

**Study of the Book of Ecclesiastes
Life in Essence
Ecclesiastes 12:8-14**

8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all *is* vanity. **9** And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs. **10** The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and *that which was* written *was* upright, *even* words of truth. **11** The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd. **12** And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is* no end; and much study *is* a weariness of the flesh. **13** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. **14** For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

OUTLINE

(1) Truthful Revelation (v8-14)

- a. A Judgment to Come (v14)**
- b. A Solemn Duty (v13)**

INTRODUCTION

From ancient times, men has tried with the utmost of his energy and resources and time to try prolonging life. There is a deep desire for the eternality of his existence that men sought to preserve his life even the dead body after his inevitable death.

From ancient history, we observe how the Egyptian Pharaohs and the Chinese emperors went through great lengths to build their tombs and preserve their bodies for their afterlife. There seemed to be that veiled knowledge of the hope of a resurrection of the dead that causes men to go to great extent to preserve the dead body.

Alas, through the thousands of years of human history, death has been the greatest impasse for all mankind. Even in the modern age of microbiology and nuclear physics, man could not unreveal the secret to eternal life. And man's quest for knowledge to understand his own make-up has been at best inadequate and deficient.

He realizes that he has not arrived at a full understanding on his own existence and his future beyond the grave.

Solomon has sought to enlight his readers the delusion of life which he called "life uner the sun or under heaven" which he called an empty meaningless life – "*Vanities of vanities, all is vanity*" (v8), by way of introduction in this final message.

He has just painted for us the process of aging. He paints for us the reality of the end of a man's life. He becomes weaker as the body naturally breakdown with age and time and he goes to his long home. There is no escape.

We said this before and it is worth repeating. This word "vanity" means "vapour" or "breath". This world's ambitions, desires and pursuits Solomon concluded give no real satisfaction to the soul for when we breath our last breath, that's it, we leave behind the fruits of all our labour, we cannot bring with us. He is teaching this concept that anything that is of real value must be eternal. What is of value must be able to last.

When death comes it puts a stop to man's earthly ambition, man's ambition is rudely interrupted. It seemed that men is left without choice, there is a lack of a better option, when death strikes. That is why he laments is there no difference between the wise and the foolish seeing that both must also die? Any difference between the rich and the poor, man and beast, when all must die! If we speak of this temporal life, everything is the same at the end. That is why it is vain and empty. Why strive so hard then? He was clearly discouraged if he pursues to the end the logic of life under the sun.

We have pursued 24 message from Ecclesiastes 1-6 delineating for the futility of pursuit in life without God in the equation.

- [23. Children and Long Life](#) (11/2/2016)
- [22. Understanding Riches \(4\)](#) (10/26/2016)
- [21. Understanding Riches \(3\)](#) (10/19/2016)
- [20. Understanding Riches \(2\)](#) (10/12/2016)
- [19. Understanding Riches \(1\)](#) (10/5/2016)
- [18. Vows Made Before God](#) (9/28/2016)
- [17. Drawing Near to God](#) (9/21/2016)
- [16. Talking of Earthly Position and Honour](#) (9/14/2016)
- [15. Talking of Loneliness and Companionship](#) (9/7/2016)
- [14. Talking of Envy and Idleness](#) (8/31/2016)
- [13. Talking of Oppression](#) (8/24/2016)
- [12. The Knowledge of Man](#) (8/17/2016)
- [11. The Knowledge of God](#) (8/10/2016)
- [10. God's Gift for the Redeemed Man](#) (8/3/2016)
- [9. In His Time](#) (7/27/2016)
- [8. Making Sense of Time and Life](#) (7/21/2016)
- [7. The Fulfilled Life](#) (7/13/2016)
- [6. Finding Fulfilment in Life \(4\)](#) (6/29/2016)
- [5. Finding Fulfilment In Life \(3\)](#) (6/22/2016)
- [4. Finding Fulfillment In Life \(2\)](#) (6/8/2016)
- [3. Finding Fulfilment in Life \(1\)](#) (6/4/2016)
- [2. Understanding About Life](#) (5/25/2016)
- [1. Talking About Life](#) (5/18/2016)

And we have also 17 messages including today how man may live his life profitably on earth. With absolute honesty, he gives us the plain truth for a profitable life on earth:

- 40. Remember Now Thy Creator (3/8/2017)
- [39. The Investment of a Life](#) (3/1/2017)
- [38. Sowing By Faith](#) (2/23/2017)
- [37. Wisdom for Nation Building](#) (2/15/2017)
- [36. Living Wisely](#) (2/8/2017)
- [35. Wise Up](#) (2/1/2017)
- [34. Living By Faith and Not By Sight](#) (1/25/2017)
- [33. Living Well](#) (1/18/2017)
- [32. Handling the Enigmas and Hardships of Life](#) (1/11/2017)
- [31. Understanding Authority](#) (1/4/2017)
- [30. Understanding Man](#) (12/28/2016)
- [29. Finding Wisdom's Benefits](#) (12/21/2016)
- [28. Cultivating Patience](#) (12/7/2016)
- [27. Rebuked!](#) (11/30/2016)
- [26. Lessons in the House of Mourning \(2\)](#) (11/23/2016)
- [25. Lessons in the House of Mourning \(1\)](#) (11/16/2016)

A careful study would have led us to acquire heavenly wisdom to live this earthly life profitably.

- (1) Truthful Revelation (v9-14)**
 - a. A Judgment to Come (v14)**
 - b. A Solemn Duty (v13)**

Solomon is saying to us in verses 9-12:

9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. 10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. 11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. 12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

He went on teaching the people all he knew, and he collected proverbs and classified them. For the preacher was not only a wise man, but a good teacher; he not only taught what he knew to the people, but taught them in an interesting manner. The wise man's words are like goads that spur to action. They nail down important truths. Students are wise who master what their teachers tell them. My son, be warned, there is no end of opinions ready to be expressed. Studying them can go on forever, and become very exhausting!¹

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *Living on the Ragged Edge*, W Publishing Group, 2004, 351.

It was a painstaking process that Solomon has gone through to choose the right words to frame the heavenly thoughts that God has revealed to him to delineate life on both ends.

Swindoll observed well, "Solomon is portrayed as a photographer. The word photograph literally means "written with light." Think of Solomon as having a camera hung around his neck throughout his desperate journey. And with this imaginary camera he takes snapshots of life – mainly in the dark shadows of the valley. Click – there is death in all of its ugly, colourless reality. Click – more shots of cynicism, doubt, despair, gloom, depression. Click, click 0 the endlessness of work and the futility of investments. He reveals it all as he takes one snapshot after another. None of them is in colour.. All of them are in stark black and white. The sun gives him the natural light he needs, his pen provides the film, developed in the darkroom of humanistic philosophies. And once he has developed and framed his prints, he affixes the same statement to each frame. "Emptiness, emptiness, emptiness. It's all emptiness." It's a grieved assignment this thing called "life". And Solomon spends one chapter after another telling us about it. He wrote it like a journal, but perhaps it is more like a sermon. The sermon of Solomon begins with the words "Vanity of vanities!" And it ends with similar words (v8). Good sermons are like taking a round trip in an airplane. You take off well and you land smoothly. It's exhilarating to take off, but it's a relief to come back home, having the trip behind you. The same runway begins and ends the journey. Solomon gives kind of a wrap-up of his journal and reveals some autobiographical information that we don't find anywhere else."²

(a) A Judgment to Come (v14)

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Solomon tells us, "There is an eternal consequence to man's actions today." He has built up his case and now he seeks a decision from his readers to heed his warning!

Ecclesiastes 3:16 *And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.*

Ecclesiastes 8:5 *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.*

Ecclesiastes 8:6 *Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.*

Ecclesiastes 11:9 *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*

² Ibid., 355.

There is perhaps no clear picture of hell judgment than Jesus' open revelation concerning judgment of hell and heaven to come where death is the desperation. The rich man died and was found in hell.

Luke 16:19-31 *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

The Nature of Hell

- Hell is a place of unquenchable fire. (Matt. 3:12, 42; Mk. 9:43)
- Hell is a place of memory and remorse. (Lu. 16:19-31)
- Hell is a place of thirst. (Lu. 16:19-31)
- Hell is a place of misery and pain. (Rev. 14:10-11)
- Hell is a place of frustration of anger. (Matt. 13:42; 24:51)
- Hell is a place of separation. (Lu. 16:26; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 20:6, 15)
- Hell is a place of undiluted divine wrath. (Rev. 14:10)
- Hell is a place prepared for Satan and his hosts. (Matt. 25:41)
- Hell is a place created for all eternity. (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:46; Jude 1:7)

He leads him to see life in perspective under God. What a great privilege God has accorded us sending this man to write these good words for our learning to a good life.

Lazarus the beggar was found in heaven safe in Abraham's bosom.

Activities of the Redeemed in this City

- (1) Heaven will be a place of praise, singing and worship (Isa. 44:23; Heb. 2:12; Rev. 14:3, 15:3).
- (2) Heaven will be a place of fellowship.
- (3) Heaven will be a place of service (Rev. 7:15, 22:3).
- (4) Heaven will be a place of learning the plan of God, the power of God and the person of God (1 Cor. 13:9, 10).

(5) Heaven will be a place without tears, sorrows, crying, pain (Rev.21:4).

[Summarized and adapted from Willmington's Guide to the Bible, page 681-690]

13 *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*

Let us hear the conclusion, he tells us, let's go straight to the point. The whole of man is this, notice the word "duty" is in the italics added by the King James translators to help us to understand our solemn responsibility for our eternal good.

The fear of God is to depart from evil. It is to understand that God is not only our Creator, but He is Judge, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His justice.

The just character of God requires that transgressions against God and His laws be duly dealt with. The infinite justice of God teaches that there is no escape for any who transgress His laws. The eternal justice of God teaches no man that lives or exists in time can escape the judgment of God for wrongdoing. And the unchangeable nature of God's justice tells us that justice will surely or always be meted out according to God's law.

This attribute of God's character gives hope to the oppressed of His people that God will vindicate and strikes fear in the heart of the oppressor and sinner that God will catch up with them for their evil deeds and cause the God fearer to say "no" to sin by the grace of God.

IMPLICATION

It is indeed the just nature of God that He has to send His only begotten Son to justify sinners for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). If God did not send Jesus Christ to die on the cross then there would have been no remedy for sin and the justice of God requires that all be condemned to the destruction of eternal hell fire.

Hence, the remedy for the sin that separates God and sinners is the finished work of Christ on the cross. Man transgresses the law of God summarized in the Ten Commandments as their will is in bondage to sin. This is the result of the fall. But all who accept Jesus Christ is justified in the sight of God and there is no righteousness in them. It is an unmerited relationship with God for sinners by the mediation of His Son.

Justification of sinners is therefore the outworking of God's salvation plan as a result of God's love as taught in John 3:13-21 through Jesus Christ, "*And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but*

that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

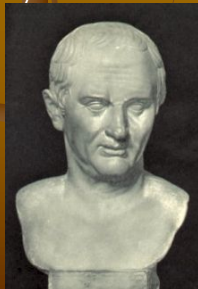
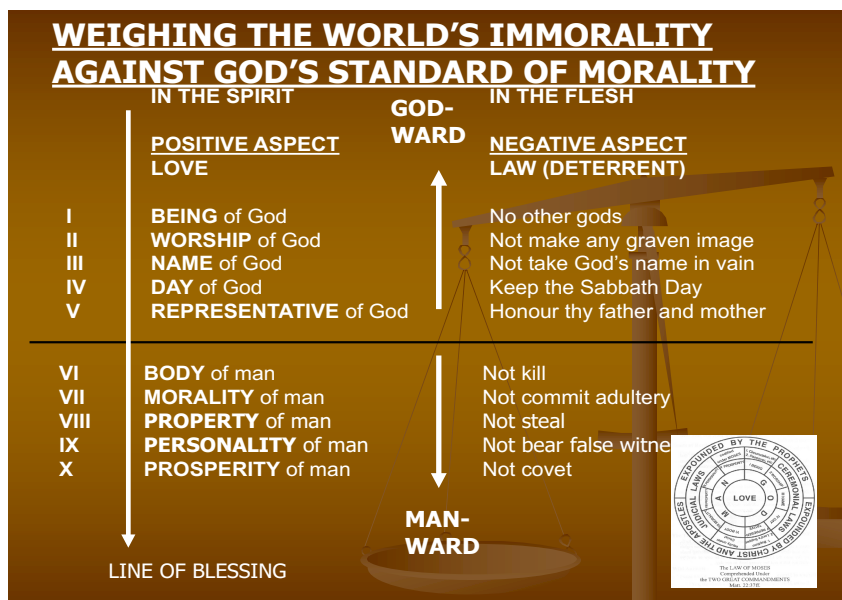
Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

One of the earliest definitions of true law

THERE IS INDEED a true law, right reason, conformable to nature, diffused among all, unchanging, eternal, which, by commanding, urges to duty; by prohibiting, deters from fraud; not in vain commanding or prohibiting the good, though by neither moving the wicked. This law cannot be abrogated, nor may anything be withdrawn from it; it is in the power of no senate or people to set us free from it; nor is there to be sought any extraneous teacher or interpreter of it. It shall not be one law at Rome, another at Athens; one now, another at some future time; but one law, alike eternal and unchangeable, shall bind all nations and through all time; and one shall be the common teacher, as it were, and governor of all — God, who is Himself the Author, the Administrator, and Enactor of this law
 — Cicero in *De Republica*

Cicero in De Republica

Marcus Tullius Cicero
 (Jan 3, 106 BC – December 7, 43 BC)
 was a Roman statesman, lawyer, political theorist, and philosopher. Cicero is widely considered one of Rome's greatest orators and prose stylists.

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Prayer Meeting - Study of the Book of Ecclesiastes
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For the children of God, we can choose, by the grace of God, to do good in our lifetime. The psalmist gives this advice:

Psalm 41:1-3 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*

Jesus tells us of a day when we shall be rewarded for all the good that we do in this life as a child of God:

Matthew 25:34-40 *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

CONCLUSION

May God bless His people to live profitably for Him. Amen.