

ECCLESIASTES

Ecccl. 2:12-16



Eccl. 2:12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the king? *even* that which hath been already done.

13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

14 The wise man's eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.

15 Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also *is* vanity.

16 For *there is* no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now *is* in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise *man*? as the fool.

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

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

b. The World of Thrills, 2:1-3

(1) Life’s Entertaining Thrills, 2:1-2

(a) Solomon’s Decision, 2:1a-b

i. To Seek Things to Make Him Laugh, 2:1a

ii. To Seek Things to Massage His Lusts, 2:1b

(b) Solomon’s Disappointment, 2:1c “...and, behold, this also *is* vanity.”

(c) Solomon’s Declaration, 2:2

i. The World of Thrills is Dangerous, 2:2a

ii. The World of Thrills is Deceptive, 2:2b

(2) Life's Enslaving Thrills, 2:3

(a) Turning to Wine as an Intended Source of Intoxication, 2:3a

(b) Turning to Wine as an Imagined Source of Inspiration, 2:3b

c. The World of Things, 2:4-11

(1) What He Accomplished, 2:4-6

(a) Magnificent Palaces, 2:4a

(b) Magnificent Parklands, 2:4b-5

(c) Magnificent Pools, 2:6

(2) What He Accumulated, 2:7-8

(a) All Kinds of People, 2:7a

(b) All Kinds of Possessions, 2:7b-8a

i. Countless Cattle, 2:7b

ii. Cold Cash, 2:8a "

(c) All Kinds of Power, 2:8b

(d) All Kinds of Performers, 2:8c

(3) What He Avowed, 2:9-10

(a) That He Retained All His Discretion, 2:9

(b) That He Realized All His Desires, 2:10

(4) What He Acknowledged, 2:11

(a) His Enterprise Considered, 2:11a

(b) His Emptiness Confessed, 2:11b

Last week we saw Solomon's accumulation of palaces, parklands, pools, people, possessions, power, performers, etc. He described himself most flamboyantly:

Eccl. 2:4 **I made me** great works; **I builded 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:

7 **I got me** servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

8 **I gathered me** also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: **I gat** me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, *as* musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

- ❖ Solomon was not shy in making pretentious statements about himself.

Eccl. 2:9 **So I was great**, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

- ❖ Solomon revealed his selfish carnality via hedonistic pleasures:

Eccl. 2:10 And **whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy;**

- ❖ Solomon then revealed the vanity of it all as he closed out with Eccl. 2:11:

Eccl. 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all *was* vanity and vexation of spirit, and *there was* no profit under the sun.

❖ With this as a background, consider Solomon's evaluation of his investigation of pleasure as we look at our passage for tonight.

2. His Pessimistic Summary, 2:12-26

a. The Barrenness of It All, 2:12-16

(1) The Turning Point in His Life, 2:12-14

(a) Why He Turned, 2:12

i. To Make a Comparison, 2:12a "And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly:

- ❖ Solomon takes an honest look at himself to what he had discovered thus far: “And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly:”
- ❖ Solomon’s purpose was to gain a better vision of himself – “...to behold...”

Original Word: רָאָה

Transliteration: raah

Definition: to see, look at, inspect, perceive, consider
(Qal)

- to look at, see, regard, look after, see after, learn about, observe, watch, look upon, look out, find out;
- to see, observe, consider, look at, give attention to, discern, distinguish;
- to look at, gaze at.

❖ Solomon's comparison was disheartening to himself – "...wisdom, and madness, and folly:"

Original Word: הוֹלָלָה

Transliteration: holelah

Definition: madness. – only used four times, all in the book of Ecclesiastes

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/1947.htm>

Ecc. 1:17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know **madness** and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

Ecc. 2:12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and **madness**, and folly: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the king? *even* that which hath been already done.

Ecc. 7:25 I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness *and* **madness**:

Eccl. 9:3 This *is* an evil among all *things* that are done under the sun, that *there is* one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and **madness** *is* in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

Original Word: סִכְלוּת

Transliteration: sikluth

Definition: folly – only used seven times, all in the book of Ecclesiastes

<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5531.htm>

Eccl. 1:17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and **folly**: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

Eccl. 2:3 I sought in mine heart to give 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. ...

12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and **folly**: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the king? *even* that which hath been already done.

13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth **folly**, as far as light excelleth darkness.

Eccl. 7:25 I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason *of things*, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of **foolishness** *and* madness:

Eccl. 10:1 Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: *so doth* a little **folly** him that is in reputation for wisdom *and* honour. ...

13 The beginning of the words of his mouth *is* **foolishness**: and the end of his talk *is* mischievous madness.

ii. To Mature a Conviction, 2:12b

“...for what *can* the man *do* that cometh after the king?
even that which hath been already done.”

- ❖ Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, had little hope to be more successful as king than his father was.
- ❖ Solomon was the G.O.A.T. He set the bar too high for anyone to reach.

GOAT. A phrase where we have a phrase with four words beginning with G, O, A, T. This stands for **greatest of all time**. The absolute best, the absolute best at something. <https://rachelsenglish.com/american-slang-bae-goat-af/>

(a) What He Testified, 2:13-14

i. Discretion is Inestimable, 2:13-14a

“Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. 14 The wise man's eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness...”

❖ From the practical, intellectual perspective, “wisdom” trounces “folly” regarding value.

Prov. 8:11 For **wisdom is better than rubies**; and **all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.**

Prov. 16:16 **How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!** and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Eccl. 9:18 **Wisdom is better than weapons of war:** but one sinner destroyeth much good.

❖ The difference between “wisdom” and “folly” is comparable to seeing versus blindness.

ii. Death is inevitable, 2:14b “...and I myself perceived also that **one event happeneth to them all.**”

❖ Death is an equal opportunity, inevitable, occurrence to all, just waiting to happen.

Heb. 9:27 And as **it is appointed unto men once to die,** but after this the judgment:

(2) The Turning Point in His Logic, 2:15-16

i. Soon to be Finished, 2:15

Eccl. 2:15 Then said I in my heart, **As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me**; and why was I then more wise? Then **I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.**

- ❖ Regardless of one's contribution to the world...all die.
- ❖ Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Chairman Mao, along with Churchill, JFK, Lincoln, etc. = all dead.
- ❖ Charlie Chaplin, Larry, Moe, and Curly, Jerry Lewis, Don Rickles, along with John Wayne, Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe, Robin Williams, Kenny Rogers, etc. = all dead.

ii. Soon to be Forgotten, 2:16

Eccl. 2:16 For **there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever**; seeing that which now *is in the days to come shall all be forgotten*. And **how dieth the wise man? as the fool**.

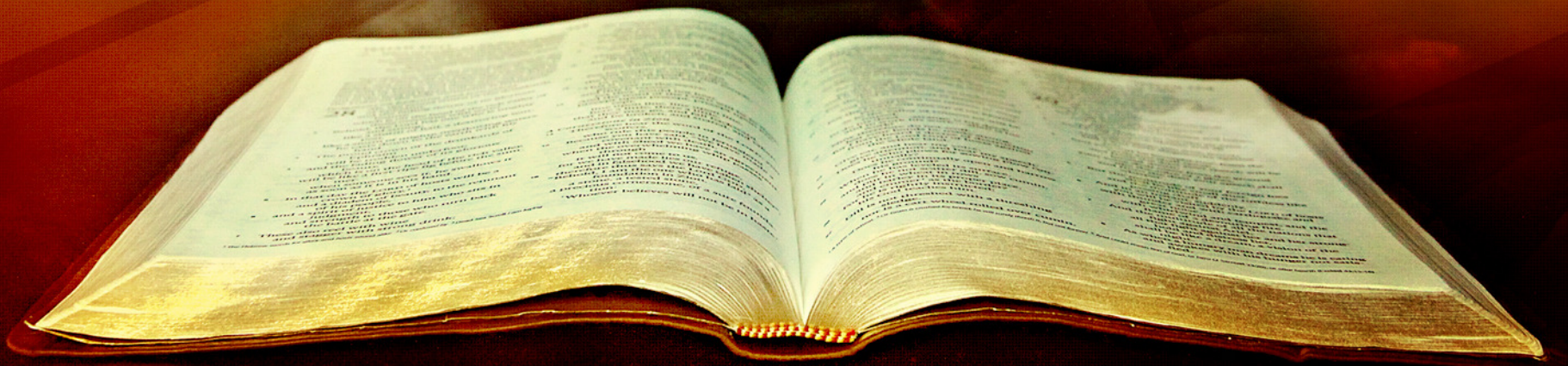
- ❖ Solomon faced the harsh reality of life – whether one is wise or is a fool...ALL DIE and all, eventually, will be forgotten.

Eccl. 2:17 **Therefore I hated life**; because **the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me**: for **all is vanity and vexation of spirit**.

Conclusion

Only One Life, Twill Soon Be Past
by C.T Studd

Only one life, the still small voice,
Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,
And to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.



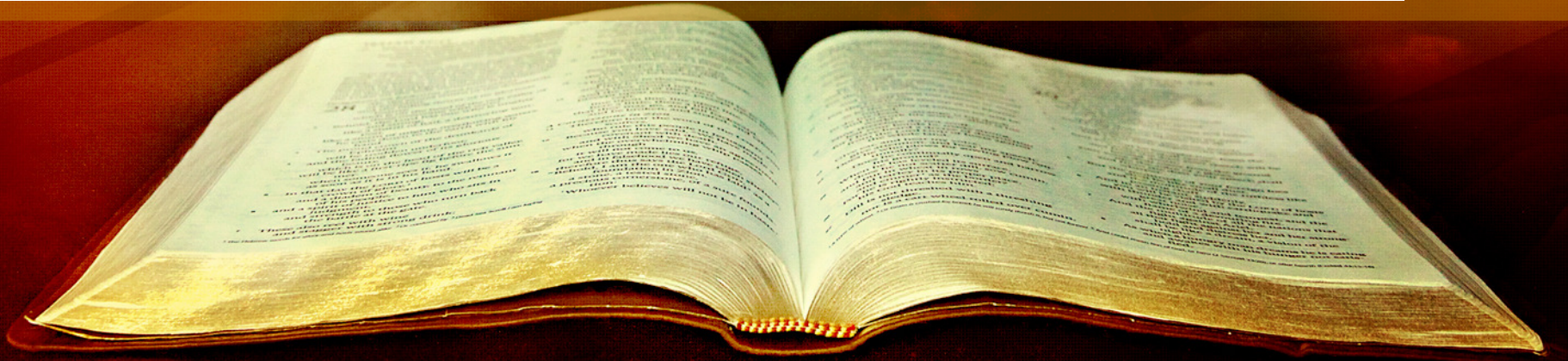
When this bright world would tempt me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way,
Then help me Lord with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.



Oh let my love with fervor burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.
And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,
If the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee

<https://paulhockley.com/2016/05/24/quote-only-one-life-twill-soon-be-past-poem-by-c-t-studd/>

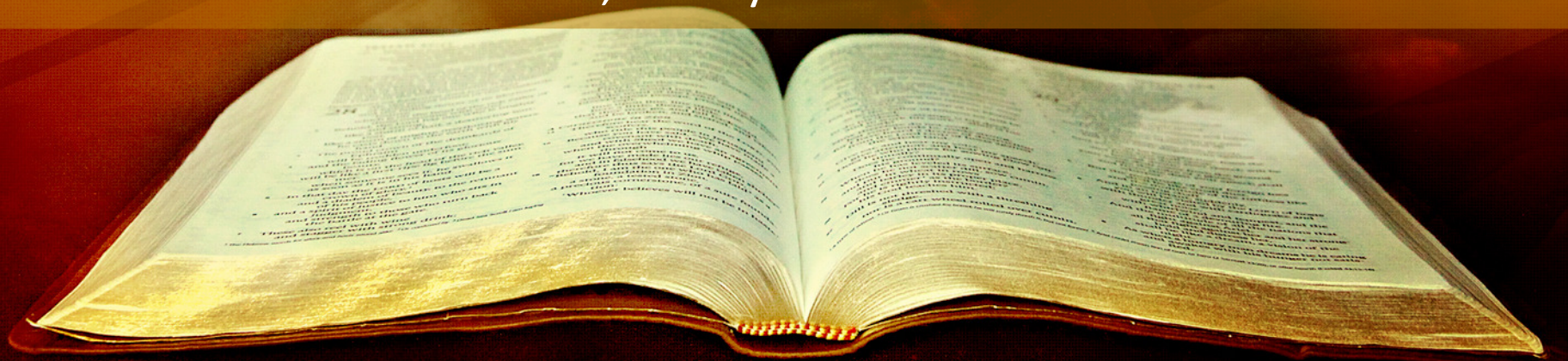


Jas. 4:14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. **For what is your life?** It is even a vapour, that appeareth **for a little time**, and then vanisheth away.

Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, **Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.**

Jn. 10:10 “...I am come **that they might have life**, and that they might have *it more abundantly.*”

Jn. 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life:** no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.



Col. 3:1 **If** ye then be risen with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 **Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When **Christ, who is our life**, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

