

# ECCLESIASTES

Ecccl. 1:4-11



Eccl. 1:4 *One* generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

8 All things *are* full of labour; man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

10 Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

11 *There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after.

This evening, we continue on a wonderful, spiritual journey through the Book of Ecclesiastes, known also as “The Preacher.” The introductory material:

### TITLE

The title of this book in the Hebrew text is all of verse 1.

Eccl. 1:1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

### WRITER AND DATE

Solomon – (971-931 B.C.)

## PURPOSE

- ❖ This book helps the reader develop a God-centered worldview and recognize the dangers of a self-centered worldview.
- ❖ It does not describe the life of faith or teach what the responsibilities of faith in God are. It also prescribes the limits of human philosophy (cf. 3:11; 8:16-17).
- ❖ **This book refutes intellectual agnostics and educated humanists.** It is a “thinking man’s” book!

## GENRE

This is a book of Hebrew poetry, specifically, wisdom literature designed to teach the reader. It is also autobiographical, relating the personal experiences of the writer. Thus, it is a combination of poetry and prose.

## THEME

- ❖ All is vanity.
- ❖ Life without knowing and doing the will of God is empty of meaning and purpose.

## MESSAGE

- ❖ Solomon had the most of anything and everything: fame, fortune, and females.
- ❖ Solomon found that temporal pleasures were “all vanity.”
- ❖ Solomon learned that the conclusion is “Fear God” and be obedient to His word and His will.

Eccl. 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.**

## The Exposition

The first 11 verses of the book introduce the writer, the theme of the book, and a general defense of the assertion that Solomon made in the theme statement (v. 2).

### I. THE PREACHER'S SUBJECT, 1:1-11

#### A. The Preacher, 1:1 (Solomon)

1. What He Was, 1:1a "The words of the Preacher..."
2. Who He Was, 1:1b "...the son of David, king..."
3. Where He Was, 1:1c "...in Jerusalem."

#### B. The Problem, 1:2-3

##### 1. The Great Quotations, 1:2

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

❖ Verse 2 is an attack upon the philosophy of PESSIMISM.

##### 2. The Great Questions, 1:3

Eccl. 1:3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh **under the sun?**

Tonight, we continue the beginning of the Book of Ecclesiastes.

In “Macbeth,” Shakespeare wrote...

“Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more.”

Act 5 Scene 5 of Macbeth, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7836942-life-s-but-a-walking-shadow-a-poor-player-that-struts>

## C. The Process, 1:4-11

### 1. A Frustrating Sequence, 1:4-10

**a. Anthropology** Does Not Have the Answer, 1:4a  
“*One* generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh...”

- ❖ The point is that since man is not permanent, it is obvious that his work cannot be, either.

**b. Geology** Does Not Have the Answer, 1:4b  
“...but the earth abideth for ever.”

- ❖ The ancient world noted four elements: earth, wind, fire, and water. Solomon does the same.

**c. Astronomy** Does Not Have the Answer, 1:5

Eccl. 1:5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.



❖ The title of Ernest Hemmingway's book, "The Sun Also Rises," is taken from verse 5.

Job 36:27 For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:  
28 Which the clouds do drop *and* distil upon man abundantly.

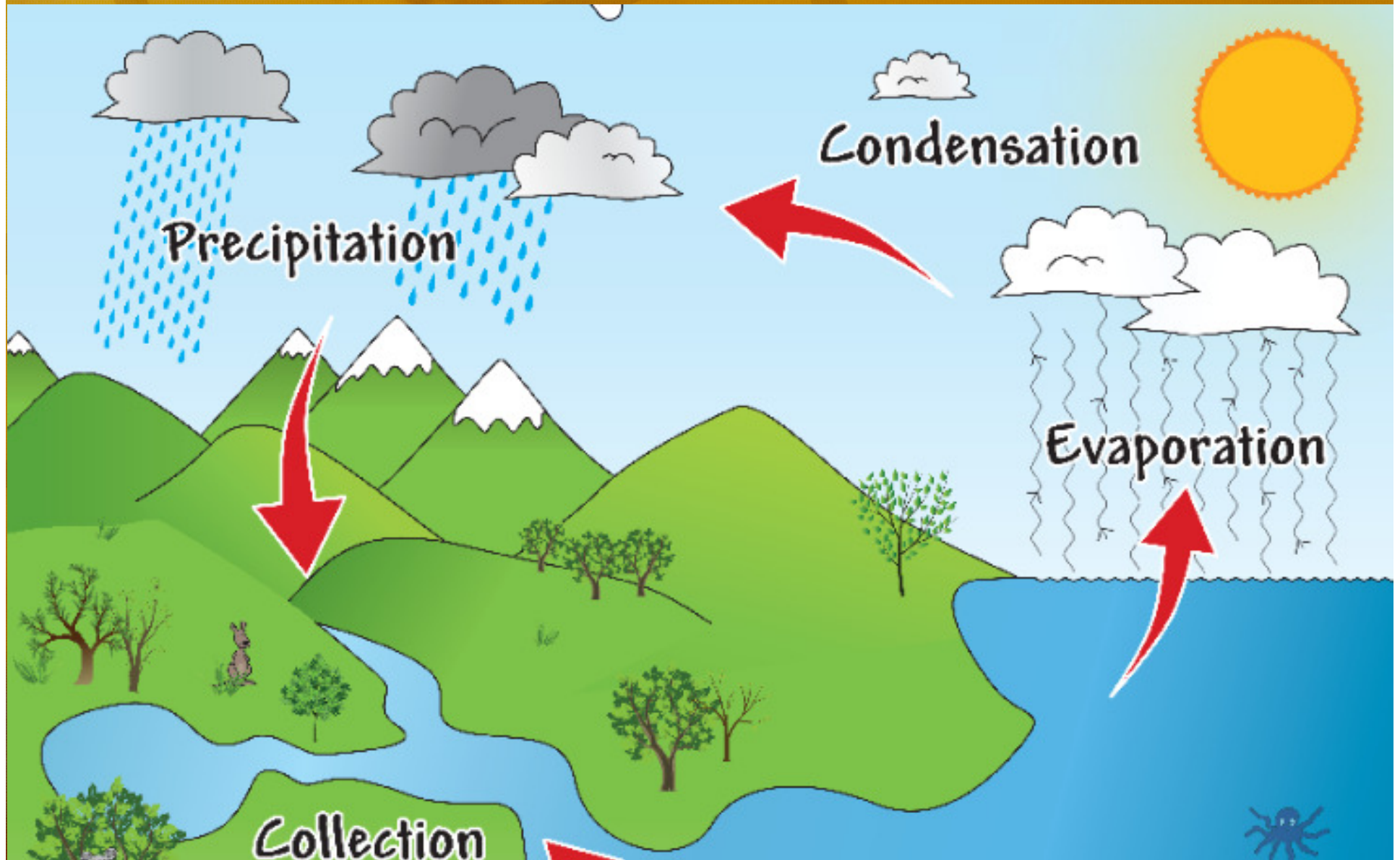
#### d. **Meteorology** Does Not Have the Answer, 1:6

Eccl. 1:6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

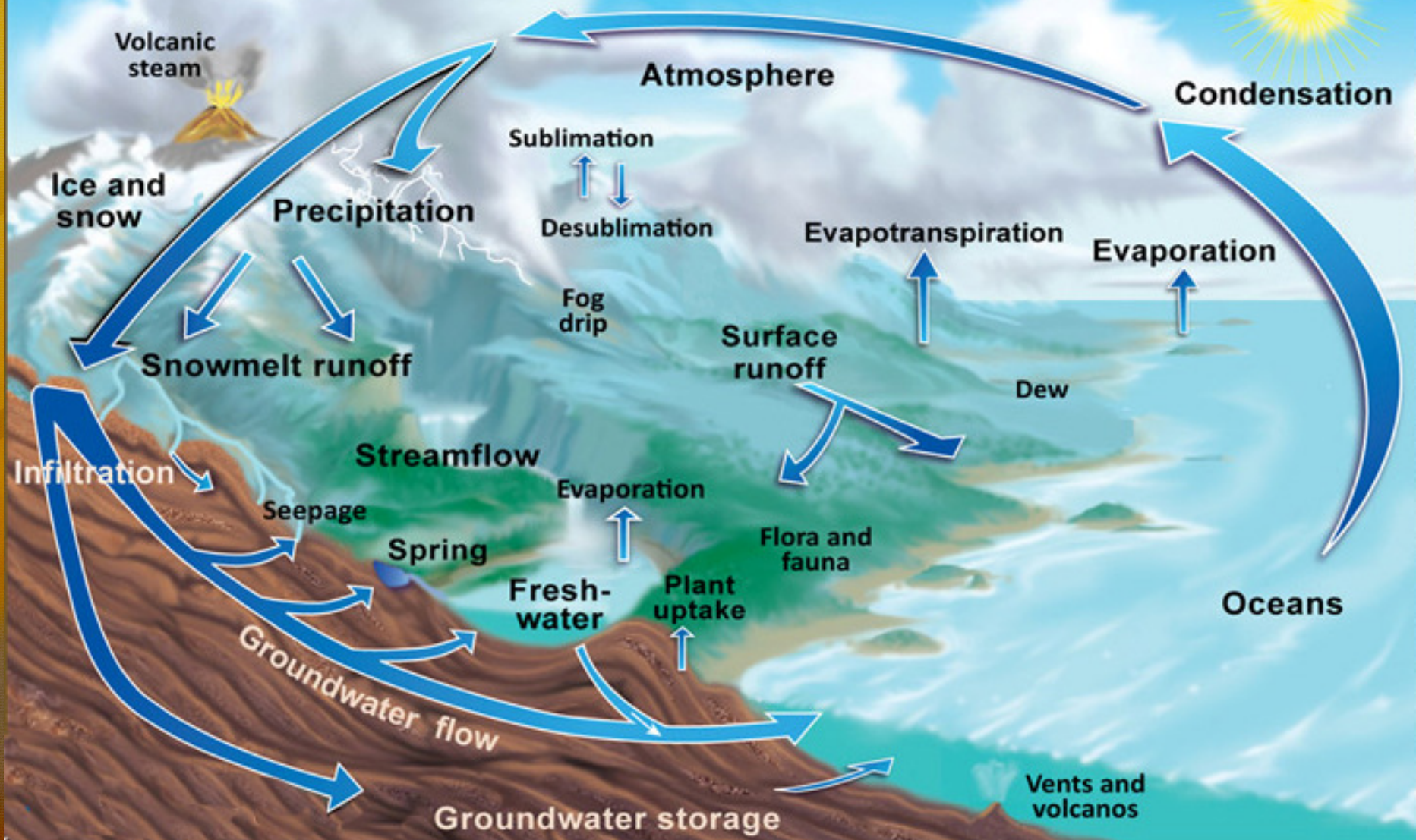
#### e. **Oceanography** Does Not Have the Answer, 1:7

Eccl. 1:7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

# The Hydrologic Cycle



# The Water Cycle



**f. Sociology** Does Not Have the Answer, 1:8a “All things *are* full of labour...”

- ❖ *Empiricism (roughly characterized)*: opinions are reasonable if, and only if, they are **supported by evidence that is ultimately grounded in experience**.
- ❖ ‘Experience’, here, can mean everyday observation using one or more of the five senses, but it is also meant to include rigorous scientific experimentation.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/history-art/david-hume/content-section-3.2>

**g. Psychology** Does Not Have the Answer, 1:8b “...man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.”

## h. Archaeology Does Not Have the Answer, 1:9

Eccl. 1:9 The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is no new thing* under the sun.

- ❖ Eccl. 1:9 implies a revelation of the Law of Conservation of Energy.
- ❖ The **law of conservation of energy** states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed - only converted from one form of energy to another.
- ❖ The Law of Conservation of Energy is also known as the “Second Law of Thermodynamics.”

## i. Philosophy Does Not Have the Answer, 1:10

Eccl. 1:10 Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

Acts 17:21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

## 2. A Frustrating Sequel, 1:11

a. The Frustrating Incompleteness of Our History Books, 1:11a “*There is no remembrance of former things...*”

b. The Frustrating Inference of Our History Books, 1:11b “...neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after.”

## Conclusion

Psa. 71:9 Cast me not off **in the time of old age**; forsake me not when my strength faileth. ...

18 Now also **when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until** I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, *and* thy power to every one *that* is to come.



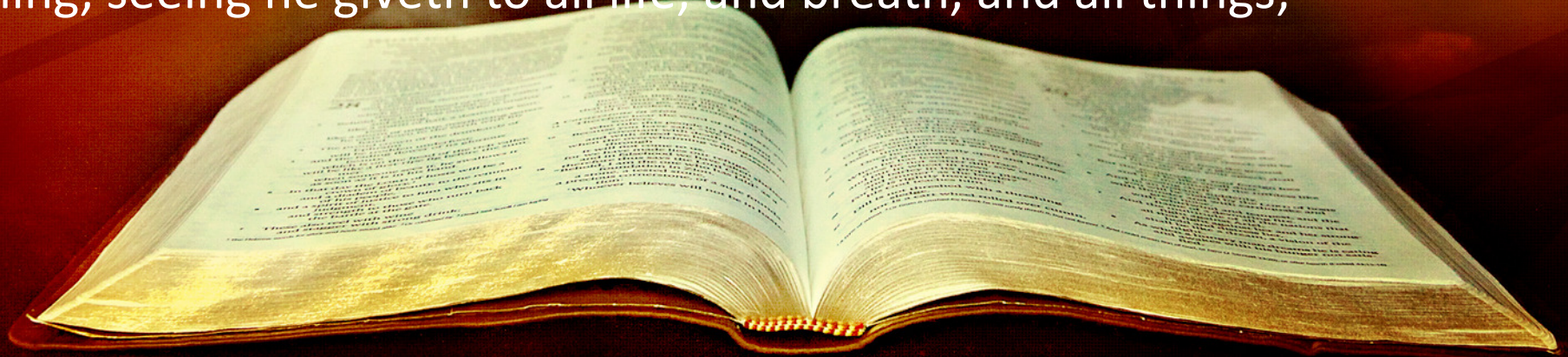
Acts 17:21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, **I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.**

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;





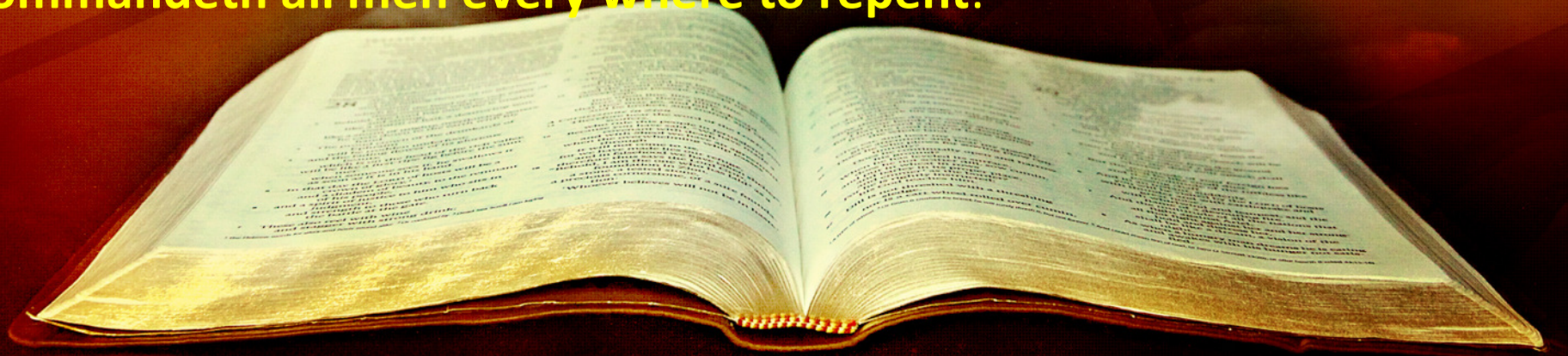
26 And hath **made of one blood all nations** of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28 For **in him we live, and move, and have our being**; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And **the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:**



31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the **which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that man whom he hath ordained***; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

