

“Solomon Extols His Wisdom”  
Ecclesiastes 12:9-14  
(Preached at Trinity, March 31, 2024)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As Solomon prepares to bring this book to a close he pauses to glory in his own wisdom, the excellence of his conclusions. Some question if Solomon actually wrote these words or whether they were from the pen of a later writer. Why would Solomon suddenly switch to the third person? And would Solomon have been so arrogant as to boast of himself and his wisdom?
2. We don't need to doubt Solomon's authorship in this passage. It was not unusual for ancient writers to speak of themselves in the third person. Both Moses and David spoke this way.
  - a. Paul used this literary device in 2 Corinthians:  
**2 Corinthians 12:2-4 NAU** - "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows-- such a man was caught up to the third heaven. <sup>3</sup> And I know how such a man-- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- <sup>4</sup> was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak."
  - b. The Apostle John referred to himself as the disciple "whom Jesus loved."  
**John 13:23 NAU** - "There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved."
3. Solomon isn't so much glorying in himself as he is glorying in the treasure of wisdom. After all, this was God's gift to him above all others. And it is by this wisdom that Solomon was able to arrive at the ultimate conclusion.
4. Solomon makes several statements before giving us his conclusion.
  - I. Solomon's heart was to teach and lead those under his rule.  
**1 Kings 3:7-9 NAU** - "Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup> "Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who are too many to be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup> "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"
    - A. This must be the heart of all who have leadership over God's people.  
**Hebrews 13:17 NAU** - "Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."  
**Ephesians 4:11-12 NAU** - "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;"

- B. Solomon took his responsibility seriously. He wrote a treasury of proverbs for the instruction of those he was called to serve.
1. Ecclesiastes is in the genre of wisdom literature but the best known of Solomon's proverbs are known to us as the Book of Proverbs. Solomon is actually one of several authors in the Book of Proverbs, but he is surely the best known.
  2. Solomon revealed his pastoral heart as he expressed his purpose for writing at the beginning of proverbs.  
**Proverbs 1:2-4 NAU** - "To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, <sup>3</sup> To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity; <sup>4</sup> To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion,"

II. Solomon was concerned about truth.

**Ecclesiastes 12:10 NAU** - "he Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly."

- A. **Verse 10** describes the riches of wisdom
1. "delightful words used correctly"
  2. Words of truth. Wisdom is truth applied to life.
  3. Human beings are often fallible in their search for truth. They often come to wrong conclusions because they fail to comprehend the nature of truth.
  4. Too often today it is presumed that if you proclaim it loud enough and long enough and can convince enough people of your claim it will be accepted as truth. There is no such thing as absolute truth. Everything is relative.
- B. Solomon knew the importance of absolutes.
1. A world without the overarching rule of God is vanity of vanities. God's rule is definitive and absolute. He is the source of all truth. Truth is definitive and absolute.
  2. If there is no absolute truth can we really make bold assertions about anything? Nothing is certain. There is no good, no evil. There is no right or wrong. Subjectivism reigns. Whatever you feel is right is right for you, and it cannot be questioned.  
 And whatever you feel God to be is what God is.  
 The Gospel is reduced to nothing without absolute truth.
  3. Solomon knew that God is the sum of all things.  
**Ecclesiastes 3:14 NAU** - "I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it,"  
**Ecclesiastes 7:13 NAU** - "Consider the work of God, For who is able to straighten what He has bent?"  
 God is absolute, infallible, perfect.  
 God is the author and determiner of all truth.  
 God is the standard of truth.  
 Truth is intrinsic to God. God is truth.  
 Truth is basically declaring things the way they are, the way God has determined them to be. Any other viewpoint is wrong or false.

4. We can only know what God reveals.  
**Ecclesiastes 8:17 NAU** - "I saw every work of God, *I concluded* that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun. Even though man should seek laboriously, he will not discover; and though the wise man should say, "I know," he cannot discover."
  5. Solomon set his heart on seeking truth. Of knowing wisdom.  
Delightful words, words used correctly.
- C. This has important Gospel implications. The Gospel is the ultimate expression of truth.
1. God's Word is His perfect revelation of truth.  
**John 17:17 NAU** - "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."  
The Bible is authoritative, demanding, imperative.  
It makes absolute statements of truth regarding the Gospel.  
**Romans 3:23 NAU** - "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"  
**John 14:6 NAU** - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."  
**Acts 4:12 NAU** - "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."
  2. The Gospel IS truth.  
**Ephesians 1:13 NAU** - "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,"
  3. Gospel truth is founded upon Christ and none other.  
**John 14:6 NAU** - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."  
**Ephesians 4:21 NAU** - "if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,"  
**John 1:14 NAU** - "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
  4. The Gospel alone provides the wisdom which leads to salvation  
**2 Timothy 3:15-17 NAU** - "and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
- D. **Verses 11-12** drive home the essence of Solomon's teaching.
1. They were powerful words. He compares his message with the goads that direct the farmer's oxen, or the carpenter's nails that are important to the strength of the building. Paul refers to the Word of God as a sharp, two-edged sword.
  2. The Word of God is singular. It is message of the Shepherd, a possible reference to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.

- a. **Verse 12** – There are many other sources of information. There are endless books and blogs. A man would weary himself in all the words. But be warned, there is only one truth.
- b. Only the Scriptures are the sure Word of God.  
**2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU** - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."
- c. The Bible is THE truth. Truth is exact. Truth is particular. Truth is singular. The point is there aren't many truths. There isn't your truth and my truth. There is absolute truth, singular truth. Truth is the way it is. Not the way we think it should be.

### III. Solomon's grand conclusion, the ultimate wisdom.

#### "Fear God and keep His commandments"

##### A. This was Solomon's claim from the beginning.

**Ecclesiastes 3:14 NAU** - "I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so worked that men should fear Him."

**Ecclesiastes 5:7 NAU** - "For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God."

##### 1. It was the frequent teaching of Solomon his proverbs.

**Proverbs 1:7 NAU** - "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

**Proverbs 9:10 NAU** - "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

**Proverbs 14:27 NAU** - "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,"

**Proverbs 15:33 NAU** - "The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, "

##### 2. The fear of God is that grace in the heart of the believer that brings him to approach God in a proper manner – with awe and reverence and obedience

##### 3. This Godly fear is the highest of Christian graces.

John Calvin – "it is comprehensive of all true godliness, or the worship of God."

Samuel Davies – "The fear of the lord implies all the graces and all the virtues of Christianity and all that holiness of heart and life which is necessary to the enjoyment of everlasting happiness."

##### B. Solomon's grand solution to the futility and vanity of life.

##### 1. Do you want protection against the emptiness of life? – fear God.

##### 2. Solomon had been taught this by his father, David who expressed this in the Psalms.

**Psalms 111:10 NAU** - "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*; His praise endures forever."

##### 3. To have the fear of God is to have that divine wisdom imparted to us enabling us to think right thoughts about God and to have right thoughts about what He is doing in the world.

Conclusion:

1. This has a New Covenant application.  
The ultimate source of all wisdom is the Lord Jesus Christ, our Shepherd.
2. Solomon was the wisest of all men, but there was one greater.  
**Matthew 12:42 NAU** - "*The Queen of the South* will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."
3. Jesus is the epitome of all wisdom and knowledge.  
**Colossians 2:2-3 NAU** - "Christ *Himself*, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."  
**1 Corinthians 1:30 NAU** - "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,"
4. Those who know Christ know God. Jesus is our great High Prophet.  
**Matthew 11:27 NAU** - "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*."