

The Whole Man

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2 & 12:13-14

Based on a sermon preached by Dr. Jerry Vines
at Southeastern Seminary



Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Read Responsively Ecclesiastes 1:1-2
The words of the Preacher, the son of David,
king in Jerusalem. [2] Vanity of vanities,
saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is*
vanity.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 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.

King Solomon, the son of King David, was a saved
believer. The Bible says that:

1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking
in the statutes of David his father: ...

He loved the Lord. He was a believer in the Lord, saved
by faith in the coming Jesus Christ. But the Bible tells us
that - though Solomon was saved - he had an area of
weakness. When we read the rest of 1 Kings 3:3 we see
that:

1 Kings 3:3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking
in the statutes of David his father: **only he sacrificed
and burnt incense in high places.**

Solomon loved the Lord, but he *compromised* with
the ways of the world. He loved the Lord, but he

sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

He was tolerant to *other religions*. I don't mean that Solomon was tolerant in the sense that he had a *live and let live* mentality toward the unbelievers of the faith. Christians ought to be kind, and ought to show love toward all people. Our standard should be to **love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us (Matthew 5:44)**. A Christian should tell others that there is **salvation in no other name but the Name of Jesus (Acts 4:12)**, yet we should never act hatefully toward the enemies of Christ. God can reach all men, and will save *whosoever will* if they will call on the Name of Jesus.

Solomon, however, went too far. He **sacrificed and burnt incense in high places**. He actually joined with other religions outside of our faith and began to practice rituals to these false gods and goddesses. Solomon's slide from godliness to licentiousness began when he married outside his faith. The Bible says that:

1 Kings 11:3-4 {Solomon} had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. {4} For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods...

Saved as a young man, Solomon took his focus off of the Lord Jesus Christ and instead began to focus on the world. When a believer stops looking to His Lord God

and begins to look to the world it will not be long before Satan will open a door of destruction for him.

Under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit Solomon wrote *three books* in our Bible.

He wrote the **The Song of Solomon**, also known as **the Song of Songs** when his heart was filled with love. He wrote **3000 proverbs** which were bound into the **Book of Proverbs**, a testament to the wisdom that Solomon had. But Solomon wrote the **Book of Ecclesiastes**, also known as **The Preacher**. Solomon departed from serving the living God and began to chase after the things of this world. As he wrote Ecclesiastes Solomon looked back over the wasted years of his life. Now an old man filled with regret and bitterness Solomon knew that he was - soon and very soon - going to see his Creator. Solomon knew that **he would have to give an account of himself unto God (Romans 14:12)**. He would have to explain how he - the wisest man who ever lived - fell into the pig pen of sin. When God saved Solomon and set him over Israel to be its King this man could have done so much for God's people. Instead of **redeeming the time, knowing that the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16)** Solomon dabbled in worldliness. He now understood the words of his father David:

Psalms 39:5 ... verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

In our **best state** every person's life is **altogether vanity**. That word "**vanity**" is repeated some 28 times

throughout the Book of Ecclesiastes. The word **הבל** (*pronounced heh'bel*) literally means "**smoke, emptiness, something transient and unsatisfactory**". Solomon - calling himself "The Preacher" - wrote Ecclesiastes to warn others of the awful waste of a life lived apart from the Lord. Solomon said:

FOCAL Ecclesiastes 1:2 **Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.**

or you could read it as **smoke of smokes, says the preacher, smoke of smokes; all is smoke!** Even the Christian living apart from the Lord Jesus Christ has a terribly unfulfilling life. You see, the devil runs this circus we call *the world*. When the devil couldn't stop the Lord from making man **perfect and in the image of God** he was satisfied with leading man astray in the Garden of Eden. If the devil can't keep you from being saved, he will do the next best thing. He will get you to step into the world, just as a child steps on to a merry-go-round, and he'll let you ride as long as you want to ride for "free".

ILLUSTRATE I heard the story once of a poor farmer who decided to take his family to the circus. When he and his family arrived he saw a wonderful thing - a merry-go-round filled with beautifully painted horses. That old farmer got on the merry-go-round and rode it not once, but many times. When he finally ran out of money and came back to his wife she said, "**now there, look at you. You got on where you got off, spent all our money, and you haven't gone no where.**" This is

what Solomon did. He got on the devil's merry-go-round and, investing his very life into ride after ride, stayed there until it was too late to serve the Lord. Oh that God would keep us all from ever getting trapped on Satan's merry-go-round. Oh that we wouldn't have to eat the swill of the hogs as the prodigal son did before we turn and repent, resting in the arms of Jesus.

Solomon Chased After Knowledge

What are some of the things that Solomon chased after instead of pursuing God?

He tells us:

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 1:13 **And I gave (נתתי) Pronounced *naw-than*) my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.**

Solomon said that he **surrendered his heart to seek and search out wisdom**. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. He became an expert in **all that is done under Heaven**. He was an **expert in zoology** (study of animal life), in **botany** (study of plant life), in **ornithology** (study of bird life), in **entomology** (study of insect life), and in **ichthyology** (the study of fish life). Like so many today who seek satisfaction in knowledge apart from a relationship with the Lord Solomon found out that **knowledge puffeth up (1 Corinthians 8:1)**, but

it does nothing for the human soul. Solomon said:

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 1:14-15 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. [15] That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

The more knowledge and wisdom Solomon gathered, the less satisfied he was in his soul. Some of the saddest people in the world are those who possess great wisdom and knowledge. They are sad because they chase after human knowledge, but have no time to come and know the Lord. Solomon said:

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 1:18 For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

The wisdom and knowledge of man does not increase happiness. Don't misunderstand - wisdom should be sought, and knowledge should be sought - but *through the Lord*. The Bible says:

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

God wants His people to be wise. We are to be **wise as serpent, but harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16)**. But the Source of our wisdom must always come from a ongoing relationship with the Lord Who gave Himself

for us. There is a wisdom of man, and a wisdom of God. We who are Christ's should seek wisdom from God. The wisdom that is **from above**

James 3:17 ... is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

The lowest uneducated man is far happier than the PhD professor or the self righteous Pharisee who has not learned that the **fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10)**.

Solomon knew this before he drifted from the Lord, for *fourteen times* in the Book of Proverbs he spoke of the **fear of the Lord**.

The **fear of the Lord** is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7);

The **fear of the Lord** prolongeth days (Proverbs 10:27);

The **fear of the Lord** is the fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27);

By humility and the **fear of the Lord** are riches, honor, and life (Proverbs 22:4).

Solomon Gave Himself To Pleasure

And Entertainment

Solomon said:

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 2:1 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.

Just as it was in Solomon's day, we in America live in a *please me* society. Everyone wants to be entertained.

Everyone wants to be happy. **Video game** sales bring in billions of dollars a year in profits. Households that are starving for food often have **cable television and high speed internet** access. People spend billions on drugs, alcohol, pornography. Every aisle at the grocery store is filled with magazines that let us look into the debauched and sin laden lives of Hollywood stars.

Solomon chased after pleasure, but in finding pleasure he discovered something. **Sin always brings diminishing returns**. Laughter and entertainment divorced from a walk with Christ in time loses its charms. **This also is vanity**. Solomon's father, King David, wrote:

Psalms 16:11 Thou {O God} wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Here is where pleasure is. It is not in the world wallowing in debauchery. Pleasure is **at the right hand of God, dwelling in His presence**. Blessed be the Name of the Lord! As **Jerry Vines** has said,

"The Christian faithfully serving Jesus can have more fun *accidentally* than the world has *on purpose!*"

ILLUSTRATE That is so true. I remember a sketch done by the Comedian **Bill Cosby** who poked fun at those who "couldn't wait for the weekend". **Dr. Cosby** remarked that these people were so excited all day long on Friday. They just couldn't wait to get out and "party". When the work day was over these people went out "on the town" and, in order to have fun, drank and drank wine and strong drink. They did what Solomon said he did.

He tried liquor and wine. He said:

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 2:3 I sought in mine heart to give (משך pronounced *maw-shak'*) myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

Solomon sought in his heart "to give myself unto wine". Earlier we saw that the word "give" meant "to surrender oneself to". This time the Hebrew word means "to stretch oneself out". Solomon did what so

many do on Friday night, the terrible things that **Dr Bill Cosby** jokingly spoke of. A man who sets out to "get wasted" **lays hold onto folly**. He open himself to addiction. The woman who gives herself to drugs or alcohol for the sake of pleasure may actually destroy her life. Drunk drivers die in accidents, and kill others in accidents. People who give themselves to the folly of alcohol and drugs do foolish things, demeaning things.

As we mentioned before, Solomon had **a thousand wives and concubines**. That is what he is talking about in

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 2:7 I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house

He collected people about him for pleasure. Dear ones, consider your bodies to be Temples of God. Avoid the sensuous evil of our age.

Young women, your bodies belong to the man that God will send to you if you seek to do His will.
Young men, your bodies belong to the godly woman that the Lord - Who loves you - will send to you in due season. Avoid fornication. Avoid the sins of the flesh.

ILLUSTRATE People think that we are in the age of sexual freedom. What has this "freedom" gotten us? **Broken families, teenage pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases**. I heard of a story written in USA

Today® that told about a sordid affair that ended in a terrible way. A man met a woman at a bar and invited her up to his room. The next morning he woke up and the woman was gone. She had left behind a nice note thanking him for the evening. The man thought about how nice that was, and he wish he had known the woman's name. When he stepped into the bathroom he noticed - scrawled in lipstick across the mirror - these terrifying words:

"Welcome To The Wonderful World Of AIDS"

He thought, "how nice". When he went into the bathroom he found - written in lipstick across the mirror - "Welcome to the wonderful world of AIDS!"

Your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit if you are born again by faith in Christ. Remember that no matter where you go! All is vanity if it does not have its root in the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Solomon Gave Himself To Work

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 2:4-6 I made me great works; I built me houses; I planted me vineyards: [5] I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: [6] I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:

Solomon threw himself into his work. He tried knowledge & wisdom, but this did not satisfy. Solomon

tried pleasures of the flesh, but again all was vanity. So he changed his methods and turned to work.

It is estimated that Solomon's annual income was in excess of 20 BILLION dollars. He was, without a doubt, one of the richest men the world would ever see. Solomon made **Bill Gates** look like a piker. He could have hired **J. Paul Getty** to be his doorman.

Solomon was rich beyond the wildest dreams of anyone. Was this a blessing to him? Not at all. Solomon said:

CONTEXT **Ecclesiastes 2:11** Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was no profit* (יתרון pronounced *yith-rone'*) under the sun.

Solomon said **there is no profit under the sun - it is all vanity (smoke) and vexation of spirit.** For all his riches Solomon was miserable. You would be surprised how many rich people kill themselves every year. Though I've never been rich (and never will be), I can imagine its tough to be rich. The people you think are your friends are just there because they want your money. People hound the rich incessantly to try and get what they have. Rich people are targets of kidnapping for ransom. Jesus often spoke of the rich person. He said that the **deceitfulness of riches often choke the Gospel so that it will not bring life (Mark 4:19).** Jesus said of the rich man:

Luke 18:25 For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

whereas of the poor He said:

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor...

The Apostle Paul said of those who are rich:

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded; nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; [18] That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; [19] Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

If the Lord has blessed you with money or land or possessions, He has given them to you to be used *for His glory.*

Do not let riches be your god. You have but

1 Corinthians 8:6 one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things,

and we by him.

If you are born again by faith in Christ let your highest pleasure be to serve Jesus while you can.

Serve The Lord While You Are Able

As Solomon came to the end of his days this wise man - the wisest man who ever lived - left behind this truth. He said:

CONTEXT Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Remember **NOW** your Creator in the days of your youth. Do not let Satan get you off course of serving the Lord. Because of sin in our bodies we all age, we all corrupt, we all decay. I heard a cute poem that said:

I can live with my arthritis,
My dentures are just fine;
My bifocals serve me well,
But I sure do miss my mind!

Young people, serve the Lord while you can. Remember what the Apostle said:

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. [25] And every man that striveth for the mastery

is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

If you are *born again* by faith in Christ then you will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ one day and be judged for reward or loss. Serve the Lord while you can.

Serve the Lord because you will gain an **incorruptible reward, a crown that fades not away. Serve Him because it is rewarding to serve the Lord.**

The Apostle said:

Philippians 3:7-8 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. [8] Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, (σκυβαλον Pronounced skoo'-bal-on) that I may win Christ,

He said "I count all things *but skubalon*, human excrement, when compared with the opportunity of serving the Lord Jesus". Knowledge and wisdom are *skubalon*, pleasure and entertainment *skubalon*! Everything is useless, worthless, unless it is found in Christ. Solomon ended Ecclesiastes by saying:

FOCAL Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God,

and keep his commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man.

I love the King James for it *italicizes words* that are not in the original language. Sometimes the translators found it best to add a little word here or there in order to make the passage read easier. Sometimes what was added was actually *unneded*. Solomon actually says:

Fear God, and keep His commandments: for THIS THE WHOLE OF MAN.

That which makes a WHOLE MAN is to serve the Lord and to heed His Word. When we depart from God we become incomplete.

No man, woman, or child is complete without an ongoing relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

To the **architect**, Jesus is the **Chief Cornerstone**. To the **baker**, He is the **Bread of Life**. To the **doctor**, He is the **Great Physician**. To the **carpenter**, He is the **Firm Foundation**. To the **educator** He is the **Living Word**. To the **florist** Jesus is the **Rose of Sharon** and the **Lilly of the Valley**. To the **geologist** He is the **Rock of Ages**. To the **horticulturist** He is the **Root of David** and the **True Vine**. To the **jeweler** Jesus is the **Pearl of Great Price**. To the **king** He is the **King of Kings and the Lord of Lords**. To the **lawyer** He is the **Wonderful Counselor**. To the **optometrist** He is the **Light of the world**. To the **zoologist** He is the **Lamb of God** and the

Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

To those who are *spiritually dead* Jesus Christ is the **way unto eternal life**.

He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes unto God the Father but by Him (John 14:6). Here is the very Wisdom of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dear friends, Solomon said:

FOCAL Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.

There is a Judgment Day for every person. If you have believed on Jesus then your works will be judged for reward or loss. If you leave this life without calling upon the Name of Jesus then you will stand before God - the Living God - as a dead thing. Oh, that God would give you the fear of that Great White Throne Judgment! Call upon Jesus Christ for salvation while you can. If you are saved, work for Jesus while you can.

May God touch your hearts with His Word!

FOCAL Read Responsively Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. [2] Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all *is* vanity.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 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.

1 Kings 3:3; Matthew 5:44; Acts 4:12; 1 Kings 11:3-4; Psalms 39:5; Ecclesiastes 1:2

a. How did Solomon compromise with the world? _____

b. How many books of Scripture did Solomon - under the inspiration of God - write? _____

Solomon Chased After Knowledge

c. What are some of the things that Solomon chased after instead of pursuing God? _____

Ecclesiastes 1:13; Ecclesiastes 1:14-15; Ecclesiastes 1:18; James 1:5; James 3:17; Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs

10:27; Proverbs 14:27; Proverbs 22:4

**Solomon Gave Himself To Pleasure
And Entertainment**

Ecclesiastes 2:1; Psalms 16:11; Ecclesiastes 2:3; Ecclesiastes 2:7

Solomon Gave Himself To Work

Ecclesiastes 2:4-6; Ecclesiastes 2:11; Luke 18:25; Luke 4:18; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; 1 Corinthians 8:6

d. If the Lord has blessed you with money or land or possessions, He has given them to you to be used _____

Serve The Lord While You Are Able

Ecclesiastes 12:1; 1 Corinthians 9:24-25; Philippians 3:7-8; Ecclesiastes 12:13; Ecclesiastes 12:14

e. That which makes a WHOLE MAN is to _____

When we depart from God we become _____

Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, TN 38351

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

