

Ecclesiastes Notes

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Introduction:

“Ecclesiastes” means “to assemble, or to call out.”

- The current title comes from the Septuagint translation of the word “ecclesia.”
- Ecclesiastes is a true account of a false perspective.

Written by Solomon, “the son of David,” who calls himself “the Preacher.” (v. 1)

- Written as the journal of a man who is trying to find truth in his experience.
- Read 1 Kings 4-11 to see the downward slide of Solomon’s life.

But Solomon predetermines the search for truth as an existential experiment. He gives no weight to Scripture, revelation, or the existence of God, but only to what he can experience.

- The key phrase of Ecclesiastes, “under the sun,” occurs 29 times in 27 verses. (1:3,9,14; 2:11, 17,18,19,20,22; 3:16; 4:1,3,7,15; 5:13,18; 6:1,12; 8:9,15(2x),17; 9:3,6,9(2x),11,13; 10:5) The corresponding phrase, “under heaven,” is used 3 times. (1:13; 2:3; 3:1)

The end result of Solomon’s search is “vanity,” meaning “emptiness, or meaningless.”

- The word “vanity,” in its various forms, is used 38 times in 30 verses. (1:2(5x),14; 2:1,11,15,17,19,21,23,26; 3:19; 4:4,7,8,16; 5:7,10; 6:2,4,9,11,12; 7:6,15; 8:10,14(2x), 9:9(2x); 11:8,10; 12:8(3x))

The conclusion of the search is to “fear God and keep His commandments.” (12:13-14)

Chapter 1:

1:1,2 – The Introduction.

1:1 – “Preacher” – means “searcher, or debater.”

- “son of David, king in Jerusalem” – Solomon is the only one to meet both of these qualifications.

1:2 – “Vanity” – Lit. “emptiness, meaningless, or that which vanishes.”

- Fulfillment can only be found in doing what we have been created for; a personal relationship with God.
- “For the creation was subjected to futility (“vanity” – KJV), not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope.” (Rom. 8:20)
- “The world is passing away.” (1 John 2:15-17)

1:3-11 – The Preamble.

1:3 – “profit” – or “advantage.” The is the opposite of “vanity.”

- “labor” – This word is used 34 times in Ecclesiastes.
- “under the sun” – This is Solomon’s perspective. No matter what we have, if all we have is “under the sun,” then we are no better than the animals.
- Ecclesiastes was written to preserve us from the temptation of trying to find our satisfaction in the things of this world and life.
- Jesus came to us “under the sun.”

- 1:4 – “One generation” – Solomon comes between King David and King Rehoboam.
 - “the earth abides forever” – Solomon is trying to find his place in all this.
- 1:5 – “hastens” – The nights fly by too quickly.
- 1:6 – “The wind” – With satellite photography we can actually see this process now.
- 1:7 – “the rivers” – The hydro-system. It never stops.
- 1:8 – “eye is not satisfied” – The eye always wants more. It seeks extravagance.
 - Our senses are conduits which can never be filled up.
- 1:10 – “It has already been” – It is just that everybody who already knew it is now dead.
- 1:11 – “no remembrance” – Life goes by so fast that it is even hard to remember what happened. It’s all a blur.
- 1:12-18 – The Mission: “To know wisdom.” (v. 17)
- 1:13 – “wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven” – God gave Solomon wisdom to govern His people properly. Solomon misused those privileges.
 - “this burdensome task God has given” – “Take My yoke upon you...” (Matt. 11:29)
 - Solomon’s reign was a time of peace and prosperity, so he has all the resources necessary to go about this task.
 - “God” – The first mention of God in Ecclesiastes.
 - Solomon will refer to God 30-40 times in Ecclesiastes. Never will he use the word “Yahweh,” but always “Elohim.”
- 1:14-2:23 – Note that God is not mentioned from 1:14-2:23.
- 1:15 – “cannot be made straight” – Nothing can really be fixed.
 - Education can describe the problems, but it doesn’t generally provide solutions.
 - “what is lacking cannot be numbered” – So much is wrong that it can’t even be counted.
- 1:16 – “communed with my heart” – Because no one else could understand what he did.
- 1:17 – “grasping for the wind” – or “frustration.”
 - He keeps repeating that everything in life is “empty and frustrating.”
- 1:18 – “increases knowledge increases sorrow” – This is tough for us in the “Information Age.”

Chapter 2:

- 2:1-11 – Seeking Pleasure from Various Things.
 - Many try to drown their sorrows at the party. Experience and escapism is often tried to fill the vacuum of the soul.
 - Pleasure promises a lot but provides a little.
 - There is a law of diminishing returns to getting stuff.

- 2:1 – “I said in my heart” – He needs someone else to find counsel in.
- “mirth” – If it feels good, do it.
 - “pleasure” – If it looks good, do it.
- 2:3 – “guiding my heart with wisdom” – Solomon is partying like a scientist.
- “days of their lives” – Lit. “the number of days of their life.”
 - When our life begins to be numbered in days, rather than years, you know the end is close.
- 2:4 – “I...my...myself” – Solomon is entirely self-focused.
- “made my works great” – He is going to try to gain accomplishments.
 - The Hippies have become Yuppies.
- 2:7 – “greater possessions” – Solomon’s table contained 300 beef, 100 lambs, etc. every day.
- 2:8 – “I also gathered” – Solomon became a collector.
- “silver” – Chronicles said that Solomon made silver as common as the stones of Jerusalem.
 - “singers” – Solomon has his own bands.
 - “delights” – Sexual pleasure.
- 2:10 – “Whatever my eyes desired” – Solomon has no limitations. He gets what he wants.
- 2:11 – “all was vanity” – There was no point to all his work and experiences.
- “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”
(Mark 8:36)
- 2:12-26 – The Problem of Death.
- People “through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” (Heb. 2:15)
- 2:15 – “also happens to me” – The wise and fool will both die.
- 2:16 – “no more remembrance” – This is when seen “under the sun.”
- In 2-3 generations, we are largely forgotten even in our families.
 - Malachi says that God keep a book of remembrance. (Mal. 3:16)
- 2:17 – “I hated life” – And this is the man who had it all.
- “I hate life, yet I am afraid to die” – Voltaire.
 - John D. Rockefeller brought home over \$1 million per week at the end of his life, yet he couldn’t eat a regular breakfast because all the ulcers in his stomach.
 - Howard Hughes owned more land in Nevada than it is legal for the government to own; he dominated zoning across the US. He dies with needles in his arms and with hair and fingernails all grown out and unkempt.
- 2:18 – “the man who will come after me” – All Solomon has will pass to Rehoboam, and Rehoboam will ruin most of it in a matter of days.
- It is in the working for the stuff that the character is refined and developed that is necessary to oversee the work. (This is the problem with handing the church to the next generation.)
- 2:19 – “he will rule over all my labor” – The executive’s nightmare.

2:24 – “from the hand of God” – It is God that allows us to enjoy anything. (James 1:17)

2:25 – “who can have enjoyment, more than I?” – But he is doing all these things without God.

2:26 – “God gives...joy” – Christian fellowship can be some of the craziest of any, and that without drugs or alcohol.

- “vanity” – The “under the sun” perspective make suicide, in some measure, understandable.

Chapter 3:

3:1-9 – The Cyclical Hopelessness of Life.

3:2 – “born...die” – Neither of these things are under our control.

- David saw life from a different perspective. (Ps. 139)
- “plant...pluck up” – Humans contribute, but they don’t create.

3:5 – “gather stones” – Building structures.

- “embrace” – Affirmation.
- “refrain” – Confrontation.

3:6 – “time to lose” – Losing loved ones is especially difficult.

3:7 – “keep silence” – This is wise, but not always easy.

3:10-15 – A Glimpse Above the Clouds.

3:11 – “beautiful” – The idea is “proper.”

- “in its time” – As we are yielded to God.
 - A life that recognizes a need for a greater satisfaction, but is unwilling to yield to God, will be greatly frustrated.
- “eternity in their hearts” – Often called the “the vacuum of the soul.”
 - You cannot satisfy a spiritual hunger with material things.
 - God will not let us be satisfied with temporal things. We were made for eternity. We were made for God Himself and only He satisfies us.
 - “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee” – St. Augustine.

3:13 – “enjoy the good of all his labor” – Solomon’s general conclusion is simply for humans to enjoy their measly lives.

- At least Solomon has this hope. Many others with more difficult living conditions don’t.

3:14 – “whatever God does, it shall be forever” – Fatalistic. Fatalism leads to selfishness, for if that is the way it will be, then why help anyone else?

- This is good news with respect to the Gospel.

3:15 – “which is has already been, and what is to be has already been” – God covers past, present, and future in His eternal present. (“I am that I am.”)

- “God requires an account of what is past” – Lit. “God seeks what hurries along.” Solomon seems to say that time goes by swiftly and gets away from us.

3:16-22 – The Problem of Injustice

3:16 – “the place of judgment” – The court system of the day.

- “the place of righteousness” – Possibly referring to the role that the Temple and the priests played in the judicial system of Israel.

3:17 – “God shall judge” – Solomon knows that ultimately God will judge all injustice.

3:18 – “tests” – Lit. “to sift, to winnow.”

- “animals” – That is what humans are without the new birth.
 - In Genesis 1, God created (“bara”) 3 things: matter/body, soul/mind, and spirit. The animals only have a body and mind. Humans are born with a dead spirit and born again when they come to faith in Jesus Christ.

3:19 – “breath” – (Heb. “ruach”) Lit. “breath, or spirit.”

- “no advantage over the animals” – That is without the new birth.
 - The beautiful thing is that after we come to Jesus in faith, He calls us His children. (Rom. 8:15-18)

3:20 – “All go to one place” – Death.

- Our sense of injustice points to a reality outside of our own. (v. 17)

3:21 – “what will happen after him” – God has revealed some of it to us in Rev. 21-22.

- “‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.” (1 Cor. 2:10)

Chapter 4:

4:1-3 – The Problem of Oppression

- The oppressions of this world are especially hard to deal with if one believes there is no continuing life after death and ultimate judgment.

4:2 – “I praised the dead” – This is the lie that leads to suicide.

4:4-8 – Escaping Oppression by Hard Work...Only to be Found Alone

- Selfishness leads to loneliness.

4:8 – “toil and deprive myself” – The lonely man still works hard, only to lose the benefits of his labor at his death.

4:9-12 – The Benefits of Companionship

4:9 – “Two are better than one” – There are no lone rangers in the church. “The whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies.” (Eph. 4:16)

4:13-16 – The Vain Hope of Youth

- Solomon speaks of the futility of fame and attaining position.

4:13 – “wise youth” – It is better to be wise, than merely to have power and position.

- “an old and foolish king” – Solomon may be speaking of himself here.

4:16 – “no end of all the people” – Even the wise, young rulers grow old and die. Then someone else takes their place.

Chapter 5:

5:1-7 – The Vanity of Religion

5:1 – “hear” – Translated “obey” in 1 Sam. 15:22.

- “the sacrifice of fools” – This in reference to making vows to God. (v. 4)
 - “So rend your heart, and not your garments.” (Joel 2:13)
 - “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart – These, O God, You will not despise.” (Ps. 51:17)

5:2 – “Do not be rash with your mouth” – Making false promises to God.

5:3 – “a dream comes through much activity” – A vision for life and a calling from God are accompanied by a lot of hard work.

5:4 – “vow” – Any vow is a mark of our pride.

- Jesus said “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” (Matt. 5:37)

5:6 – “Do not let your mouth” – It is our responsibility to control our mouths.

- “The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6)
- “messenger” – Translated “angel” in KJV.

5:8-6:12 – The Vanity of Personal Prosperity (Financial and Familial)

- Abundant resources and a large family were both marks of God’s special favor to an OT Jew.

5:8 – “high official” – God alone is the highest official and His throne is the supreme court.

5:10 – “Not be satisfied with silver” – Money doesn’t satisfy.

5:11 – “They increase who eat them” – The more money we have the more people will come around us to try to get some of that money for themselves. Not to mention the accountants, lawyers, insurance salesmen, financial advisors, etc.

- Solomon’s provision per day was 30 measures of flour, 600 bushels of meal, 10 oxen, 100 sheep and assorted animals.
- “to see them with their eyes” – When you have that much stuff, all you can really do with it is look at it.

5:12 – “sleep of a laboring man is sweet” – It is good to sleep after a hard day’s work.

- “not permit him to sleep” – Due to worry.

5:13 – “Riches kept for their owner to his hurt” – A stingy man looking to gather wealth might place undue stress on his health.

- The Parable of the Rich Fool speaks of the folly of storing wealth. (Luke 12:14-21)

5:15 – “take nothing from his labor” – But you can send it ahead.

- “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matt. 6:20)

5:16 – “what profit has he” – Solomon must be quite depressed.

5:18 – “good and fitting” – The only good thing that Solomon saw in this life was the ability to enjoy food, drink, and work. (1 Tim. 6:17)

- “enjoy the good of all his labor” – Repeated also in Eccl. 2:24; 3:22.

Chapter 6:

6:2 – “whom God has given riches” – Solomon may be speaking of himself.

- “God does not give him the power to eat of it” – The fool who said “take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry” received God’s response of “this night your soul will be required of you.” (Luke 12:19-20)

6:3 – “a hundred children” – Rehoboam had 88.

- “not satisfied with goodness” – He cannot enjoy his family.

6:6 – all go to one place” – Death.

- Ultimately, not all go to one place. Heaven or hell.

6:7 – “his mouth” – The desires of the heart.

- The soulish nature is insatiable; it longs for the infinite and eternal.

6:8 – “What does the poor man have” – At least the poor man knows how to enjoy life.

6:9 – “Better is the sight of the eyes” – It is better to be satisfied with what you have. (1 Tim. 6:17)

6:10 – “man” – (Heb. “adam”) Dust.

- “cannot contend with Him” – The sovereignty of God makes life seem hopeless.
- But at least God is involved.

6:12 – “Who can tell a man what will happen after him” – God alone prophetically foretells.

- Our days are numbered from the beginning and there is nothing we can do to change that.

Chapter 7:

By Ecclesiastes 7, Solomon has forsaken the excesses that marked his early journey for truth. To his credit, he was too sincere to be placated by earthly and temporal pleasures. But now Solomon has become a moralist; a stoic, rather than an epicurean.

- Solomon is settling for a “good...better” philosophy.

7:1 – “good name” – Reputation.

- “precious ointment” – We all have a fragrance, of life to the living and of death to the dying. (2 Cor. 2:15-16)

- 7:2 – “the house of mourning” – Death puts life into perspective. Funerals are the great common denominator.
- 7:3 – “Sorrow is better than laughter” – We often learn more in hard times.
- Sorrow weans us from the temporal to the eternal.
 - “better” – or “deeper.”
- 7:6 – “the crackling of thorns” – They make a lot of noise when burning, but they don’t last long.
- 7:7 – “a bribe debases the heart” – Bribes make everyone a cynic and make everything seem hopeless.
- 7:8 – “patient in spirit is better than the proud” – Pride makes us vulnerable to a fall.
- “patient” – Also translated “long-suffering” in the Bible.
- 7:9 – “anger” – It is easy to get angry.
- Anger itself is not a sin, but how we use it many times is.
- 7:10 – “the former days” – The good ole’ days. But each season of life has its advantages and its disadvantages.
- The idea is, “don’t be a complainer.”
- 7:11 – “wisdom is good with an inheritance” – Without wisdom, you won’t have an inheritance for long.
- 7:12 – “money is a defense” – Money is a great tool when submitted to God and used against Satan.
- 7:13 – “Consider the work of God” – Ultimately, God sets the course of life.
- 7:14 – “prosperity” – You have to be a good receiver to be a good giver, because you cannot give what you do not have. Both, given and receiving, come from the Lord.
- “God has appointed the one as well as the other” – “Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” (Phil. 4:12)
 - Jesus said “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” (Matt. 8:20)
- 7:15 – “a just man who perishes in his righteousness” – Righteousness is no sure protection against hard times or an early death.
- “a wicked man who prolongs life” – He is battling the prosperity of the wicked. (Ps. 73)
 - We know that God is good, but that is what bothers us when we see so much trouble in the world.
- 7:16-17 – “overly” – Avoid extremes and attempt to be moderate.
- The verbs in these verses carry the idea of reflexive action. Solomon said, “Don’t claim to be righteous and don’t claim to be wise.” In other words, he was warning them against self-righteousness and the pride that comes when we think we have “arrived” and know it all.
- 7:17 – “die before your time” – There are two reasons why people die in the Scriptures: 1. it is their time, and 2. they are getting in the way.

- 7:20 – “there is not a just man on earth who does good” – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23; see also Rom. 3:10-20)
- In the Parable of the Wedding Feast, the father brings the off-scouring of the world into the feast.
- 7:21 – “do not take to heart everything people say” – One cannot take other’s comments too seriously.
- 7:26 – “The woman whose hearts is snares” – Solomon pursued peace and pleasure in women and it led to his downfall.
- 7:28 – “a woman among all these I have not found” – Solomon wasn’t choosing from the best women.
- Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines.
- 7:29 – “they have sought out many schemes” – The futility of life is a result of sin.
- The futility of the world isn’t due to God’s failure, but to ours.

Chapter 8:

- 8:1 – “his face shine” – Like Stephen. (Acts 6:15)
- 8:2 – “Keep the king’s commandment” – “Be subject to the governing authorities.” (Rom. 13:1)
- We are to pray for our government leaders. (1 Tim. 2:1-2)
- 8:3 – “take your stand” – The idea is “to oppose the king.”
- 8:5 – “who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful” – Paul said “rulers are not a terror to good works.” (Rom. 13:3)
- 8:6 – “every matter there is a time and judgment” – Moderation will help to keep you from the punishment of the civil authorities.
- “the misery of man increases greatly” – Wisdom and moderation will not keep you from all pain and suffering.
 - Sometimes a situation must get worse before something can be done to correct it.
- 8:8 – “No one has power over the spirit” – When it comes time to die, nobody can hold onto their life.
- “Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?” (Matt. 6:27)
 - “death” – Death is no respecter of persons; wise and foolish alike fall to it.
 - Death messes up the theory of moderation. And though it may give you a longer life in some ways, it won’t give you an abundant life or lead to truth.
 - “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’” (Rev. 14:13)
- 8:10 – “wicked...place of holiness” – Hypocrisy.
- 8:11 – “the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” – This is a huge problem of our current judicial system.
- Proper punishment executed speedily is a deterrent. It keeps people from thinking they are getting away with the crime.

- 8:12 – “well with those who fear God” – This is despite death and any temporary gain wickedness may bring. The view is coming out from “under the sun.”
- 8:14 – “wicked men...according to the work of the righteous” – Death comes to all and life does not offer just rewards...so what do we do?
- 8:15 – “commended enjoyment” – There is value to enjoying one’s life. (Eccl. 2:24; 5:19; 9:7)
- 8:16 – “sees no sleep day or night” – He is so troubled, he can’t sleep.
- 8:17 – “not be able to find it” – But how should we enjoy our lives and what matter does it make anyway? This is beyond him.
- There is nothing under the sun that really satisfies. In Christ, we have all God has to offer us. (Rom. 8:32)

Chapter 9:

- 9:2 – “One event” – Death.
- Solomon’s perspective of death comes from “under the sun” and it makes everything seem unfair.
- 9:4 – “a living dog is better than a dead lion.” As long as you are alive, there is hope.
- Earlier Solomon thought it was better to just be dead. (Eccl. 4:2-3)
- 9:5 – “the dead know nothing” – That is not true.
- 9:6 – “their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished” – We have a love that abides forever.
- 9:7 – “eat your bread...drink your wine” – He again sums up life with food and drink. (Eccl. 2:24; 5:19; 8:15)
- “For God” – Speaking as “under the sun,” he still mentions God like “the big man upstairs.”
 - Even atheists refer to God when it is handy.
- 9:9 – “Life joyfully” – The least you could do.
- 9:10 – “there is no work...where you are going” – That is not true. “And His servants shall serve Him.” (Rev. 22:3)
- 9:11 – “time and chance happen to them all” – Fate or luck.
- We, as believers, can see how God’s hand has been working in our lives from the start. (Ps. 139)
- 9:12 – “man also does not know his time” – This is true in general.
- 9:15 – “by his wisdom delivered the city” – People will often only turn to wisdom when they are in trouble.
- “no one remembered” – Ultimately, wisdom’s reputation fades.

9:16 – “the poor man’s wisdom is despised” – Because people don’t generally value wisdom.

9:17 – “spoken quietly” – By observation and gentle conversation.

Chapter 10:

10:1 – “Dead flies” – Stink.

- “ointment” – Oil was a primary way to care for wounds.
- “a little folly to one respected” – One error can ruin an entire life.
 - Powerful and important men do foolish things at times.

10:2 – “right hand” – Eastern cultures held the idea that honor was at the right hand.

10:3 – “fool” – The one who says in his heart, “There is no God.” (Ps. 14:1)

- The fool is made manifest by his actions.

10:4 – “Do not leave your post” – Don’t just quit right away.

- “conciliation” – Don’t argue over minor issues.
 - We are to have a submissive attitude toward our bosses and leaders.

10:7 – “servants on horses...princes walk” – In our culture too, people of skill and popularity can be exalted over people of character and genuine goodness.

10:8 – “who digs a pit will fall into it” – Careful when you set a trap for someone else.

10:10 – “wisdom brings success” – The advantage of wisdom.

10:11 – “babblers” – A gossip or backbiter.

10:14 – “Who can tell him what will be” – You can’t tell a fool anything; he thinks he knows it all already.

- Nobody really knows what the future holds for them personally.

10:15 – “they do not even know how to go to the city” – They are always lost.

10:16 – “child” – Immature.

- “princes feast in the morning” – They are self-serving. They eat before any work gets done.
 - This is a fat and lazy leadership.

10:17 – “nobles” – Blessed is the land who has wise men for its leaders.

- There can be a tendency of expecting nobility out of leaders, while not expecting nobility out of ourselves. The problem is, a democracy inevitably elects leadership that resembles its constituency.

10:18 – “building” – And car, lawn, home, etc.

10:19 – “money answers everything” – The earthly view sees money as the answer to everything.

10:20 – “a bird in flight may tell the matter” – We say “a little birdy told me.”

- Don’t say anything bad about anyone; it gets around.

Chapter 11:

11:1 – “Cast your bread upon the waters” – Speaking of giving financially and generously.

- This may be a reference to the practice in Egypt of scattering seed on the Nile when it overflowed its banks, allowing the water to carry the seed out in the field. The practice would often yield a good harvest.
- “He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly.” (2 Cor. 9:6)

11:2 – “seven, and also to eight” – Diversify your investments.

- Don’t put all your eggs into one basket.
- “do not know what evil will be on the earth” – You do not know when it will be your turn.
- Our human mind thinks that it is wise to hoard in sparse times.

11:4 – “He who observes the wind will not sow” – If you are always worried about the danger in giving, you’ll never do anything. Don’t let fear lead to inactivity.

- Life is full of problems; don’t let them keep you from living life to the full and investing in the future.

11:5 – “the bones grow in the womb” – We prepare for the birth of a baby even though we don’t really understand how that baby grows and develops.

- We must keep on giving even when we don’t really know how it helps or what it does.

11:6 – “which will prosper” – For God brings the increase. (1 Cor. 3:7)

- We will not be rewarded based on our fruitfulness, but based on our faithfulness.

11:7-8 – There are some good things under the sun.

11:8 – “All that is coming is vanity” – Still the end result of wisdom without God.

11:9 – “Rejoice, O young man” – Solomon is nostalgic.

- “your youth” – “The greatest hindrance to youth being involved in missions is Christian parents”
– A head of a mission’s organization once told Damian Kyle.

11:10 – “childhood and youth are vanity” – Life is short and passes like a dream.

- It would be sad to get to the end of your life and realize that you haven’t laid up anything in heaven.

Chapter 12:

12:1 – “Remember” – Lit. “to act decisively.”

- “Remember now” – “While it is called ‘Today.’” (Heb. 3:13)
 - This is an investment program. You will reap in the future what you sow today.
 - “Flee also youthful lusts.” (2 Tim. 2:22)
- “difficult days” – There is a healthiness to experiencing some of the difficult things of life in one’s youth. It can help put things into proper perspective.

12:2-5 – A picture of what happens when one grows older.

12:2 – “clouds do not return” – It is all passing away.

- 12:3 – “house” – Referring to his physical body.
- “tremble” – This could be Parkinson’s or the shakes of old age.
 - “bow down” – They are hunched over.
 - “grinders” – The teeth.
 - “windows” – The eyes.
- 12:4 – “rises up at the sound of a bird” – Harder to sleep soundly.
- “daughters of music are brought low” – Hard of hearing.
- 12:5 – “afraid of height” – Weakened legs make it more dangerous to be at a height.
- “terrors” – The fears of the elderly.
 - “almond tree blossoms” – Likely speaking of gray hair the color of almond blossoms.
 - “grasshopper” – Normally agile, its slow movements on a cold morning recall the stiffness of old age.
 - “desire fails” – The passions of life dim.
- 12:6 – “the silver cord is loosed” – Idioms for dying.
- What does tie us to the body?
 - Death is a part of the vocation of the believer.
 - “the golden bowl” – The brain.
 - “the wheel” – The heart.
- 12:8 – “Vanity of vanities” – The conclusion he started with. (Eccl. 1:2)
- Returning to God doesn’t have to be that sad, if we can remember our Creator in the days of our youth.
 - “vanity” – This sums up life apart from God.
 - It is God’s mercy to refuse to allow us to be satisfied with anything other than Himself.
- 12:10 – “acceptable” – The idea is “delightful to hear.”
- 12:11 – “goads” – Sharpened sticks that would help to drive oxen.
- “given by one Shepherd” – The only words worth anything come from Him.
 - Solomon seems to understand that this writing was inspired by God.
 - The word of God reveals the God of the Word – the Great Shepherd.
- 12:12 – “many books” – Solomon could go on and on like this forever.
- Rather, we should be “a man of one book.” (G. Campbell Morgan)
 - “Occasionally, a man stumbles over the truth, but usually he gets up and continues on his way” – Winston Churchill.
- 12:13 – “keep His commandments” – The only one to do this perfectly was Jesus Christ.
- Jesus said that God’s greatest commandments were that we love Him and love others. (Mark 12:29-31)
- 12:14 – “every work into judgment” – Either on the cross or when we stand before Him personally.