



August 15, 2025

Reflections from the book of Ecclesiastes

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

Often, after a long day in front of the computer, driving and/or visiting brethren, or working on details perhaps for an article or sermon preparatory research, I end my day by sitting in my chair in my "man-cave" or in warmer weather on my back porch and read a chapter in the book of Ecclesiastes.

There are so many words of wisdom in the book and some challenging statements to ponder. Some take the book in a cynical way. Sort of like the old Alfred E. Newman character from Mad Magazine. He said, "What me worry? Nothing is going to turn out alright!" That's a pretty negative focus folks, but many fall prey to that perspective.

The book opens up with, "*Vanity of vanities,*" says the Preacher; "*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*" *What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?*" (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3)

People come and go. Possessions are accumulated and then are passed down to someone else or taken to the trash. Cities come and go. Nations come and go. Leaders of nations come and go. The cycle continues.

Whether one is rich or poor the same event will overtake them. They will all eventually die. No matter how much human wisdom and knowledge one has accumulated it won't prevent old age and death from coming to him or her.

Life often seems unfair. Bad things happen to good people. Some evil people seem to escape the consequences of their bad behavior.

There is an important simple repeated instruction. *"Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God."* (Ecclesiastes 2:24)

This is basically repeated in Ecclesiastes 3:13, 5:18 and 8:15. Generally eating and drinking is something we enjoy doing with family and friends. It's important to maintain these relationships. One of the greatest assets of any congregation is the getting together of the Ekklesia or family of God to eat, and draw together in solid edifying fellowship.

God also directed the first humans to engage in work and labor. *"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it."* (Genesis 2:15)

God is a creator and a worker. Jesus stated, *"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."* (John 5:17 KJV) *"My Father is still working even now, and so I am working."* (BBE) Our Creator intended that you and I would find fulfillment in our work. If we are retired and no longer working for pay, we should find something to do to be working, or busy, even if at a lower level of time.

Solomon expands on this later in the book. *"Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; For God has already accepted your works. Let your garments always be white, and let your head lack no oil. Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."* (Ecclesiastes 9:7-10). As a side-note, this is one of my wife's favorite verses.

Solomon may have lived with one wife briefly, but he gave in to acquiring multiple wives who led him into idolatry. But, that is a subject to discuss for another time.

We see Ecclesiastes as a review by Solomon near the end of his life of lessons he has learned. White garments symbolize righteous and lawful actions. Oil can be

symbolic of God's spirit, and also of receiving blessings and honor from the one hosting the meal.

God wants us to properly take advantage of the simple but important things of this life while we can. Family, fellowship with friends and family, and meaningful work and labor. Solomon experienced some of this, but fell short in many of his relationships.

Might I suggest you take time out of your busy lives, and carefully, prayerfully, read and meditate, ponder, muse and consider this book of Ecclesiastes God has blessed us with for review and edification? You'll be glad you did!

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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