of the hand of your son**. Only, I will not tear away all the kingdom, *but* I will give one tribe to your son for David My servant’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake which I have chosen” (vs 12-13). Immediately after that warning, God raised up enemies.

I want you to stop and think about this in relationship to the countries of the world today. Why is there so much trouble, war, killing, death, famine, sex sins, abominations, Satan worship, disasters, earthquakes, floods and droughts. Why? **Because the world is forsaking God!** Because of this, we need to learn the lesson and we need to understand that God is giving us a chance

- to be prepared
- to be educated

- to be trained through His Word
- with His Spirit
- with His love
- with living

so that we can come and be resurrected from the dead and that we will enter into the Kingdom of God as spirit beings and that He is going to give us rulership over this world.

Brethren, let’s see the goodness and severity of God, and **let’s learn with a willing mind and a ready heart the things of God!** Let us have a tremendous relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ and with each other. Let us use this time at the Feast to change, grow, overcome and to set the course for the coming year. *The coming year looks like it may be a very difficult year at best!* Always remember this:

- always *hope in God* because you **stand in His grace**
- *walk in faith*
- *believe in hope*
- *live in love*
- *prepare* for the Kingdom of God!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ecclesiastes 2:1-2
- 2) Proverbs 18:2
- 3) Ecclesiastes 2:3-14
- 4) John 3:19-21
- 5) Ecclesiastes 2:15-19, 21-26
- 6) Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, 14-21
- 7) Ecclesiastes 6:1-7
- 8) Ecclesiastes 7:11-13, 15-16, 23-28
- 9) Ecclesiastes 9:1-6, 10-11, 18
- 10) Ecclesiastes 11:9-10
- 11) Ecclesiastes 12:1-8, 13-14
- 12) Deuteronomy 17:14-20
- 13) 1 Kings 11:1-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted: Genesis 6

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