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Nothing

A Commentary on Ecclesiastes

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Bibliography:

*Ecclesiastes Bartholomew
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COMENTARY ON ECCLESIASTES 12:13 THE VANITY OF HADES

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INTRODUCTION

What is this vanity, and is it a part of the Christian life?

Is vanity only something that has to do with the heathen and those who are lost? Or is the reason vanity is the subject of Ecclesiastes because Solomon is exalting the life of the heathen? This commentary will take the position that vanity often becomes inseparably integrated with Christianity. How does it happen that this vanity Solomon speaks of comes to life, and how should we understand it? These are complex questions that can never be fully answered, yet Solomon has made those points come to light which are of the most importance.

The subject of Ecclesiastes and the reward of vanity is nothing.

For this commentary I am using “nothing” for the title because the idea of nothing is what the book struggles with. Some people have argued to say: “*Surely the book of Ecclesiastes is not about nothing.*” For these people, I would have to say they have not yet come to the same place as Solomon, and what he is purposely seeing the world for in Ecclesiastes within this perspective. Perhaps these people should read Solomon again. Eccl. 1:9, 11; 12:7-8 “... *there is no new thing under the sun. ... 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. ... Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.*” What we end up with in Ecclesiastes for all our worldly efforts is wood, hay, and stubble. “*The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after*” Revelations 18:11ff. Here it is for these things alone, and the loss of them that there is mourning. It is the idea of these things that is the subject matter.

The creation of Adam and his resulting encounters with vanity.

In Genesis 1 it says: “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...*” It may be that there was no real creation to speak of before God made the Heavens and the Earth. If “all is vanity” now, how was there ever any need for it until God created man as a living being? There was marriage (Eve came from Adam) before the fall. But this is something from this world that passes away. Now here in Ecclesiastes we are entering creation, setting our eyes on the ends of the world as an end for ourselves, Christ and His works are not the subject, our works are predominately the subject. It is from the perspective from one of God’s elect. What we are left with for all time and infinity is a misplaced hope, nothing, a void without form or purpose, a vacuum, infinite space. Perhaps vanity will be a thing of the past in the world to come, it seems that it can be if there is no longer anything like marriage and foods in the way we understand them presently, 1 Cor. 6.13.

In Christ and departing from the world of vanity. A process given to faith and free will.

The worldly things that are given to us in Christ are to be recognized as the gifts of God. God has indeed given men an overflowing overabundance of good things. Yet, 1 John 2 tells us that we cannot love the world and love God, or as it says in Phil 3, that these things are not so that we could set our minds on them nor put them before God thus making them god. And this is even true with marriage, 1 Cor. 7:29-30. These things are here so that we may see God and the greater gifts that are in Christ Himself are far above His creation, Romans 1:18ff. The world is given to us to occupy ourselves, to keep us out of trouble at times, or creating troubles for other people. Proverbs 30 tells of God giving to us that we not be vain nor take God in vain. We can therefore conclude that God gives us things of this world that we may not be distracted by similar things adverse to God’s commandments. Ultimately however, those unseen things that are in Christ

before the creation of the world are the great and perfect gift. These things that are in Christ do not compare with those things. The things in Christ and the judgment that Solomon speaks of are the things that last. To get there, all these other things that we are wrestling with here, the wood, hay and stubble, with their own faulty conclusions, must be allowed to fade away as we love God with all our heart soul and mind.

Note 1 John 2:16-17 *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof”* and 2 Peter 3:3-4, 10-13 *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”* Phil. 3:17- 21 *“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”*

The point here has not to do with creation being evil or only one point in time. However, men have their hope tied in with creation, creation therefore is in view. For all practical purposes there need not be any creation in heaven any more then there was in the wilderness with Moses or that time eternal and forever before Adam. Note that the promised land was not that land that they came to physically, Hebrews 11:9-16: *“By faith he [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise . . . For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . . These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”* Man makes an idol out of creation, Romans 1:18ff. Yet God’s creation is here to bring us to God: Acts 14:17 *“[God] left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”*

The works of Christ continue after we return to paradise.

In the New Heavens And Earth, after sin and Satan have been removed are we again in the Garden of Eden where everything will return back to the way it was before the fall? In Christ what has changed is that marriage is now with Him and no longer with Eve and this world. Therefore, not only has the vanity ended but the works that continue are no longer works of this world. In other words our union with Christ is a process that begun with Adam and this world. The change happens in Christ; it happens in the world to come. Vanity is something that happens in this world and not the next. *“The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. The First man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth: earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.”* 1 Cor. 15:45.

THE KING MANIFESTO

God said Israel had a heavenly King.

Israel said they wanted a King like the nations around them;

The purpose of this essay is to consider

how vanity is a legitimate part of the Christian life when
God's people follow a man.

What is this all this about?: Israel said they wanted a king to be as all the nations around them. But God wanted Israel to subdue all the nations and their kings that were around them! If Israel already had a king, what was the reason for them in getting another king, an earthly king sometimes just as wicked as the nations around them?

The reason must have to do with the man's love for vanity. This was the same reason Adam followed Eve. Wherever this vanity is allowed the vanity will multiply. Of all the kings Israel had Solomon is known by Ecclesiastes to be the king who was allowed to understand the vanity and interpret the error. This desire to have a king was another form of going back to Egypt, not physically but spiritually, 1 Sam. 8:8. Their relation to the king was that they would die for this king or be killed. As long as they loved their king, their king would love them. They would have a relationship with this king based on vanity, it would involve work and consistent attention to the will of a man serving his worldly desires.

The Son wanted to glorify the Father. Man wanted to glorify a man, even if this meant that they would have to be slaves to support his vanities. They were guaranteed the following troubles in 1 Samuel 8:10-21:

*And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. **11**And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. **12**And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. **13**And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. **14**And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. **15**And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. **16**And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. **17**He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. **18**And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not bear you in that day. **19**Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; **20**That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. **21**And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. **22**And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.*

What Samuel promised them is that their lives would be intimately wrapped up with a man and his vanity, his desires, and his work, that they would have a king like Solomon. Apparently man feels more comfortable aligning himself with another man, than with God and God's desires and wants. This is one of the reasons people get married. There is a delusion here that there will be something better. But all it is, is more of the same, more vanity. There is only one true King, one God, one way. The one thing that all this proves is that man loves vanity for the sake of forgetting God. Here man can, perhaps, forget all about the problems and the reasoning of why the nation is in turmoil, a king can wrestle with this insanity. And if they do not like the king, there can be a civil war or an insurrection. You can complain to a king and he will understand you are a man and perhaps give you what you ask for.

In having a king Israel supposed they could align themselves more so to the likeness of what is in man than to what is in God. Of all things, Israel wanted to be free of accountability to God, they sought to rather be accountable to a man.

History: Rejecting Jesus is not the same as rejecting Samuel. In having a king Israel did get a king who was not only worldly but also many times Godless. Eventually Jesus would come, who would be the King of Kings. But Jesus, unlike Israel's earthly kings, who were only at best a shadow, He was the Lord of Heaven, and His desires were only to glorify His Father. Psalm Two says:

*¹Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
²The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,
³Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
⁴He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.
⁵Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
⁶Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
⁷I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
⁸Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
⁹Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
¹⁰Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
¹¹Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
¹²Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Psalm 19 says:

*The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*

When Jesus came Israel rejected Him again, their true King for a king who would come in his own name, the Antichrist. The Antichrist is not only wrong because he is a man, but more so because his office usurps Israel's rightful King, John 5:43,44. By this, this makes him the antithesis of Jesus. Israel crucified their king, and by this they their house was left unto them as desolate, Luke 13:35. If Israel had not crucified their king, than Jesus would not have left their house desolate. But Jesus said that his kingdom is not now of this world, else his servants would be fighting. So this seems to imply that man does not make Christ king without a spiritual resurrection to a resurrected kingdom. And God knew this in advance, that Jesus would have to die to bring resurrection life.

As Israel wished to follow a king. Jesus said in John 5:43: *"I am come in my Fathers name, and ye receiue me not: if another shall come in his owne Name, him ye will receiue. How can ye beleue, which receiue honour one of another, & seeke not the honour that commeth from God oneh?"* Whatever and whoever Israel made up their mind to follow, other than Christ, especially not to follow Christ's warnings, this is Antichrist. His goal to fight for worldly power and wealth stands in opposition to Jesus. I believe that such a person in Israel in AD 70 of 2 Thess. 2:4 refers to the thinking of the people and their rejection of Christ more than any particular man. That "Spirit" of Antichrist and 1 John 4:3 is the key. 1 John 4:3a *"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come: ..."* This is the same as it is with other types in the Bible, such as the whore of Babylon etc. That person who is said *"who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God; shewing himself that he is God"*.

Today: Today we do not have kings in Israel, but we exalt men to places where only Christ should be. When we make one elder a pastor, in doing so he becomes a king (this is un-Biblical). 2 Peter 5:1-3 says: *"The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for dishonest gain, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock."*

Christians are like sheep, and often they fail to remain within the thinking of the true fold. Men will interpret the truth based on other things other than what is reasonable. Not to contradict John 10, man will to some degree prefer to be told what to think by what he will allow for other reasons than the facts. Man cannot help himself in this. And the problem goes on; it is something of vanity within the heart of man that seeks to nullify the word. Man does not always accept it, he also naturally rejects it.

We are born with a mother and father, and then man seeks a wife, and has children. All these things which make up a person's life have to do with responsibilities to other people much like ourselves. Vanity can be multiplied. And when Israel asks for a king, they are asking for a man like themselves, they are choosing vanity and likewise than God chooses vanity for them.

THE PROMISED LAND MANIFESTO

The point of this essay is to define succinctly how, why and when vanity comes into play by possession of a physical Promised Land.

The Promised Land and necessary God ordained vanity in kingdom.

God brought His people to the Promised Land through the wilderness, the same land promised to Abraham. This land was a shadow of the land we are to come to through the resurrection according to Hebrews 11:13-16. Now this land, that is in the earth is subject to drought, there is seedtime, harvests, and wars all of which have to do with serious labor. And this is just as it had to do with Adam in the Garden of Eden. And all these labors that have to do with the physical land are labors that must be done again. And occupying the Promised Land is something done corporately not individually. So your own righteousness or wickedness is irrelevant to the fact that there will most likely be vanity in the land. In other words, as long as you are dealing only with the physical land you are dealing only with a shadow of the Promised Land, and are therefore always subject to vanity as long as you need to occupy it. If you die in a war, if you die in the field, if you die in a property dispute you died in vain.

On the other hand, the physical land is a shadow and a measuring line that indicates if you as a people are inside or outside of the blessing and favor of God. If you are among exiles from the Promised Land, then you know you are potentially outside of that happy relationship with God that you were created for.

The Promised Land was instituted to keep God's people busy in one worldly thing so they would not be distracted by the many other things that are in the world. There were vineyards to attend to, there were homes to build, there were guilds that needed to be argued, there were

judgments that needed to be made, and there was the temple and synagogues to be built. God did not wish to keep His people in the wilderness, even if that wilderness was Mt. Sinai. A place that was closer to God. And I think it was. The wilderness had no distractions, the wilderness is where God met with Israel, the wilderness was where God fought the battles for the people.

The tree of the world, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In the land there is good worldly works and there is evil worldly works. One can be a carpenter and enjoy the work or one can be a tax collector for the Romans and frustrate the people. One can be a tent maker or one can be a prostitute. One can be a honest businessman or one can be a dishonest businessman. All these things are works done in the Promised Land, and none of them has anything to do with salvation. Yet there are works in the world that can be done for God and there are works that can be done for your own reasons. The greatest works are the works of the kingdom, which Jesus admonished Peter that if Peter loved Him, he would feed his sheep and give up the fishing business again.

There is tension between our seeking the Promised Land and our seeking the Kingdom to come.

God's people were to maintain the land and drive out all the heathen from the land. After the King and the Christ came, and the kingdom of God was at hand what happened for Jerusalem was irrelevant. After Christ came there was tension between being an Israelite and being a Christian. One no longer had to be an Israelite and worship in Jerusalem. And if you remained in the Promised Land after Christ gave the sign to follow Him out of the city, then it was a matter of not following Christ. After that point in time if you were still in the city no one could leave and be considered a faithful Israelite. You could not leave physically.

Jesus said in Luke 4:24-30 *“And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.”* The tension here is obvious, between shadow and substance, between the preceded kingdom of men and the true kingdom in Christ. And there is also the example of the rich young ruler. Jesus asked if he was willing to leave everything and follow Him, and that would include all that had to do with his place in the Promised Land.

THE MARRAGE MANIFESTO

The point of this essay is to define more succinctly how, why and when vanity comes into play within the life of the Christian. Marriage is the subject here only because Scripture shows how marriage is both of this vain world and only a shadow of the next.

Marriage and necessary God ordained vanity in the life of the Christian.

What is wrong with marriage in the resurrection.

Marriage in and of itself is good. Although it can be argued to be materialistic, that it has to do with some kind of mutual ownership for the sake of the world. The Scripture says in Matthew 19:29 *“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”* Yet the idea of worldly marriage is something outside the resurrection. The Scripture says in Romans 7:2 that at death one is loosed from marriage.

What is left behind is that eros love, which Greek term for love is not mentioned in Scripture yet is directly applied in such verses as 1 Cor. 7:9, *“... for it is better to marry than to burn”*.

Marriage is nullified on the grounds for having many heavenly “wives” as well as being like the angels and united to only to Christ. This does not mean there will be any less devotion, only more devotion to many “brothers”, “children”, and “wives”. There will be no jealousy within the church because there is no relationship for devotion to anything else but God. Any covetousness or jealousy is for the love of the Lord. There is no longer any room for exclusive relationships between individuals. There is no separation from that relationship between God and His church. There is no longer any vanity.

What is materialistic about marriage.

Here I am using the idea of marriage, seeking a husband or a wife, as a term for seeking anything else materialistic in this world or that which requires stewardship. And I think this concept of marriage as something earthy and an extension of the self and materialism is workable in limited ways. If covetousness is always idolatry then Marriage on the basis of eros love, where it not given to God alone, is readily subject to being earthy, and is subject to the things of this world given to idolatry, Col. 3:5. [1.] Scripture outlines and defines all that has to do with the marriage contract in relation to its physical limitations as in relation to this world and not the next. The devotion to marriage, and ordained for other things other than God Himself, is a perfect touchstone to define everything God given that is in partly worldly and materialistic. When you read “marriage” here, you can also read into it the word “world” or understand that the pleasures of this world and materialism are also involved.

Marriage ends in death and you cannot get married in heaven. Being a good soul mate will not get you into heaven, Matt. 24:38, 1 Cor. 7:5. In the Bible marriage involves a price and a dowry and has the responsibility of ownership. In marriage there is commitment for life to another person to care for them. To take on the contract requires commitment, not only to one’s spouse but also to the world to be able to provide whatever is necessary materially to keep ones wife and children healthy and happy. It is a job that all has to do with providing things to others from within this world. In Deut. 5:21 it is written *“Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour’s.”* Or Proverbs 18:22 *“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.”* Or Proverbs 31:6 and 10 *“Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. ... Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”*. Scripture defines marriage as the devotion to divided interests. It is dependent on how much or how little attention one gives to the marriage, so that it will function rightly. Material possessions can be understood to have equal value to a husband or a wife, Luke 14:16-21. Marriage or divorce is often caused by finances.

What is forever good in marriage.

It is possible to end a marriage Scripturally, but in doing so one could deny the faith, loose the right to remarry, as well as to put their partner in the position to commits adultery as well as be responsible for that adultery. So there are spiritual aspects to marriage as well, and those spiritual aspects of marriage also have to do with the next world. As times goes on, for marriage to last there can be agape love. Marriage is a lesson and a shadow of our union and devotion to God.

The tree of the world, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

The one thing and the only thing in this world that stays consistent is the character and opinions of God, and this is why there will be a judgment, Eccl. 12:14. This stays true in the Christians mind always, and in this through Christ he sees by faith a life free of sin, 1 John 3:9. All our worldly ideas outside this New Jerusalem cannot enter there. We must abandon the opinions and plans that fall to a prey for the devil while we are yet in the way, that are contrary to the opinions and plans of God. You’re not going to change God’s mind, and your own true mind that sits with Christ in heavenly places is not going to change either. Yet our stubborn sinful nature wishes to establish that old world [1 John 2:16, 17] again and again, even at the same time knowing that God will destroy it forever by fire, [2 Peter 3:10-15]. That old world is not the

materialistic world itself, but more exactly our faulty feelings toward it which glorify it, rather than our Heavenly Father. In Christ all these things are burned up, 2 Peter 3:3-12.

Deut. 6:6 says:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

Proof of the fact that all men are worldly, for those who don't know, is the fact no man loves the Lord with all his heart as we are commanded to, except the Son. Man can either choose to be worldly in their God given pleasures and blessings or they can be worldly in accursed pleasures, or they can be worldly within their ministries. But regardless of how holy Pharisees become, there is no escaping the vanity. All men will set up a conflict between their love for God and their love for the world, the only question is how much and when. Idolatry can be defined as anything we substitute for our happy relationship with Jesus and His holiness and our faith in Him, 1 Cor. 10:6-15. It is not that material things are bad in themselves, but that unless we are doing these things with Jesus or for Jesus, then they take on a world of their own outside of the New Jerusalem.

In this it can be argued that there is some kind of marriage in heaven (but that that marriage would be impossible to define by this world's understanding) that has nothing to do with our satisfactions. The Scriptures do tell us in Matt. 19:29 *"every one that hath forsaken . . . wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."* So in this, yes there is marriage in heaven. Although because they are like the angels (Matt. 22:30) there would not be any procreation or being "given" in marriage. The Lord and His will be there without any conflict with the will and desires of man.

In this world, to avoid greater vanities, this is the reason why marriage as it is, is of necessary good, this is why worldliness can be of the blessings of God and is of necessary good. These things of the world that are good and evil are recognized in Scripture (Proverbs 21:17, Luke 8:14, Ps 16:11, 36:8). Those things of worldly good are they such as hobbies and various business ventures, marriage (1 Cor. 7:29ff.), various foods (Deut. 12:15, 20, 21; 14:26; Rev. 12:12-14), wine (Psalm 104:15, Eph. 5:18, Rom. 14:21). Or on the other hand one can also be worldly through fornication, gambling money, addiction to vices, corruption for the sake of business and those pollutions that will entangle and overcome men and make them at variance to the nature of God.

One of the primary purposes of marriage is to allow the good of the world, to be of great worldly blessing in this life and to have children, Psalm 17:14, 127:3. These other things keep one from sin. 1 Tim. 4:1-3 *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."* Note that Paul says "hypocrisy". All men are worldly to one degree or another. By nature, animals are only worldly.

Some Christians have no idea just how much they are given to compromise in all that they do and think; these are the same people who suppose that their works and their worldly life will help save them at the judgment. These are the people who wish to be judged by their works and be their own Savior. These Christians, if they are Christians at all, need a spiritual encounter with Jesus like that of John Owen or John in Rev 1. Or perhaps they are not carnal sold under sin like Paul (Romans 7:14), perhaps they do not need a resurrection. It is true that we need to be holy to have a right relationship with Jesus, but holiness does not come from us. If you can keep your salvation, if you can lose your salvation then you have yet to be saved, you are not saved.

There is tension between our marriage to Christ and our marriage in this world.

There is also ongoing tension and even struggles here in commitments between this world and the next. Christian worldly contracts require commitment for family and business, that, if they are broken demand compensation. There are worldly pleasures that require commitment and compliance regardless of the fact that they are worldly, 1 Timothy 5:8. On the other hand, Jesus says that if one can escape these things, it is better to do so, but only to follow Him wholly to do so. Jesus did not own a home. And one can escape these things through death as well, and must do so when faced with martyrdom rather than to deny Him. Perhaps this is something that had much more to do with that generation? Luke 9:58ff says:

“And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

And in the case, when one will leave their spouse to worldly ends [2.] it is potentially to remarry [3.]. Jesus agrees that it is good, but only if you can count the cost, and are willing to die completely to your old life.

If you know you are consistent in your love for God and man it is better not to marry and to be friends on a spiritual level with those of the opposite sex and equally with those of your same sex. And it would be safe to say that such ideas are by nature impossible. It is only unless one for some other reason has a strong desire to walk by nature only in the Holy Spirit and not according to the course of this world, it is not impossible with all people. Jesus and Paul suggest it, so it is possible in the Holy Spirit to those who know they can receive it. And it is certainly possible for those who are virgins until a day comes when they realize they should engage in marriage.

“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”
Matt. 19:12

“For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.” 1 Cor. 7:7

“... for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.”
1 Cor. 7:31-33

Paul says it is better not to marry because 1 Corinthians 7:28-35: *“such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. ... he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife ... And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.”*

Therefore there is a great weight set by the Holy Spirit to bring us out of this world altogether to be wholly devoted only to Jesus Christ, and this is in fact the subject of Solomon's next book, The Song of Songs. See the Watchman Nee Commentary. In Song of Songs marriage has nothing to do with materialism and has only to do with everything Holy and Spiritual separated from this world to love God with everything. And if nothing else, it is best, if the times allow it, that *“they that have wives be as though they had none ... and they that buy, as though they possessed not ... And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.”* 1 Cor. 7:29-30.

A man must leave father and mother ... and shall cleave to the world

Marriage can cause problems when you need to talk to seek and save others:

The weakness of having relationships with people of the opposite sex is that through ongoing communication there can be some kind of certain change for some kind of intimacy. Therefore it must be remembered that relationships with peoples of the opposite sex are within that group of people that one may need to only marry or flee from, especially if you are the type of person who needs to be married. Even a hint of the idea for you to “*receive an hundredfold now in this time*” is a promise that is at war with marriage and the family. If you become or your spouse becomes dispersed into the family of the church, this is something that normally is impossible for any marriage, and especially hard for children to live with.

James says in James 3:16 “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*” Sara told Abraham “*Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, ...*” Over time the strife and impracticality of these two competing worlds become self evident, and in the end you can lose everything if you do nothing. Solomon says in 27:8 “*As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.*” The focus of marriage is to keep it, this involves work. This means that all other relationships must come second. Just as one must leave their mother and father (Genesis 2:23-24 “*And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*” Mark 10:6-9 “*But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”) so to must one leave the companionship of all other relationships, they too must be compromised and come second. The Bible already says that one must leave even their own mother and father for there to be a normal marriage without divorce. How much more it is the case that one must leave former friends and that spiritual family, one cannot be completely involved with the church. In order to make the spiritual marriage happen, the marriage of the world must be as though it is not. There will be trouble if the focus is to be one with the many, and this is what Paul has already said in 1 Cor. 7:28. Marriage increases the vanity.

Furthermore, one cannot be a Christian and be any more spiritual than that of *what their relationship* to the marriage partner allows. Romans 14-15 says: “*Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations ... I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean ... We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*”

Paul says concerning that which can be idolatry (Colossians 3:5), “*it is better to marry than to burn*” and “*come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*” 1 Cor. 7:5, 8. Human nature has proven time and again that close encounters with the opposite sex should be restricted by and for marriage. This is why it should be determined by nature impractical to have close friends of the opposite sex, within that category of those that require one to flee rather than to resist. So the point is that there has to be commitment one way or the other. In marriage one is forbidden to reside with ones parents, how much more so is it forbidden to side with someone outside the marriage?

For those who are committed to a marriage and their family, the necessary alternative to understand the world is that just as there are many peoples in the world, is just like there are many planets in the universe. The earth small, yet this is the only planet we can live on. It makes no sense to plan on building a house on another planet; anyone would assume such a person to be mad. There is only one place where you can build committed friendships in marriage, and that is in the marriage itself, those outside the marriage are subject to the scrutiny of being divisive. If problems occur that are detrimental to marriage, there is nothing but a hell on earth in a very real sense of the word that awaits you. This is true spiritually, physically, and emotionally, for all parties involved, not just you, but especially you. In this case one might think back on Eccl. 2:26 “*For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*”

When marriage is subject to vanity and multiplication:

Now that we have concluded that marriage is good and bad, and that wordless can be good and bad, the next question is how do we deal with this desire for multiplication of worldly things when it is good, so that the limited good does not fade away into deeper vanities? In other words, vanity is naturally subject to multiplication. The question is where is marriage, or any other thing that is worldly, subject not to expand in vanities? The conclusion is threefold. **First, be fully engaged by the world.** Multiplication is the evil within our worldly nature, yet it is good to be busy in one good worldly thing rather than overcome with many sinful worldly things. It is also good to know what it is that you can be worldly in, and to have a legitimate work for it. And this worldliness, like the man who burns (1 Cor. 7:9), can make him a better Christian or even a better preacher. For example, if man has nothing in this world to distract his worldly attention his worldliness nature may not so easily be arrested. He may be more subject to every worldly thing that comes his way. He may become worldly in everything. **Second, forsake wordiness altogether.** One must always be attempting to supersede the first rule, which is rather to love only God with all your heart soul and mind, and have no time for anything of this world, but this is the lifelong struggle. Most people, especially whenever they have problems in their marriages, find other things in the world to make up for the glue that helps hold everything together. Games, cars, pets, homes and kids are at the top of the list of worldly things. But there is evidently no benefit in any of these when multiplication is always at work. This brings us back to Solomon's admonitions of vanity not to love the world, and at the same time expect that there are not forces at work to increase the vanity! If you are like Solomon, and you have your eyes opened, you will come to the conclusion that multiplication is a sign that you are wasting your time. **Third, being practical.** If you love yourself and God you will love and remain faithful to your marriage partner above every other hobby. Chaos is never a good thing. Multiplication can lead to instability. Therefore logically one car or one wife or one house or one set of dishes, or one pet, or one hobby or one job is all anyone can handle. Aside from it being sinful to be gluttonous, it is just simply impractical.

Some people believe that they need more than one wife, yet through time they discover that all relationships prove that they are virtually the same. The first car that a man falls in love with will be the same as the second. The conversations are identical as well as the necessary jobs. If you have a particular problem with your wife you can learn that you will have that same problem with every other person.

Some people believe that if they just get that wife or that car that then they will be happy forever. It is foolish to assume that multiplying anything, will not gravitate to other and more complex responsibilities, yet human nature works in just that direction. People do not exactly get married to unconditionally love another person, if that were the case such people would not need to get married in the first place, but would be content to love God and His church as did Jesus. Binding another person to your own will does not define agape love. Marriage by nature has, at times, less to do with love and more to do with a mutual commitment to the affairs of this world. To stay married, as well as to please your children one will have to gather many things from this world for there to be a working at contentment. And in this, worldliness becomes a necessary evil and a part of life. And if you cannot supply that which is good and that which is of the blessings of the Lord, then you may leave your family open to think of wandering into the enemy's camp. Even to flatter your wife, you will need to please her through the world that is passing away. You will have to get a house, you will have to be involved in the games, and the recreational affairs of the world in order to communicate with your children. This is why Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 7:28-35: *"he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife ... And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."*

The logical solution is, don't get married in the first place (Matt. 19:10). Don't get a car if it is not for driving. Or if you have a car, don't get a new one. And if you are married don't waste your life by listening to the voice of strangers that may entice you and say that marriage can be better than it already is. Marriage cannot be better than being single, and that is what Paul said. The moral of the story is sooner or later one will need to understand, Hebrews 13:5 *"Let your*

conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Or Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Be wise and leave the vanity of gathering to fools, yet stay within reason. If you find that you have too much free time on your hands, if you find that you cannot break your concentration on this world or that you cannot keep fixated on the world to come without interruption, if you find that you can fall into sin, then get married. Get a car, get a full time job, drink wine and sing songs, get some pets and have children to keep you company, but in all this getting sin not. For God will bring everything into judgment to see if it is good or evil. And do not expect that God will not test you to see how much you love Him as He did with Job. Being a disciple is not necessary, but it is work and as such has rewards both in this life and in the life to come.

The example of Christ in relation to vanity.

Jesus said in Luke 14:16ff

A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. 25And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Here, as in other places throughout the Bible God calls men to be holy as He is holy, Leviticus 11:44, 1 Peter 1:16. Here what this means is setting all other things and every other thing aside to love God with all your heart soul and mind, Mark 12:30. God calls men to a life free of vanity, but they must first count the cost. Counting the cost is very important, Acts, 5:3, 1 Tim. 5:12.

Vanity here foremost concerns the rest of us, those who are not the Disciples of Christ, children, moms and dads; those who support the church and the work of God through business, and those who watch the home, those who have concerns with this world.

However loving God with all your heart does not and will not save anyone, Mark 12:30 has to do with the Ten Commandments, which are written to show foremost that we are sinners and need a Savior. Only secondly are they written to show a holy path we should follow to avoid judgments in this life. What saves men is God. Salvation is not attempting to live up to the holiness of Christ to the best of one's abilities. That method of salvation is the argument of every false gospel and every devil, and those who are not saved, who are banking on their own holiness that they are saved. Christ is of no benefit in this case, Gal. 5:4-5 “Christ is become of no effect unto

you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”

In conclusion love God alone with all your heart, so you can escape the vanity.

So in conclusion if one can fall in love with Christ alone this is better, but if not, then do not be ashamed to allow God to add things of this world for which you can serve Him in. Romans 14:17-19 *“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”* Only be careful that the things that you approve are right and will not cause your brothers to stumble.

Notes:

[1.] *“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.”* 1 Cor. 7:4 *“they that have wives be as though they had none ... and they that buy, as though they possessed not ... And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.”* 1 Cor. 7:29-30.

[2.] *“And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”* Mark 10:28-30

[3.] *“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery...”* Matt. 5:32

VANITY AND ECCLESIASTES

Definition of Vanity: Solomon’s long definition of the world as vanity (which is the primarily concern of his book) foremost concerns what you will do with your spare time while keeping the commandments of God, Eccl 12:13,14.

Predominantly Vain Conclusions: Solomon’s preliminary or predominantly vain conclusions and revelations concerning man’s labor do not escape his world of vanity. Note the last chapter starts with *“Remember now thy Creator ...”* and does not end without *“Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.”* These conclusions are circular, where the best solution is that **man can only enjoy the vanity in spite of his hate for it.** Eccl 2:17 *“Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity”*. Eccl 2:24 *“There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour.”* That is that, the enjoyment of labor for something, often proves worth more than the very thing itself, 6:1, 7. We can see that Solomon concludes that his way is **vain and unknowable apart from God’s** commandments.

The above conclusions are also based on Solomon’s understanding that God has made things this way, as he says in Eccl 8:17 *“Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.”* and Eccl. 1:15 *“That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.”*

In Ecclesiastes Solomon is found bound to conclusions within that same world he is operating and moving in through this book. These conclusions, that all is vain, refer to man’s efforts to do anything on his own. **This vanity also has to do with man’s efforts to save himself, or to sanctify himself.** See also Eccl. 9:1.

Because the pursuits are ongoing, they can thereby be deemed as only illusionary and ultimately as unattainable: The deception of this world is that, what is bent can be straightened

and that which is lacking can be numbered. In other words, the deception of our flesh and the world is that our worldly desires can be fulfilled. Solomon says that even if we think our desires are being fulfilled or can be fulfilled, that in reality we are deceived, that this is an impossibility. And this is because our prize will vanish like a mirage, it is numbered, and the road ahead is crooked, Eccl. 1:15. Eccl. 7:13 says *“Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?”* And that this is the way this world was created, because God made it this way intentionally. All that is seemingly new can only revert back to the old and vanity with added liabilities, Eccl. 6:9, 5:10-11. Eccl. 1:8 says *“All things [are] full of labour; man cannot utter [it]: the eye is not satisfied with seeing”*. Eccl. 6:9 *“Better [is] the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this [is] also vanity and vexation of spirit.”* With initial discontentment, new people, places and things all revert back to the place where they were in the beginning with equal if not greater discontentment! These “things” [people are also things in this world of the evil eye] will not answer that which is crooked.

In one’s own world of vanity, other people seeking their own vanity have limited use, where some kind of temporary agreement is made. Such agreements are always subject to exploitation and greed. These agreements are the subject of cross manipulation which have their root in evil doing and thievery more than selfless giving or true love. For example regarding man, slavery is the first thought in Ecclesiastes, Eccl. 2:7. Or in regard to parenthood Paul says in Heb. 12:10 *“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ...”*. The fundamental difference in relationships here has to do with a love for the Ten Commandments and His holiness or a love for what is before our evil eye. Each man must serve God or else he will be made the servant of sin, and men will rule over him. John 8:31-36 says:

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; [32] And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. [33] They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? [34] Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. [35] And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. [36] If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Yet in regards to the Ten Commandments, there will be sacrifice, this is to work God’s will.

But not only for practical reasons, but so that our fellowship with the Holy Spirit should be without grief and the burden of the world on our shoulders Paul counsels us in Hebrews 13:5 *“ [Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* There is great salvation and joy in trusting God, He can carry our burden and should be our only desire.

Outside of the Ecclesiastes enigma, men are not vain, they are “sons of God”, James 3:9. They have infinite value because they are paid for with the precious blood of Christ, they are destined to become like Christ. Here relationship has to do with God and His commandments, and through this come all greater relationships and blessings.

The purpose of vanity: It is by lack of child like faith in God’s secret councils that we are overcome (Mark 4:19) with that which is outside the kingdom, which will result only in our remorse and repentance. The result of lack of faith is more vanity. Solomon says these things are like this intentionally to bring us back to God and new life in Christ. Eccl. 3:4 says *“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”* Paul says in Romans 8:20-23: *“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itse lf also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”*

Solomon tells us to pay attention and deal with these conclusions so we can escape them. Eccl. 12:1 says *“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”*. Or as the author of Hebrews admonishes us in Heb 11:24-27 concerning the example of Moses and his choosing: *“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt,*

not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”

Solomon's right answer, although he never comes out and says it directly, is found in concluding that we who have faith in God, should abandon the world of vanity completely and seek rather to “*Fear God, and keep his commandments*”. (Eccl. 12:13) But this can only happen in understanding the atonement. That we should rather surrender to love God will all our heart, soul and mind, Deut. 11:13-15 “*And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.*” This life in God is spelled out much more clearly in the NT.

Solomon's method in argumentation: Solomon knows the answer that all things are in Christ, just as did Moses, Hebrews 11. Solomon knows the answer because he understands that God will judge the world in righteousness in the resurrection. But here he is explaining the world without a reflection of Christ. If we follow our own way where will it lead us? The answer Solomon gives is that it will lead us to circles of pointless worthless arguments and nothingness, “*the eye is not satisfied with seeing.*”

Because there is a judgment (Eccl. 8:5,6; 11:9; 12:14) there must needs be, and logically so, that which is not vanity. Solomon is not setting out to unknowingly contradict himself, but he wishes to bring us to a place where we should conclude that there is only life in God outside of this world of vanity through a resurrection. Outside of being made partakers with Christ there are only dated contradictory and vain conclusions. These conclusions are real and set in place by God intentionally. Solomon says in 2:18-19 “*Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured and wherein I have shewn myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.*”. Solomon is talking about material things not spiritual things. Solomon is talking about life outside of heaven and the resurrection. Vanity is only a part of our lives to the degree that we are in this world, or we deal with worldly interests for heaven's sake. In the next world and in Christ there will be no vanity. Everything we do will glorify God, even as there will be no marriage.

Concluding With New Conclusions: The enigma that has been carried throughout the book dissipates in Jesus Christ and our unity and resurrection with Him. Jesus said in Matthew 12:42: “*The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*” And in Matthew 6:27-30 “*Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*” Romans 6:4 says “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” Solomon answers Ecclesiastes and the world he is living in and its resulting enigmas with a love for God's commandments and Song of Songs. [Watchman Nee has a helpful commentary on Song of Songs which can be found online.] Solomon balances his life in Ecclesiastes against the life of she who is devoted to Christ.

In this concept of keeping the commands of God vis-à-vis man's world of vanity, God has His will. **And God's will is foremost to do those things which brings glory to His name, and to teach others to glorify God as well.** If we will seek out the will of God, this puts us outside the perspective of Solomon's conclusions regarding vanity. The only problem left is to know whether or not we are doing the will of God or not and this involves prayer. Paul said in 1 Cor. 4:3 “*I judge not my own self*”. And Jesus said that we are like servants who work while our master has left traveling into a far country, Matt 25:14. Therefore the Bible shows that it is only with the Holy Spirit that we may do all that which is the will of God with God. The talents are limited, as well as that men are not rewarded for good intentions, but how the talents were increased. In seeking God's will it must be realized foremost that God's will is on another set of perspectives often against even our better judgments, and that these perspectives should be discovered and

considered against the darkness of our hearts. Often the Holy Spirit has not spoken where men say that He has. In this then, work may be done to bring about that which is the will of God.

All is vanity that has to do with the plans and works of man outside of Christ. If we can acknowledge that our ways are vain, that our ways are not His ways, then afterwards we can be made new vessels, new creatures in Him by giving ourselves to God. See Rom. 12:1; Matt 12:26. There is satisfaction only through the living waters of life, as Jesus said to the women at the well. The world was intentionally created this way by God, and there is no escaping it because God made it like this, Eccl 3:11. *“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”*

We are to consider God’s work superior to the point that He is in fact the only author, and the author of everything meaningful. Ultimately this vanity is so pervasive that man can do nothing. Eccl. 9:1 says: *“For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.”* Eccl. 9:1 is another reason for Solomon’s exhausted conclusions about his labors, God has control over all the world and time itself. However on the other side of the coin Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:58 *“your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”* 1 Cor. 3:9-19 says:

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. [10] According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. [11] For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.[12] Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;[13] Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.[14] If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.[15] If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.[16] Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?[17] If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.[18] Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.[19] For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. [20] And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

Therefore, the main subject of futility or vanity in Ecclesiastes has only to do with that which is redeemed to the extent that it keeps us from sin and being abandoned to the world. But vanity is also that which is of the nature of idolatry and of those worldly briars that compete with our affections for fellowship with Christ. Even Peter’s fishing business was a problem with Christ, John 21:15 *“Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.”* speaking of the fishing business. Previously before Christ’s resurrection he had left his business to follow him, Matt. 4:18ff.

*And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. **19**And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. **20**And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. **21**And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. **22**And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

***23**And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. *25* And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.

PART I
ALL IS FOR NOTHING WHEN YOU GO IT ALONE

ECCLESIASTES 1:1 *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, King in Jerusalem.*

It is disputed who the author is for the following reasons:

- 1.) The name Solomon is not important to the writer.
- 2.) The book is narrated in the third person, see 1:1,2; 7:27; 12:8-14.
- 3.) Qohelet says that he “was” king over Jerusalem.
- 4.) Qohelet compares himself to “*all who were over Jerusalem before me.*” This sounds like he is speaking of a number of kings who had reigned over Jerusalem before him. Yet the only king in Jerusalem other than Solomon was David.
- 5.) Qohelet has observations of abuse of power (4:1-3; 5:8-9; 10:5-7; 16-20). Yet if he were Solomon where would he observe this from?

There is also language in Ecclesiastes that is out of place with the time of Solomon, which rather is what would be expected for a later time period.

In answer to these arguments, there is no record of Christ disputing the nature of Ecclesiastes, the early church attributing the authorship to Solomon. In Mathew Christ even makes a reference to Solomon’s wisdom and worldly attire, these things are the subject of Ecclesiastes. And as far as the internal evidence goes, Jerusalem in the context of Ecclesiastes can represent more than just a natural city, but the city of the people of God. So Qohelet being a king of Jerusalem has more to do with just his physical location or legal standing. As far as the nature of the language is concerned, it would not be unreasonable to assume that what we have in the Bible is not the original but a translation. Other parts of the Bible were not originally translated in Hebrew so why would it be a problem if Ecclesiastes was translated into a later version of the Hebrew language? It is safe to believe Solomon is the author.

Why Solomon tells of these things in the third person, or presents himself as Qohelet maybe understood in the context of Solomon not attributing the thoughts of the letter entirely to himself, but merely as a gatherer of people and their ideas.

ECCLESIASTES 1:2-3 *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*

See introduction.

ECCLESIASTES 1:2-3 *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*

This, “*vanity*” and “*labour which he taketh*” is labor and vanity that man taketh to himself after that work which God did has been completed. Hebrews 4:3 says: “*For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*”. And what is it that the Preacher wishes to accomplish? He wishes to do himself good through his own labors, there is nothing of this labor said about God. God becomes an afterthought, not the subject of these labors. The two are separated. And this is the reason for the vanity in the first place. The work has to do with becoming worldly.

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

It is important to understand the first thoughts of any book. If the key and groundwork for understanding a book is in the very first words it is important to thoroughly understand them to avoid conclusions that the author never intended. Verse four is where Qohelt first begins to lay down his ground work to prove his point, that all is vanity and what he means by this.

This thought, that man is temporal and the earth is eternal, is here in the beginning of these things because foremost this is what man makes himself ignorant of. He needs to be reminded of his place among the earth, because he is in denial of it. The main point is that the true intentions of the earth and the created order, and the work involved with living a peaceful life with God remain out of man's reach in spite of all that he naturally does. Man cannot go where he wants; he only repeats the same mistakes of his forefathers. What passes away is all mankind's failed answers one generation after the next, while that which is of God's created order and His right answer continues forever. Man wishes to fill something up, Qohelet is saying there is no possible way to do so. Qohelet knows best, and God has given him the aptitude to understand these things and write of them.

Man has the delusion of taking his ways out of agreement with the created order. In essence he seeks to overthrow the created order. That which remains, the rust and corruption, is that which God has ordained, James 5:3. Man cannot keep up his struggle forever. The only way found in the end is remembering our Creator and finding His ways. The earth abiding forever here vis-a-vis man passing away forever has to do with that which is temporal verses that which is eternal. The two have to do with such a case as Matt. 16:18-19 "*I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*" In this life we need to make decisions for God and heaven rather than for man, because the man of this world is passing away.

God has done His work in seven days and His work goes on forever, Eccl 1:4-7. On the other hand, mans futile work can go on forever.

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

Here we have a second thought pointing to God's creation that it lasts forever. Man is religious in his efforts to bring forth a plan that has a future and solidarity. He continually strives against the created order that in effect turn the opposite way he is going. Even where he does succeed, the path he has chosen is crooked and leads directly nowhere. Man himself is his own worst enemy, thus no man can be trusted. We cannot trust ourselves to follow our own expectations, how much less some other persons. But God has faithfully provided the earth, time, power, water and the sun to do all so that man will seek Him. God faithfully brings the sun up every day again in spite of the vanity for which God has to endure, Psalm 19.

Here Sun, Wind, and Waters represent the Trinity that bring these things forth to establish God's created order.

ECCLESIASTES 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.*

Over time day after day it becomes evident that the path is circular. In like manner there is no end to the desire of the unregenerate heart. And against it, God in Job is likewise like a world wind that no man can stand against. See Job 38:1.

Here Solomon basically concludes "*That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.*" and "*He hath set the world in their heart so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*" Throughout the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon makes it clear that the Way, Jesus Christ and through His Holy Spirit, this is only something to be grasped at, obscure and not yet completely understood. Solomon's relationship with God here in Ecclesiastes is to Him as the Creator, there is no mention of redemption.

Christ explains the wind in John 3:7-8 with: “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou bearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” and Paul said in Hebrews 10:1-3: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. **2** For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. **3** But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. **4** For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” So at this time there is only the righteousness of man and faith in the righteousness of God. And if a man is wise he knows that he must by faith in God throwing himself on the mercy of God, that his righteousness is deficient. Even Moses was not worthy to enter the Promised Land. Later there would be the righteousness of Christ and faith in Jesus in the Holy Ghost. Furthermore we read in Ephesians 3:8-12 “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; **9** And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: **10** To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, **11** According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: **12** In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” So here Solomon can only contemplate a righteousness that has yet to be manifested in Jesus Christ, Eccl. 12:1. He more so than Paul was seeing through a glass darkly, 1 Cor. 13:12. The vanity that Solomon speaks of in Ecclesiastes also has to do with the absence of the revelation of Jesus Christ and His Ways and His righteous life. Indeed the ways of Christ are said by Himself to be separated and on a higher plane. Jesus said in Luke 11:31: “The queen of the South . . . came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.” or in Matthew 5:28-33 we read “**28** And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: **29** And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? **31** Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? **32** (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. **33** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” The wisdom of Christ is greater than the wisdom of Solomon, a man who sought to involve himself principally with only his own works and not the finished works of Christ. And here Solomon makes no mention of the redemption that is in Christ---and without Christ all work is indeed vanity. Paul defines what labor is not in vain in Philippians 1:21ff “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. **22** But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. **24** For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: **24** Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” Therefore the problem of Solomon is 1st that he is overly concerned with the world and his own works, and 2nd that he has not the greater and pervasive revelation of Christ and His righteous works through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is not that Solomon does not have faith. Solomon does have faith. But the problem of his world view and the world of that time is that Christ has not yet come, Acts 19:1ff. Solomon is focusing here on his works rather than on Christ and His finished works. However it is important to note that Solomon throughout the book is focusing on God’s finished works as creator of the world and as the creator of man. Yet ironically Christ is the member of the trinity through whom the world was created. But the creation that is the subject of concern in the NT is Christ the creator of the new man. Again, this is what is missing in Ecclesiastes.

The Holy Spirit had not yet been given, and more than anything else the Baptism of the Holy Spirit has to do with the Spirit of God revealing the words and wisdom of Jesus Christ to our personalities. In other words when the Bible shows in Acts that the Holy Ghost had not yet been given to those believers’ through John the Baptist, it is that man Jesus and the knowledge of Him was not yet available to mankind. It is important to understand that Christianity was an impossibility until Jesus had come.

ECCLESIASTES 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.*

As long as a man will live he will always be empty if he seeks to be filled with the world. What is needed is a death and a resurrection with Christ, and consistent agreement with Him. Ultimately the point that Ecclesiastes brings us to is the reality of our need for a death and resurrection with Christ, which is the subject of Solomon's Song of Songs. God day after day bring down living waters for us to drink of, yet man who rejects Christ will not be satisfied with these things of God. Yet to as many as have received Him, to them He is the living waters of life. To those who received Him, they have seen a new day and for them the true bright morning star has arisen, Rev 22:16. And in Him we shall be satisfied. See Ezekiel 47:1.

ECCLESIASTES 1:8 *All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*

The result and answer of 1:3 "*What profit hath a man of all his labour*" and facts of 1:4-7 are summed up in that the profit of mans labor is—more labor from God! Here the reward of seeing or hearing, whatever it is, is just as unending as the labor that overtakes us.

The task is irresolvable. In this ultimately there is no such thing as purchasing or obtaining anything. This is because everything is moving away at the same rate at which man is drawing closer to anything. Seeing is the best reward (5:11), this is why television can captivate a man forever. That is, being "*not unsatisfied*" results in seeing it again as a form of a result that can only be defined for **meaningless labour**. Later on Qohelet says in 6:9 "*Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire*" showing that there is nothing better materially than what we potentially already have within reach. Yet Qohelt says that both what we see and what we do not see will be unsatisfactory, and that our dissatisfaction and that circular course is the only thing that will remain, implying that the greatest gift is seeing not possessing. But better than both of these is being a servant of the one true God rather than working for the world.

In Matt. 18:9 Jesus said "*And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.*" And in Luke 11:34ff "*The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. 35Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. 36If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.*" Jesus used the eye or what we look to as the point of determining who we are. Here Jesus did not direct his listeners to what they did in the past or what they had but to where they were going, what they see. The point of concern in both these instances was foremost the eye. What is silently spoken here is that the whole idea of ownership means nothing if the eye is not satisfied. Therefore it maybe wiser to be satisfied with seeing a thing rather than owning it. Seeing something you want is something very personal and special as you go about to own it, after you possess it, it is all downhill and slavery from there. In this world, the search for that which is complete straight and can be numbered is futile. Proverbs 17:24 says "*... the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.*" And 30:4 says "... *who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?*"

Now, foremost in this conclusionary sentence it must be noted that now we have an inescapable fact. The eye is not satisfied with seeing. Therefore as a Christian it would be wise, in my opinion, to have some form of repose to the mind of the flesh which is not under the ban, such as golf, swimming, mountaineering, body-building, art, a pet dog, children, a wife, a house, cars. Yet to know at the same time by Ecclesiastes that these things are vain. If one is preoccupied with the above to some degree with the Christian life as well, this could leave no room for those worldly recreations, such things as multiplying wives, adultery, fornication, drugs, alcohol, the love of money, collecting wealth, rock concerts etc. In other words, given all that is said in Ecclesiastes, it may be wise to simply make some kind of allowances for the flesh rather than seek to ever eliminate it entirely. Hopefully ones hobbies should be something which gives insight into the mind or our creator. In all this the advice of Psalm 1 should be remembered.

ECCLESIASTES 1:9-11 *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. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time,*

which was before us. 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.

Again, here the idea is that there is nothing better than what you already have. Qohelet is talking about those old things that you have passed up for new things, that the old things and the old ways are just as happy as the new ways! The point is that satisfaction only comes by serving God and keeping His commandments. As for those who have not grasped these things, they are under the delusion that they are on a road that actually lead somewhere—new! The subject of the book of Ecclesiastes concerns the delusions of life, which have been given to nothing.

ECCLESIASTES 1:12-15 *I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 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. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.*

What Solomon is lamenting about here is that the works of man and how all his riches change nothing. Happier is the man who walks through and observes Solomon's garden than he who owns it. It is better to live and operate in God's world than to live in your own world.

ECCLESIASTES 1:16-18 *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. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

The wisdom and knowledge Solomon is talking about has to do with this world that we have inherited from our fathers. The wisdom and knowledge is equal to the madness and folly that pertains to man. It does not have to do with the wisdom and knowledge of God, God has nothing to do with any of reaping this kind of increasing grief and sorrow.

ECCLESIASTES 2:1-26 *I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. 2 I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? 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. 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. 9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. 10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. 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. 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.** 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. 18 Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. 19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity. 20 Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun. 21 **For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.** 22 For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? 23 For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. 24 There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. 25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I? 26 **For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.**

The point here in all this is that Solomon's conclusions are not based merely on speculation, but what he found in his own struggle for peace and freedom, in his own works for self worth. His conclusion is that "For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up ..." verse 26. In both of these people there is wisdom and knowledge (21), but one is lasting while the other is fleeting.

ECCLESIASTES 2:26 For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Qoheleth says that the righteous get wisdom and knowledge and thereby possessions, while on the other hand the wicked gets only to labor for the righteous and righteous purposes he does not understand or directly support. The sinner supporting the righteous, that being vain has to do with as well as being another indication that Ecclesiastes is about only that kind of labor that the wicked and the righteous share. Therefore it cannot be concluded by any means that the subject of Ecclesiastes is directly about labor in Christ, or labor in the Gospel. This labor here has only to do with worldly labors for that which will pass away. The earthly temple was also something that was to pass away, this is how there can be vanity and purpose here. Paul even tells of this vanity that they were under in Romans 8:20: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope," Thereby we can conclude that the righteous were waiting for Christ in every way, and for the perfect works we now follow through His righteousness. For even our righteous works were unclean before God.

Now this subject is repeated throughout chapter two.

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 appears to be simply about life in general, especially in light of verse 3:13 "And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. ". However, by the time we get to 7:5-7 we can understand that Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 should concern

God's desire juxtaposed to man's desire and that we need to be wise to know the difference. Ecclesiastes :7:5-7 says:

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. 6 Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. 7 For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

The different times therefore should refer to man's accountability and the judgments of God. Eccl. 3:9-15 is about man's relationship with God, and not so much man's relationship to work. We can assume "*that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour*", but as life goes on we see that man can do better by enjoying God and the better choices that are in Jesus Christ. By keeping God's commands a man will have no fear of judgment.

Also, 3:15, 17 show that the subject of 3:1-8 is a reflection on man followed by judgment. Eccl 3:17 says "*I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work*"

ECCLESIASTES 3:9-12 *What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? 10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. 11 He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. 12 I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. 13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. 14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. 15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.*

Solomon sees God's work and man's work. Man's work is wanting and simply repetitive while God's work is perfect and unknowable. And that God has created the world in such a way that men should turn to God. And amongst all this vanity, good and bad, "*God requires that which is past*". There is purpose in the judgment, to see what is good and what is not good. The purpose in all the vanity is that we might be able to be allowed to make good choices by the grace of God. Our God is a God who loves judgment. The very first thing we will encounter after death is judgment with God.

ECCLESIASTES 3:16 *And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. 17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work. 18 I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. 19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. 20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. 21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? 22 Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?*

Here Solomon is basically saying that from an earthly perspective with a mind stubbornly set on this world, that there is no other conclusion other than all is vanity by reason that the life of man is no more of any value than a beast. You can come to these conclusions, and it is only right to do so. But there are better conclusions to come based solely on that "*God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work*" wherein God wishes to have fellowship with man through judgment and through the resurrection through that man Jesus Christ. Without Him, without His imputed righteousness we cannot stand before Him.

PART II

PROVERBS FOR A PROPER LIFE WHILE HERE WITH MAN AND GOD

ECCLESIASTES 4:1 *So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. 2 Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. 3 Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.*

How often have we said it would have been better if we were never born. Yet the job of the Christian in this world is to separate himself from what is natural and from the vanity, and to be the comforter with the Holy Spirit. If we are not following with the Spirit of God what spirit are we of? Those who will not see the church or God, Solomon says, they would be better off like those which have not been born, verse 3.

ECCLESIASTES 4:4 *Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit. 5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. 6 Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit. 7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.*

Work is good, and it is better if it has nothing to do with keeping up with the Jones'. And those who work should not do so in order to make a statement back to the Joneses', because that is the empty life you want to avoid at all costs. The conclusion here is that it might be better not to work at all then to work for the wrong reasons and vanity. Heaven has nothing to do with this world and what people think. Jesus said, "... that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15. Also, there is much vanity in the virtual world, it is better to deal with real people and real work rather than lose touch with reality.

ECCLESIASTES 4:8 *There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. 9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. 10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? 12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

If you have to go it alone, you should know that you would have been better off if you could have a friend to help you and be with you always. And it is better to work for the betterment of two than to simply work for one ... that is vanity. Furthermore, a cord of three is even better, but not if they do not work well together. In such cases one needs to choose one or the other.

ECCLESIASTES 4:13 *Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. 14 For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor. 15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead. 16 There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.*

Verse 4:13 and 4:14 is a good saying, accumulating wisdom is far better than having riches not knowing what to do with them, see also Proverbs 8. The fool is king and is destined for poverty while the wise may even be in prison, and is destined for and already has the While on the subject of being alone, one should consider that even a king of riches and peoples is worse off than one

who is alone and poor when he will not listen to people who admonish him. In this case he is just the same as having nothing and no one.

ECCLESIASTES 5:1 *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. 2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. 3 For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. 4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. 5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay . 6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.*

Those who do not like to want to understand the Bible like rather to hear the sound of their own thoughts. By the same token, don't go to temple considering that you are there alone. God is well aware of what you have been ignoring. He will not let you forget your sins until you repent. Do not cause division due to greed for more than your God given portion of manna, James 4:1. We should be faithful and thankful, therefore don't bother with sacrifices or anything else for that matter, till you clear up the troubles you are causing by not repenting. Jesus said in Luke 15:7 "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. ... neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error." Do not suppose that you can sacrifice or give any good thing, only our Savior was righteous and could make appropriate sacrifice. If you are not that Savior than you cannot save. You need to be saved from your unrighteousness, not save yourself by keeping the whole law (James 2:10) and negating the need for Christ's ability to keep the law to be appropriated to you. Trying to save yourself by keeping the law makes Christ of no effect to you, Galatians 5:4 "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." If you are not saved unto everlasting life by faith in Christ today, you still need to get saved because you cannot save yourself, you are not the Savior. Not only did Christ die for us, but we cannot stand in the judgment apart from Christ's imputed righteousness. And to insist that we can means that there is more than one Savior. Furthermore, this playing the Savior is the Satanic gospel, it is found in the doctrine of every cult.

On the other hand, be ready to pay what you vow, and keep God's commands, Eccl. 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. For God shall bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." There will be judgment and repentance for your sin. Sin not or you will suffer losses in this life as well as in the next. Eccl "... neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error." Do not suppose that you can sin (not keep God's commands) and get away with it without hurting yourself and hurting others.

ECCLESIASTES 5:8 *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they. 9 Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field. 10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. 11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? 12 The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.*

God knows about your vows, and He also knows about the violent perverting of judgment!

Love the poor, God does. God does not love money or that which is vanity so why should you: "... what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?" Fall asleep with the poor friends God has given you and wake up to work with them. Do the right thing and you will find happiness this way and not by some other way, and be careful not to be unthankful

and complaining. Because even if you get everything you think you need and are trying to get, all it will do is give you insomnia. But if you truly are in need, don't worry, now you have something from God to do to keep you busy, even if it is sinless vanity.

ECCLESIASTES 5:13 *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. 14 But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. 15 As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. 16 And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? 17 All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.*

See also 6:1ff. This thought is repeated again in with hoarders.

Such is the case in Exodus 16:20 with the manna of those that had the greedy and an evil eye, Proverbs 23, Luke 11:34. Many make this mistake, to one degree or another, but some live only for wealth and not for their family or that family of people God has given them to teach them that they should at the least choose the good vanity over the evil vanity and not be greedy. Be content with such things as ye have, Hebrews 13:5. You cannot take it with you, so why make a golden calf out of it that serves no one?, especially not God. A poor relationship with God and man will return to you many times before the time of your death unless you repent. See 5:6.

ECCLESIASTES 5:18 *Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion. 19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God. 20 For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.*

Be satisfied with that lot God has given you in your vain life 6:12. But when you can do better, hold on to only what you need and give the rest away to your neighbors and follow Christ like Jesus asked the Rich Young Ruler to do. The results are, at the very least, you will find happiness and the blessings of God and the blessings of your family. On the other hand if you will only love yourself prepare yourself for 6:1-6.

ECCLESIASTES 6:1-6 *There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: 2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease. 3 If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he. 4 For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. 5 Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other. 6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?*

Do not suppose that the god of plenty is a good god. The god of money is a hard task master. She will make you afraid, serving every last cent sacrificing even your own family and ultimately even your own life for her, Prov. 23:2. Don't be a fool, put your trust in God and invest in your family instead. Furthermore ...6:7-12

ECCLESIASTES 6:7-12 *All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. 8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? 9 **Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.** 10 **That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man;** neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he. 11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better? 12*

For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

All men are vain to one degree or another. Keep on working for your appetite and your job will end only on the day you die ... all the time know that there will never be satisfaction, there will only be things which "increase vanity". "Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire" is the right answer that centers in on that our imagination creates dreams that disappear as we draw closer, they are like a mirage. Wisdom will not follow the crooked path of desire, but rather seeks that which glorifies God and the good of his family, his extended family, and his neighbors.

That which man seeks for in other people other than God Himself, this is vanity. All men are of man as a reflection of that which is within himself, and man by himself is vain, verse 10.

Eating too much will only make you fat until your back breaks and your joints fail. An unchecked appetite and lack of discipline and exercise will not make you thin and trouble free. Men should rather trust God and take only what they and others need, and live a simple care free life of trust and seeking only God, Ex 16:20.

ECCLESIASTES 6:7 *All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.*

Qoheleth says in 6:10 that our lives are vanity. Now here in verse 7 Qoheleth says that all man's labor will be vain because it is for his belly. Paul says of such in Phil. 3:19 "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."). So we can see from these two verses that the points that Qoheleth is making have to do only with the flesh. The subject of Qoheleth is men and man, he is vain, 6:10. It is only when we are united to Christ that our lives have meaning and purpose.

Here Qoheleth says there is this principle that exists in the world, that all man's labor is for his mouth again. In other words, and in light of the words of Paul we will always have the flesh to contend with. Now that therefore there is this labor for the mouth, it would be wise to plan ahead. It is expedient to be occupied to a moderate degree with the things of this world, to have common worldly pursuits one can fall back on to be occupied with, so that there is no room for sin. These principles in moderation are also found in 1 Cor. 7:5, 9, 31-33. Therefore such things as having a wife as said here in 1 Cor. 7, or keeping a sports car, or keeping a pool or keeping in good physical shape to climb mountains are all things that can temper the soul of man and keep him from the evil pursuits. There is evil is when one is overcome with such things Matt. 4:19, 1 Cor. 7:31, but it is more evil to be overcome with wrong things. Inevitably there will be times of uncertainty, and it is the gift of God, if necessary, to have a portion in the Promised Land of this world. But in all these, you can use everything to serve Christ, Col 3:17 "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.". 1 Tim. 4:1-5 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; [2] Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; [3] Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. [4] For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; [5] For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.". See also Romans 14:14, Titus 1:15, 1 Tim. 4:8.

ECCLESIASTES 7:1-4 *A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. 2 It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. 3 Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. 4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*

Qoheleth believes in the resurrection. The point that Qoheleth is making is that it is the day we are alone with God, not the days we are with men that we need to have before us because there is where the vanity ends. If very few people cry at your funeral, you can conclude that your life was a joke.

PART III
PROVERBS ABOUT LIFE IN GENERAL

ECCLESIASTES 7:5-6 *It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. 6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.*

...

ECCLESIASTES 7:5 7 *Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.*

Do not get tangled up in taking bribes, do not become a slave of men.

ECCLESIASTES 7:8 *Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. 9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. 10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.*

Do not be in a hurry, take everything into account, and do not think you were better off before you had trouble. Trouble often comes from being in a hurry not because of different days.

ECCLESIASTES 7:11 *Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun. 12 For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.*

Solomon is telling the truth, as well as laying some groundwork for a thinking and questions to come afterwards.

ECCLESIASTES 7:13 *Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked? 14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. 15 All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness.*

The ways of God are unsearchable to those who do not have faith. Believe in God, God is in control, there will be good days and bad days to prove your faith.

ECCLESIASTES 7:16 *Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? 17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time? 18 It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.*

Your righteousness for righteousness sake or wealth for wealth's sake is not the goal, rather seek the fear of God foremost. Understand your own wickedness and righteousness and just do what is right by God and man. The answer to all things is not in man but in God. Do not gather up gold or righteousness all for yourself, rather serve God and man.

ECCLESIASTES 7:19 *Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city. **For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.***

The point that wisdom is superior to might must be taken with the fact that even the wisest men are sinners.

ECCLESIASTES 7:21 *Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: 22 For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.*

Do not be hasty, do not be given to anger as said before in verse 9, be merciful, don't be a hypocrite.

ECCLESIASTES 7:23 *All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. 24 That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out? 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:*

Solomon can only see this world that he speaks of through faith, all the things that he speaks of are up for debate with worldly men until the resurrection. If you cannot understand this then you cannot understand anything else Solomon is saying. And Solomon points out that to understand wisdom is also to understand the wrong of folly, and to see it for what it is.

ECCLESIASTES 7:26 *And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. 27 Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account: 28 Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.*

Ultimately here this woman who is more bitter than death can be the same woman whose feet go down to death in Proverbs, and she is set against the women called wisdom. The wrong woman can be a very bad decision in marriage, and a good one is very hard to find. Do not marry a spoiled woman, be satisfied with the wife you have been given from God. Be controlled by God and not the thinking in men or by women, that was Adam's mistake. Proverbs 31:3 also says "Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.". God did not create man to seek out many women and increase vanity. God created man to fellowship with Him and have a partner in that. Romans 1:23 says that men have: "... changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." It is a vain thought to think to trade ones relationship with God for a relationship with another person or persons. In effect that would be to change the glory of God for an idol, and image made to corruptible man. And here, as in 2:8 if you please, such relationships will likewise all prove to be part of the endless circle of a vain life because this is the way reality is and the way God made it. All these pursuits can equally fall into the same category of that which cannot be numbered, 1:15, and that which is vanity.

One can seek pleasure for the moment and that which is temporal as did the Hedonists, or one can seek pleasure for eternity with the Heavenly Father as did Christ. These two pursuits are not the same pursuit. Wisdom 11:11 says "There is one that toileth and laboureth, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind." and John Ray's 'A Collection of English Proverbs' has "Haste makes waste, and waste makes want, and want makes strife between the goodman and his wife", and there are many examples of this we could give. In stark contrast, Christ's path takes on the denial of momentary pleasures for work instead, as well as suffering in exchange for fellowship with God. It is impractical and wrong to live for self and the moment, and it denies faith in Christ. God is able to bring about the future He has promised in the Gospel. Ultimately it should be considered that the pursuits of pleasures are only substantial found in the fear of God and following His paths. Likewise God Himself is eternal and man and his ideas are temporal. Furthermore, the two paths are at war with one another, one cannot be on the side of the temporal and the eternal at the same time. One cannot seek to please God and man at the same time. Luke 14:25-33 "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples."

ECCLESIASTES 7:29 *Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

And with men, they will always try to find some way around the truth. Man's way is not straight. Man seeks to have fellowships with the world and give his strength to women rather than to God, a plan that does not work. All these relationships with different people in the world are the same; do not be deceived, you will only end up going in circles.

Here in Ecclesiastes Solomon himself has likewise taken the liberty to seek out inventions, none of which prove to work out either. Solomon says that, contrary to the way God made creation as "crooked", here man has made himself crooked. However what Solomon means by God has made creation crooked is that when man avoids God and the truth all he is left with is creation and crooked ways. Nothing works without God involved.

1 John 2:15 says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And James 4:4 says: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Therefore, to say the least, to be a man who seeks out these inventions, this will bring in nothing new at all, the same as if nothing new ever happened in the first place. So why bother?, there will only be more troubles and not more treasures. Take Solomon's word for it.

ECCLESIASTES 8:1 *Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.*

Wisdom is good for you and those who see you.

ECCLESIASTES 8:2 *I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. 3 Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. 4 Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?*

Understand the will of the King. Don't be a rebel, it is not wise. If you are involved with an evil thing, get out of it.

ECCLESIASTES 8:5 *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. 6 Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. 7 For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be? 8 There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.*

1 Peter 3:17 says: "For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong." But here verse five refers to feeling or not feeling that judgment coming. Do not do evil things and you will have no fear of judgment from man or from God. You do not have power over the spirit nor the devil nor can you do good by doing evil, so in who do you have hope for salvation through this world? Do you hope in God or yourself for a resurrection?, are you the author of your salvation?

In Matthew 25:34, 46 the judgment is final. In AD 70 judgment started before they died. Therefore the beginning of the judgment can sometimes be seen and felt.

Wickedness is something one can be given to, in such cases it would be better to repent against your own better judgment.

ECCLESIASTES 8:9 *All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt. 10 And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity. 11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. 12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: 13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God. 14. There is a vanity*

which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.

The point here is verse 11, even though there are exceptions to the rule. First, we observe that here the rulers, who chiefly would be of those who rule over the temple, when they are wicked, are they only who rule over the people to their own hurt. Regarding verse 10, in order for these wicked to have regularly come and gone from the holy place, as well as to be forgotten, it must needs be at the very least, that those who ruled the temple itself were wicked. In this case we are talking about hypocrites who are willfully blind to their hypocrisies. Solomon says in Proverbs 5:

*“And you mourn at last, When your flesh and your body are consumed,¹²
And say: “How I have bated instruction, And my heart despised
correction!¹³ I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear
to those who instructed me!¹⁴ I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst
of the assembly and congregation.” ...²¹ For the ways of man are before the
eyes of the LORD, And He ponders all his paths.²² His own iniquities
entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin.²³ He
shall die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he shall go
astray.”*

In that they were forgotten, means that there is little understanding neither of their wickedness nor the judgments that came upon them, further defining verse 11. After all, they were involved with the leaders of the temple, whose job it was to teach the people concerning righteousness and wickedness, and to know the difference. But the focus here is also on the wicked heart of man, becoming hardened to do evil. That there is a cycle in the world that allows the wicked to come and go as they please until the day of their death, and that nothing can be done about it. And here wisdom and the understanding of these verses are the thing that should eliminate such problems.

So the idea is paramount that judgment should be swift, but even if it is so, it makes no difference, the hypocrites will always be hypocrites, and judgments do not change the wicked. Yet it is only the righteous who can understand this, and the wicked are either blind or “given to wickedness verse 8B. Indeed the ways and the wisdom from God are only found in those who remain in the presence of the king.

The bottom line in all that Qoheleth says here is that the thinking and the fact that judgments in the earth do not appear always to be from a righteous God are false. If the king will judge you so will God.

ECCLESIASTES 8:15 Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

Not always is righteousness or wickedness rewarded rightly, and from an earthly stand point. If this is the case, then there is “no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry” and forget righteousness and wickedness.

ECCLESIASTES 8:16-9:1 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:) 17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. 9:1 For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.

Only God works the work that allows for the outcome of any work, and who knows what this work is but God. Only God knows the wheat from the tares and the true from the false.

Furthermore God is the one who calls men to salvation or who has made the wicked for the day of judgment, Proverbs 16:4. Men do not save themselves. John 1:13 says that we were born, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”. The only conclusion is that men should put their trust in God. If they can do this, then God has worked a work of salvation in that man’s heart.

Therefore we can conclude that only God knows what is going on, and those to whom He chooses to reveal it to. The ironic error of man is that he thinks he knows what to do, man thinks he does not need God or that doing without God is a possible choice he should make. How does man suppose that he can live without God and consider himself wise or happy, by hiding from the truth?

Therefore to be happy man should have faith and consider what his present relationship with God is and make sacrifices rather than multiply people places and things and vanity, Matt. 6:32. And if he is married to sin, then in that case it is better that he “eat, and to drink, and to be merry” while he can.

ECCLESIASTES 9:2 *All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. 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. 4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5 For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. 7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. 8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. 9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. 10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.*

This passage merely presents an argument of the age, Solomon does not believe “there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”. This is a contradiction of what he says elsewhere. This passage is a reiteration of Ecclesiastes 8:9-15 and concerns the ironic death that man supposes he may encounter or death without the possibility of God’s redemption or real fellowship with Him. We certainly cannot resurrect ourselves, nor is there any chance we will be resurrected by a god of materialism. And if our thoughts are not God’s thoughts, certainly such will have “... perished, neither have ... a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.”. For those who look to this earth as their father, God will not resurrect them any more than these wish to have fellowship with Him in the resurrection. The purpose for which God exists and the purpose for which we live is to love God and have faith in His ways. If we have left love for hate, if we prefer the love of this world and the love of our flesh to the love of God, in this case we are left to resurrect ourselves.

Apart from Christ’s righteous, the truth of our present circumstances were: “... the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live. . . but the dead know not any thing”. There was yet no resurrection. Galatians 3:22 says: “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed”. If Christ did not come for us to die for our sin our future would be empty and the truth is that a living dog would still be better than a dead lion. We were at a state in dire need of salvation. Paul says in Romans 6:5-6 “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held;...”.

ECCLESIASTES 9:11 *I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. 12 For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.*

The point that Qoheloth is making here, like the verses following, is that man from science, observation, and even by his faith in God is unable to determine what will happen to him from a worldly standpoint. Job is a good example of what Qoheloth is referring to. He is presenting an argument that in truth Christians cannot answer. No one knows how God will work in the future.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 Paul says *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* In 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Paul explains in contrast to Solomon, that likewise faith in Christ is something only God can open the door for, that will in turn by that faith save men from death.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Ultimately we can do nothing, and God is in control of everything, and this is what we are being directed to recognize here. If we think we have made ourselves we will be left to resurrect ourselves, our faith is not in God, Ps 100:3. Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:55-58:

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

In contrast to the life that Solomon shows man is principally under in faithless thinking, Paul shows we do have work and we do have victory when we are of those who have faith in Christ.

ECCLESIASTES 9:13 *This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: 14 There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: 15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. 16 Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. 17 The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. 18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.*

Wisdom is from God, man does not know where it comes from or where it goes.

ECCLESIASTES 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. 2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left. 3 Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool. 4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences. 5 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: 6 Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low*

place. 7 I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth. 8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. 9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby. 10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct. 11 Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better. 12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. 14 A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him? 15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city. 16 Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning! 17 Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness! 18 **By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.** 19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things. 20 Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Proverbs for fools and their thinking.

 PART IV
 REMEMBER THE POOR,
 FORSAKE TRUST IS YOURSELF
 AND REMEMBER GOD.

ECCLESIASTES 11:1 *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. 2 Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*

These verses have to do with charity and giving to the poor.

ECCLESIASTES 11:3 *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. 4 He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.*

What shall be shall be, lay that aside and go to work with the blessings of God by faith.

ECCLESIASTES 11:5 *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. 6 In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Be not be foolish; work and remember the poor [“cast they bread upon the waters?"]. Do the best with what God has given you in this life and trust that God will provide through the difficulties. Have faith.

ECCLESIASTES 11:7 *Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.*

Solomon is talking about God’s graciousness, and the sunny days where one can sow without fear. He is talking about the days of light or darkness where good and bad things happen to a man, such as they did with Job. It is not simply God’s creation that is the subject here, but also

God's blessings. These blessings also include the light of God's word where one can endure the days of darkness by faith.

ECCLESIASTES 11:8 ***"But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many"***

The days of darkness here are set against the days of rejoicing. Foremost these days of darkness have to do with those days of vengeance inflicted upon the many who do not believe. Remembering the days of darkness also has to do with knowing about them in the lives of unbelievers as well as where they superficially touch our own lives because of the fall. Do not be surprised even at the inevitable worldly misfortunes, trust God. Surly there are many more days of darkness for those who walk in vanity and blindness. On the other hand we who are in Christ are the children of light and of the day, too many Scriptures to list.

If one lives out his years toward vanity there will be overshadowing days of darkness which will overtake the days of light. There is simply not a multitude of choices when you are seeking God, you cannot serve God and mammon.

ECCLESIASTES 11:9 ***"...and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."***

Man endeavors to make his life pleasant in the fellowship of material things, but these things cannot give an answer for a reason to live. A car, friend, children, home, and various amusements and favorite occupations are things that can capture interest. In the meantime we live in a reality where we realize that unless we are abiding in Christ our lives are empty. Those who live in Christ, God will not abandon them, if we are the temple of God, God will care for us as He deems proper.

Although it is *"a pleasant thing ... for the eyes to behold the sun"*, one needs to grow up to see beyond the physical world and to know that God is at work regardless of our perceived surroundings. Such was the case with Jesus on the ship in the storm with His apostles. Therefore we should walk by faith and not by sight. And it is by this perceived faith that we can escape the vanity, and in faith the sun is always shining. This is the theme of the entire book of Ecclesiastes. At all points it is an overshadowing reminder for reflection.

ECCLESIASTES 11:10 ***Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.***

In other words, do not be overcome with sorrows, trust God in the lot that God has given you. The Lord said unto Cain in Gen. 4:6-7 *"...Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."* In the midst of the vanity of our lives, the vanity that screams for our attention, we need to realize that sorrow may be our intended God ordained lot in many things until we learn more about our Creator. And by that light, being able to see the vanity, we need to turn from it to escape and become free to find God. Unlike our invented falling apart vain world, God's world is a world of righteousness, where men should seek Him always.

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;***

The point that Solomon is making is that learning to walk with God is something that needs to happen while you are young. Consider the generation that perished in the wilderness. Once the evil days come, there is grumbling at and unfaithfulness toward the goodness of God.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth" (11:9) should be set against *"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth ..."* (12:1a). *"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth"* (11:9) is set against *"Remember ... while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them"* (12:1b) in that if you will not remember your Creator in the days of youth, and rather rejoice on in pleasure, then certainly all that can possibly await you is dreary days in which you will have no pleasure in them at all. Repent of the ways of this world and set a good foundation before it is too late and

you are set in evil ways and unable to repent. Hardness to sin can meld thorough your soul to where only darkness and blindness pervades.

ECCLESIASTES 12:2 *While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:*

Here this sun, light, moon and stars being darkened by clouds does not refer to the literal sun etc. Rather what this figure of speech has to do with is man not remembering God and all that is left is curses and judgments such as those seen in Deut 28.

Here, in the days of youth, the warning is that man can steadfastly forget God. This forgetting has nothing to do with forgetting religion, but rather steadfastly forgetting the simple commandments of God.

The death talked about in the following verses really has more to do with spiritual death. Physical death is something that cannot be avoided, but what can be avoided is these days of darkness and spiritual death. These days in 12:2-7 principally refer to the cosmological end of the age of the last day. Such dark days were also in the days of Egypt wherein Pharaoh's firstborn son died. Exodus 10:21 *"And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt."* Ezekiel 32:7ff:

And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. [8] All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD. [9] I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known. [10] Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall. [11] For thus saith the Lord GOD; The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee.

ECCLESIASTES 12:3 *In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.*

All these verses are headed for a man's funeral, but what we have here has to do with a city. The keepers of the house are comparable to the servant's Jesus tells of in Matthew 21:33 and 24:45. And as with the servants, so to with the strong men that run the city, workers, and those who have faith in them looking out of the windows. To cease from grinding bread at the mill, trembling, and bowing themselves has to do with a catastrophe where only the end to everything is imminent.

ECCLESIASTES 12:4 *And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low,*

Shutting the doors here has put an end to city life. Jesus said that in the days coming that *"because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."* And to flee the city before the doors shall be shut.

The quietness in the streets is stranger, where there used to be people interacting; now there are only the sounds of birds, possibly vultures or crows. The picture appears to be that, as the song of these birds rise as the sounds of the mourners of the funeral become low.

ECCLESIASTES 12:5 *Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:*

"Also when they" shows that we are talking about a city. With the voice of birds and the fear of high places and a fear of open doors, can be said to say that the birds are Roman eagles and the death of a people and the desire which God has no use for.

In Jeremiah the almond tree is a sign of judgment, Jer. 1:11.

ECCLESIASTES 12:6 *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.*

Here what is pictured is the end of life's concerns for eating and drinking mentioned previously. The silver cord that holds the golden bowl, seems to be reminiscent of weighing out coins to purchase goods. Likewise, the fountain of living waters no longer brings life to those who are thirsty.

These pictures here are of things that end. The silver cord is not to be fixed. The golden bowl is not repaired, nor is the pail for the well used again. The end here is permanent, it is not temporary, and these ways of man have an end here forever.

ECCLESIASTES 12:7 *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

The end here does not end with bodily death, but in this picture, life goes on and back to God and to that judgment mentioned in verse 13. In light of the foundation for the writing of Ecclesiastes, that there will be judgment, with equal certainty likewise there will also be life after death. If judgment is the said foundation of the book, it must be taken into consideration that all that has been said before has to do with arguments define it.

ECCLESIASTES 12:8 *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.*

These vanities are remembers again. This vanity, once we become aware of it is a warning, that should fasten ourselves to the truth, and to the love of God.

ECCLESIASTES 12:9 *"... because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge"*

The reason God gives us talents is to bring them to His people for His glory.

ECCLESIASTES 12:10

ECCLESIASTES 12:11 *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.*

Solomon says his words have been as goads, or that his words have been written to drive us to right thinking, toward the correct conclusion.

ECCLESIASTES 12:12 *And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. The accomplishments of man and the reasoning of the world are endless, yet all the study of them is weariness.*

The greatest accomplishments of man are found in his books, yet the words of man are marked by turmoil and weariness, his plans are vain. On the other hand, the words of the Shepherd are priceless, timeless and that which brings about success.

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

The whole duty of man is to love God and love ones neighbor. Yet with an absolute sense of certainty, we are left with judgments. If we have understood nothing else, we are to understand that we are to fear of God and to keep His commandments. The answer is simple and the solution of all that has been said before. Not only is judgment promised, but every vain work will be brought out to see if it be good or evil. The concerns of God's have principally to do with His fellowship with the righteous and with the day of judgment. However, not all man's sins will be mentioned, those sins he has purposely repented of will not be mentioned. Ezekiel 18:21-24 says:

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. [22] All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. [23] Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? [24] But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Likewise there is righteousness that shall not be mentioned to the man who does not repent. This is why it is necessary to keep you mind on day of the Lord, that one be found ready for the Son of Man when He comith.

COMENTARY ON ECCLESIASTES 12:13 THE VANITY OF HADES

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

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

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Introduction:

In this paper I am answering the questions of what is Hades, and all that has to do with it, as opposed to the vanity on earth as we know it. The reason for this essay is to define 1.) What happens to those who have not put their trust in Christ to take away their sin, and will rather stand before Him as a judge on judgment day and 2). What happens to those before they are personally accountable.

Please note here that there will be some conjecture, which conjecture should be considered nothing more than the same. What I have written here is only a feeble effort to see into something that God in His great unsearchable wisdom has sometimes said little about in precise detail. However, there is, I believe enough written in Scripture that should lead to appropriate speculation. The reason there is not as much written in Scriptures about Hades, as we would like to see, such as in Dante's Inferno, is that in reality there is really not much to write about in the first place. There is no progress, there is no activity, there is only sin shame sorrow and pain. Eccl 9:10 says *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor*

knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." We should rightly conclude that the vain works of man end here on earth. In Hades, if you have rejected the salvation of God, there is only inactivity and righteous judgment. Solomon is not contradicting himself in 12:13. The subject concerning Hades here has to do with the end of vanity.

I dedicate this work to God, and for our communion with Him in the Scriptures concerning His feelings in all these things.

Question: Are there different degrees of punishment in Hades?

Answer: The Bible tells us that someday there will be a judgment. And in this judgment men are judged according to their works: Revelation 20:11-12 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. [13] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

Here we read that the dead are judged only according to their works, what they did or did not do. That would be the same as to say they are judged by the Law of God, which is summed up in Mark 12:31-33 *"And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. [32] And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: [33] And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."*

Therefore because, as Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* we can know that these works only have to do with those who have not been regenerated. The works are manifest in all men, but not all men have new life in Christ. 1 John 3:9 *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."* The believer has the new nature which cannot sin. And it is not correct how the NIV translates this, *"No one who is born of God will continue to sin"* that's for salvation by works, your works instead of Jesus' works.

Jesus Christ defined what Hell was like in Luke 16. Here He presents the story of the Richman and Lazarus, where there is a Richman on earth opposite a Poorman covered with soars, and completely ignored. In the next life what we see is that the tables are turned. Now the Richman is in the place of the poor and the poor is in the place of the rich. The story proceeds as follows:

Luke 16:9ff *There was a certain Richman, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the Richman's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the Richman also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

We now have a definition of what are the "evil", and what are the "good things". Therefore we can expect from this story that our Savior gave us about Hell, that it can be comparable to being outside the city gates annoyed by dogs, whose only pleasure is to add embarrassment to being in such circumstances, as being found in Hell. The dogs offer no real comfort there. In the Bible

the dog is understood to be an unclean animal. In reality having a dog lick ones sores can be beneficial, but it can also be very dangerous, and result in more serious infections. From this story we should derive that any company one finds in Hell, will not be of any real help.

Lazarus was immobile and for all that he found nothing was pleasing. From his experience, all that was good bypassed him entirely. He was completely ignored and completely inconsequential to everything that went on inside the kingdom and beyond those gates of the Richman, which gates that he could not even come to. For there was a great gulf fixed that separated them. This would be consistent with where the Scriptures say these shall Isaiah 65:16 *“And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee . . .”* In other words it would appear that there will not be much going on in Hell to write about either now or in the hereafter.

Longing to be fed from the crumbs that fell from the Richman’s table, Lazarus was placed here at the gate of the house of the Richman strategically that he might receive perhaps some . . . crumbs. For Lazarus to prefer to be at the Richman’s gate, there must have been an advantage, the Poorman Lazarus would receive crumbs in order for that he would want to be placed there. Likewise the Richman in Hell was at the edge of Hell that looked over into Abrahams’ bosom. And although he is rebuked, like Lazarus he too did find more than some crumbs. He was answered to have Jesus come and preach the Gospel, even with proof by the resurrection of the dead just as he had asked for. So God may at times even answer the prayers of those in Hell, and they can very well be righteous prayers as well. Even that Jesus would come and save some from their sins. And God here is very concerned about what this claim might be, that it would be right to send someone from the dead, even though they already have Moses. He says they will not believe, they do not believe Him, but Jesus will be sent anyway. So nevertheless, God answers the prayer of the Richman in Hell. He seems to have made a point, as it reads through this story, that God will even consider even the prayers of the damned to prove His righteousness; How much more so will it be when His elect ask him to demonstrate His own righteousness. God here demonstrates that His desire to prove Himself more righteous, even in the sight of the damned. Do not suppose that God might leave any stone unturned in going even beyond all that is right to prove Himself even more righteous and the wicked clearly well deserving of their fate. Therefore we can thus rest assured that none of the wicked in Hell will be raising any arguments, for God would have already have seen fit in His infinite wisdom to have already answered them all, and to see to it that they will have no argument at all.

Therefore from this we have concluded that however much you have offended, likewise you will have the same place in the afterlife. On the other hand, Lazarus found himself in Abrahams’ Bosom, which was the abode of the righteous who were covered by the Lamb sacrifice. So, there are degrees of punishment in the afterlife. Furthermore Jesus said that the fate of Capernaum would be worse than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Matthew 11:20 *Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*

Question: What is the greater extent of these tortures?

Answer: Whatever was happening during the siege in Jerusalem, in either the first or second time?, we can read about it today. On the 10th of August, in A.D. 70 – (the 9th of Av) -- in Jewish calendar reckoning, the very day when the King of Babylon burned the Temple in 586 B.C., the Temple was burned again. Titus took the city and put it to the torch, burning the Temple, leaving not one stone upon another. But before this, and for some long time, the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem died in great numbers via starvation. Josephus writes *The Wars Of The Jews; Book 7, Chapter 8, Section 7: “And as for those that are already dead in the war, it is reasonable we should esteem them blessed, for they are dead in defending, and not in betraying their liberty; but as to the multitude of those that are now under the Romans, who would not pity their condition? and who would not make haste to die, before he*

would suffer the same miseries with them? Some of them have been put upon the rack, and tortured with fire and whippings, and so died. Some have been half devoured by wild beasts, and yet have been reserved alive to be devoured by them a second time, in order to afford laughter and sport to our enemies; and such of those as are alive still are to be looked on as the most miserable, who, being so desirous of death, could not come at it." As much as you can imagine seems to be the correct answer. It is God's wrath that is on display here, where Jerusalem is renamed Sodom in Revelation 11:8.

Question: What is the lesser extent of these tortures?

Answer: Those who did not accept Christ as their Savior will find themselves outside of the Holy of Holies, yet may be in a place similar to Abrahams Bosom if they have feed the poor, helped the widows and fed the fatherless. Jesus said in Mark 9:41 *"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."* and in James 1:27 *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."* Note that it appears that these judgments are not here to reform men, that for these it is impossible, but to find them a place suitable, where they should spend eternity.

For these it can be said that it may be no worse than that of the life of Lazarus. Lazarus was annoyed by many things, as well as in pain. However, for someone who would have feed Lazarus half of the time, then it would appear that they would have half the punishment and so on. To spite those who refused to feed the poor, God may very well have a place in Hell not too unsimilar to a life only less comfortable than that of Lazarus in Abrahams Bosom. However, if one will reject the Gospel, or wantonly engage in sin denying God our Savior His rightful place, the same two people will have two different results, because a greater sin has been committed.

Question: Is there any end or change to the confinement?

Answer: No. It is possible to frame an argument to say that things change, but there is one judgment, not two. And second, although it is possible to frame an argument to say that these things end, these judgments are spoken of in terms of eternity. Why should we now seek to make the go against the grain? There is a reason for the damned, they have made their place for eternity, and God will allow them to keep it. For more arguments concerning this question, see the book Redirectionism, and the chapter on Hell.

Question: Where do unbaptized babies go?

Answer: It would appear that in order for God to work out a just solution that He would have needed to allow those innocents born, who have died before an age of making a reasonable and accountable choice, that they should have to be allowed a second chance to enter the world to make a true decision, and here be born again. It is not possible that salvation happens in Heaven. These questions are worked out here, which is why Christ came. Little angles born here only for a moment of time, to be born again at another time unknown, but likely very near to what was originally intended. This underlines the belief that all things come from God, and that God is the maker of all things.

We know that God's plans cannot be thwarted. All that should come into the world will come into the world. And there is no way to enter the next world but through this one. This is the stronger argument, and not that there is some other way to either end up in heaven or in hell or anywhere else.

All those at the judgment are judged according to their works; infants have no works and therefore cannot be judged. It says in Hebrews that it is appointed once for men to die, and after this the judgment. This would have nothing to do with premature birth or children who have not been allowed yet to understand the world and choose the way that they shall go. And this would also be the case for those with mental disabilities, they too will need to be born a second time.

If God decide to simply remove His elect straight to heaven, where they are resurrected without a need first to be born again, this would be contrary to the normal workings of God, and seemingly not in keeping with His chosen way and plan for man's progress. In some cases God can choose simply not to resurrect those who are not of His elect. The process of birth itself is met with complexities, where there is choice for birth among many possibilities.

Of those who have reached an age of accountability, of them everyone has an opportunity to seek God. And if one will seek God (Romans 3), he will find Him.

Question: Why did God create the wicked?

Answer: All things are crated to prove righteousness. When men choose to reject God they remain forever to live out the rest of eternity to display their own worth and ways in light of truth. In one sense it could be said that the damned are in heaven. They are in fact now finally in the presence of God. It is only that they have no advocate to stand between them and the Father who is all righteous and all knowing, that they stand naked before Him without being clothed by Christ's righteousness. That they must forever endure and wear the sin and shame that they choose.

The Richman in hell does not ask to be annihilated, he only asks for the punishment to cease, and in this is the Richman asking to live on forever?, it is only that he wants to continue to live without being tormented any longer. He would have been happy to live forever and sin. He has got his wish, it's just no longer on his terms. There is a reason why those who have not been redeemed continue to endure in Hell, and it appears that it is to demonstrate God's judgment on what they have found in the world to idolize. The Richman only asked for better living conditions.

What purpose does it serve God to have people in Hell?

Because the people in Hell are not redeemed, they are dead, and they do not have the new nature which cannot sin they cannot change. They will always choose sin over righteousness. They will always choose the bad over the good. They will make sacrifices for sin to their own detriment. They will always prefer to bring honor to another God. They wish to be made righteous in spite of themselves.

Because the Richman in Hell is able to reason, pain is not such that he can only think about pain. He also will think about his family and have compassion. Likewise the kings and great men of the earth, when they see Satan arrive they too make some comments and ask questions and are able to incorporate some reasoning having to do who made the nations to follow after sin rather than after righteousness. It could even be argued that they now take a position that it is unthinkable for them to realize that the nations would follow after sin. Perhaps in this sense, they have forgot they are in Hell?

So even here in Hell God is able to restore the possibilities for righteous and right reasoning, but it is only through their being cut off from all that they desire.

But the reasoning that prevails here is not that the same as before, here now it is challenged no more against the truth. What is not happening in Hell is that these who avoided the truth now must deal with it, and whatever torments there are here now in Hell make that necessary so that they must always acknowledge the truth. Every knee must bow to Christ, and it would appear that this is out of truth, not out of coercion, men not knowing what they are doing or what they are doing it for.

Likewise, Abraham was able to communicate with those in Hell, who seemingly had repented, who seemingly had the new nature. Yet there was a great gulf fixed between them so that they could not cross over. This gulf appears to be for the righteous just as much as it was for the wicked. But there must be a separation, and this was based on the fact that both were not righteous for the same reasons. Hell seems to be about righteousness more than it is about punishment in this. That is that in order for these to contemplate righteousness they must be

confined to Hell. Whatever Hell is like, it is not worse than smelling your own rotting flesh laying outside the gate of a Richman who must only ignore you so you don't ruin his day.

It will be in the next life, that there will be forces from the inside or from the outside that will determine righteousness. Yet all will be made to be righteous, God is everywhere and He loves righteousness.

The state of the wicked in Hell is not simply to keep them righteous, always keeping them out of self induced delusions of themselves and of God. They are also there because by nature they are most wicked and God must punish them for it. They love, just as the dogs depicted here and in Revelation, to do violence to all that is holy, righteous, and good to satisfy every vain imagination of their ever devil worshiping heart of hearts. So there is ongoing punishment for whom they are as well, not just to keep them straight.

After observing such wickedness, it becomes clear why and how God takes such pleasure in His saints. And it says in the Psalms, in whom is all His delight.

It is insightful that the Richman, who was so famous on earth now is such a man that his name has been deliberately omitted and lost. Yet he was seemingly a good man on earth, as far as what is considered good by the good, that he had good friends whom he still cares for, he does not ask about Lazarus, but only that he would now attend to his friends.

People in heaven may not be able to see people on earth, but they will be able to see people in Hell. Yet there is some kind of conversation between that gulf fixed, but it can only be after the type of Abraham.

Question: Do the wicked express their hatred of God in Hell?

Answer: The punishments are such that in Hell they bring some kind of repentance. Here is where the Richman prays to Abraham that he would send men to preach the Gospel now taking real concern for others. Punishment is such that it promotes some kind of righteousness. If however God's hand is removed there is no doubt that sin will continue just as before. The Scriptures say that every knee will bow, so therefore it will be that in Hades, men will be forced to acknowledge God, whereas now here they can try and ignore Him.

Question: What is the mental state of those in Hell?

In Hades the Richman now is concerned with salvation. He asks for a drop of water. He would like some assistance, and this must be typical because the Bible says for this reason there is a great gulf fixed. It would appear that the righteous understand only in part why the wicked are forever cut off from the righteous, even in the afterlife. So, what appears to be happening here is that the wicked are forced against their will to think in terms of righteousness, guarded against blasphemy, and pierced with an intimate knowledge of their neglect of the poor, and of their rejection of the Gospel. They continue in unpleased conditions under stress from what they have done, or not done concerning righteousness. If however they would realize, or have their punishments decreased, they would soon revert back to their original state. They do not have the new nature or the Holy Spirit to guide them. Their mental state appears to be in better health, it is only that they are under punishment that is not the problem.

Question: Is Hades a place of solitary confinement?

No. The Richman understood that his family was not there, as well as he could even identify Lazarus and Abraham. If and where the Bible tells of outer-darkness or solitude, it is only as that any company in such a place if of no benefit whatsoever. This is why the Richman asks that his family not come to the place. Normally, one would expect the complete opposite answer. Jesus tells of towns going down to Hades, as well as when Satan arrives, the most sinful of all, he is publicly recognized, Isaiah 14:16. What happens in Hades is essentially nothing other than repenting, like that of Judas, and that throughout eternity.

Question: What is the difference between the Lake of Fire and Hades?

It would seem that there should be no difference. It is only that now the reason why the wicked are there is now clear.

Question: What is Hades for a Christian?

When Jesus suffered and died, what it was that He suffered was not the torment of physical pain, nor was this is fear of man, that He should suffer at the hands of men. It says in Galatians 3:13 *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree:”*. To be separated from God for Christ and for a Christian means is to be in Hades. No physical punishment even slightly compares to such a thing, to be regarded as unclean in the presence of God and separated from Him, there is absolutely nothing worse. In this place nothing is held together, all things have fallen apart and there is only a deep cutting pain with great sadness more that can be imagined by any man. In the heart and mind of man it is to lose everything completely. In this place there is no rest, one cannot even breath, and every moment is met with great difficulty and all hope is lost. There is no faith that God is with you, your Christian mindset is completely lost, this is Hell.

For the unbeliever, who does not know God, Hades is not to be separated from God but to have to deal with His anger, which is the same kind of torture, but on a different plain. Here there is no joy no love no happiness, and no peace but only torment.

Question: When will Satan be in Hades?

This question has to be answered by those who hold a idealistic redirectionalist view on the second coming. If we are now in an age that never ends, if the age we are now in will stay as it is forever, if the fundamental definition of the second coming has already happened, when will Satan be put in Hades? Rev. 21:10 *“And the devil that deceived them [1-10] was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

The best answer is that Jesus is coming again literally, and that latterly God is going to end the physical world and put Satan In Hell at the end. This has stronger arguments in that it is very simple, Satan, fallen angles are still here in some form or another.

Another answer is that Satan went to Hades and is there now. But then where are we now? Perhaps we are in a parallel timeline approaching AD 70. Our age, and every other age to come is in existence at the same time before AD 70. Time does not necessarily run in a linear fashion. There are ages and our age runs parcel to that generation 33-70 AD. We are not just redirected to think like AD 33-70, we are actually living somewhere in the last days. Time is stacked in layers like stacks of computer paper that is connected together to make one long sheet. This is why Satan is able to enter our time. He does not go into the future, he traverses through ages horizontally.

Luke 4:5 says: *“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.”* This verse shows, perhaps, that this has to do with future history, and that Satan knows what it is already.

To then explain the millennium, it is a 1000 years and is a recapitulation of Rev 19. It is a perfect time in the sense that it will keep repeating itself. There will always be an antichrist, and Christ will always defeat Him in the end. Every future age is to have similarities with AD 70 in the sense that faith and Christ’s martyrs will be victorious over those who wish to make man God.

