

# The Vanity of Scholarship

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18; Jer 9:23-24; 1 Cor 1:24, 27-31

## I. **THE QUALITY OF THE SCHOLAR** (12-14, 16)—seeks truth/meaning

A. **Credentialed**—knowledge, experience, position of respect and resources

1. **Position**—*king over Israel in Jerusalem*
2. **Opportunity**—*access to world's most educated, best informed*
3. **Time**—*hours in the day, a lifetime of observation and experience*
  - a. He has time to study
  - b. He has a lifetime of experience.

B. **Sincere**—*wants to find the truth, not playing intellectual games*

C. **Thorough**—*careful, diligent, conscientious*

1. What he has objectively observed
2. What he has personally experienced

D. **Honest**—*doesn't sugar-coat anything, honest about his findings; not what he expected.*

1. **About himself**—his limits as a mortal man
2. **About the world**—The more he sees, the more he weeps.

## II. **THE FRUSTRATIONS OF THE SCHOLAR** (13b, 18)

- A. **Striving After Wind** (14)—futile, chasing or trying to shepherd wind
- B. **Bent Out of Shape** (15a)—the dysfunction we can see but not fix
- C. **Deficit in Accounting** (15b)—something missing we can't explain
- D. **Applying Traditional Morality** (17)—Traditional morality does not satisfy; neither do absurdity or the practice of immorality.

## III. **THE WITNESS OF THE SCHOLAR** (13b, 18)—

- A. **Scholarship can't provide the meaning of life.**  
We can't help asking the ultimate questions but we can't ultimately find the answers apart from God.
- B. **The world is broken and we can't fix it.**  
The closer we look, the more problems we see.  
The deeper we look, the more dysfunction we discover.  
The more we study, the more complicated everything becomes.
- C. **We need more than a Teacher; we need a Savior.** (Jn 14:6; 1 Cor 1:24; Rev 5)