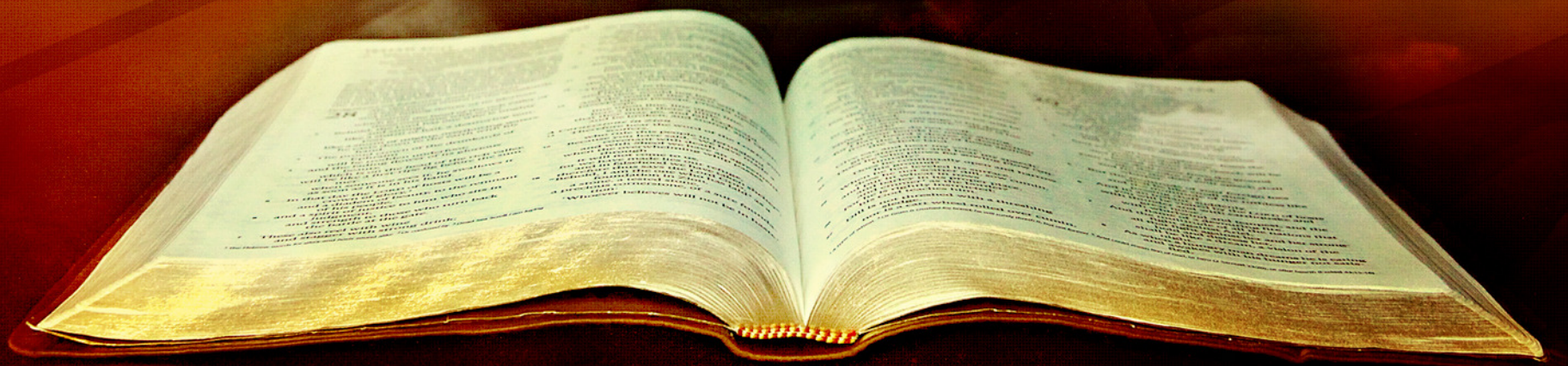


ECCLESIASTES

Ecccl. 1:12-18



Eccl. 1:12 I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

13 And I gave 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.

14 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.

16 I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all *they* that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

18 For in much wisdom *is* much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

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

I. THE PREACHER’S SUBJECT, 1:1-11

A. The Preacher, 1:1 (Solomon)

B. The Problem, 1:2-3

C. The Process, 1:4-11

1. A Frustrating Sequence, 1:4-10

a. Anthropology Does Not Have the Answer, 1:4a

b. Geology Does Not Have the Answer, 1:4b

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

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

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

f. Sociology Does Not Have the Answer, 1:8a

g. Psychology Does Not Have the Answer, 1:8b

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

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

2. A Frustrating Sequel, 1:11

a. The Frustrating Incompleteness of Our History Books, 1:11a

b. The Frustrating Inference of Our History Books, 1:11b

Metaphysics and Cosmology were involved in 1:5-8. Now we move on to axiology:

Axiology is the branch of philosophy dealing with values, as those of ethics, aesthetics, or religion. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/axiology?s=t>

The term axiology comes from the Greek *axios* or **worth**. In philosophy, axiology is that field that concerns itself with the subject of value and all pro and con assertions. In the context of worldview, your axiology consists of your beliefs about the nature of value and what is valuable: what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. **Virtually all elements of your worldview, from your epistemology to your anthropology, are intimately related to your axiology and it is your beliefs about the value of things that are the proximate cause for most of your behavior.** <http://web.engr.oregonstate.edu/~funkk/Personal/worldview.html>

II. THE PREACHER'S SERMON, 1:12-10:20

A. Things He Had Sought, 1:12—2:26

1. His Persistent Search, 1:12-2:11

a. The World of Thought, 1:12-18

(1) His First Quest: To Exploit His Wisdom, 1:12-15

(a) What He Declared, 1:12

Eccl. 1:12 I the Preacher **was** king over Israel in Jerusalem.

- ❖ The repetition of verse 1:1 found in 1:12 is a method for driving home the veracity of the identification of Solomon in Jerusalem (in case anyone missed it!)

Shakespeare wrote, in *Julius Caesar*, Act 3, Scene 2, (Mark Anthony speaking...)

“The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones.”

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/799328-the-evil-that-men-do-lives-after-them-the-good>

(b) What He Determined, 1:13a “And **I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom** concerning all *things* that are **done under heaven...**”

- Solomon gave his heart, NOT to seek God and His will, but, “**...to seek and search out by wisdom** concerning all *things* that are **done under heaven...**”

Mt. 6:21 For **where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

Original Word: חִכְמָה

Transliteration: chokmah

Definition: wisdom (**common sense**) skillful, subtle, wise hearted...

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/2451.htm>

(c) What He Displayed, 1:13b “...this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.”

(d) What He Discovered, 1:14-15

i. Man’s Works Are Disappointing, 1:14

Eccl. 1:14 I have seen all the works that are done **under the sun**; and, behold, **all is vanity and vexation of spirit.**

ii. Man's Works Are Dismaying, 1:15

❖ The Bentness of Things, 1:15a “*That which is crooked cannot be made straight...*”

Job 14:14 If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

Job 15:14 What *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

- Mankind is crooked. The world is crooked – the reason = the “god of this world.”

Isa. 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, **even leviathan that crooked serpent**; and he shall slay the dragon that *is* in the sea.

2 Cor. 4:4 In whom **the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

❖ The Bankruptcy of Things, 1:15b “...and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.”

- The barren woman lacks pregnancy;
- The missionary lacks money;
- The orphan lacks parents;
- The government lacks integrity;
- The movie stars lack morals;
- The school system lacks God;
- The desert lacks water;
- The news media lacks honesty;
- The religions systems lack truth;
- The compromising churches lack power.

The futility of man's limitations is perplexing: "I know nothing except the fact that of my ignorance." – Socrates

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/socrates_137471

(2) His Further Quest: To Explore His Wisdom, 1:16-18

(a) His Success, 1:16

Eccl. 1:16 I **communed with mine own heart**, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all *they* that have been before me in Jerusalem: **yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.**

- Solomon was contemplating, and his thoughts are revealed:

Psa. 13:2 **How long shall I take counsel in my soul**, *having* sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

- The empiricism discussed last week is manifested again at the end of verse 16: “...yea, my heart had **great experience** of wisdom and knowledge.”
- *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>

(b) His Search, 1:17-18

i. His Goal 1:17a “And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly...”

- Solomon gave his heart, NOT to seek God and His will, but, “...to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly...”

ii. His Gloom, 1:17b “...I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.”

B. His Grief, 1:18

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

Conclusion

Jas. 3:13 Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

