



In Much Wisdom is Much Grief

Ecclesiastes 1:15 – 2:10



~ A sincere student of Scripture will pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment, open their Bible, read the Biblical text covered by this report, then read the report — and then read the text from Scripture again. If you follow that plan, these reports will be much more meaningful, interesting and understandable in your mind and to your heart. Our consideration of Ecclesiastes has just begun and, if you haven't read our first two reports, I highly suggest you take a few moments and go back and do so now. What the Spirit of God is speaking of in this passage is God's answer to the modern day philosophy of humanism; which is also known as and called liberalism and progressivism. It has many other labels — but it's all the same thing. We are making experiments in the laboratory of life with King Solomon in this Bible study.

Humanism has saturated the sponge of global society; to the extreme — where an excess bi-product of human thought and emotion now drips continually. From the doctorate achieving program at university to the kindergarten classroom of crayons and scribbling, mankind sets forth humanism as the bedrock foundation of his morals, ethics, learning and functioning in a society. A huge part of the philosophy of humanism includes placing an over-emphasis on education and learning. Well, this section of Scripture that we are going to consider is where Solomon will exhaust the subject of education, and demonstrate that education can never satisfy the heart of man. Obtaining the knowledge of truth is a profound weariness and bore to the flesh; which fully explains why so many people neglect to study their Bibles properly, correctly and completely.

Our modern day education system is built entirely on humanism; and that is the reason morality is never — ever — taught. Each natural man of the world desires only to do that which is right in his own eyes; and that which is in his own best interest. Whatever the liberal deems right is right; and

that which he deems wrong is wrong — irrespective of factual truth. Naturally, in order to have morality, there must be a constant, unchanging standard of right and wrong; and man cannot provide that. God is the One Who has established our standard of right and wrong and, believe me, a clear line has been drawn, according to the Word of God. Because man rejects God and, therefore, has no reference point for right and wrong, our schools, businesses, and community at large are now desperately plagued with crime, drugs, sexual immorality, and outright lawlessness. These societal plagues have reached a level that can no longer be controlled. The problems we presently have are the result of a departure from Biblical morality — and an adherence to humanism, liberalism, and progressivism. It is the very way in which we are moving as a world society today....

I

15 That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

16 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.

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

~ Solomon is ferreting out man's own planning and man's scheming nature in an attempt to work out the problems of life by reaching some happy compromise. Modern philosophy generally leads to cynical and pessimistic views of life. We cannot take a man or woman who is alienated from God because of their sins and expect an education to solve their problems. Education will not remedy the problems we experience in this life. Philosophy and psychology do not change human nature; in fact, they don't even correct the old nature. Man has absolutely no way to straighten out human nature. As the twig is bent, so grows the tree. It's natural for all life to grow crooked. We may educate our human nature, teach it some

manners, and clean it up; but that which is born of flesh will always be flesh — and that which is born of the Spirit will always be of the Spirit. That's why we have to have a new birth in the first place. This is one of the greatest principles found in the Word of God.

In light of myriad recent disastrous problems in American schools and on college campuses worldwide, education has come under the scrutiny of thoughtful people. The committees and boards have designed a novel explanation for the problems they've created: they blame political inquiry for basically all nefarious happenings in their world. Well, that may be true about students inquiring more, particularly with the immediate and rapid sharing of horrible news from every corner of the world, because it's only natural that all people are becoming more aware of what takes place today. However, to say the reason for the problems on campus is an increase in information is deterioration — not improvement! See, we have literally come to the day Isaiah warned us about, when men will call evil good and good evil — it's definitely here! To make any attempt at refuting these truths reveals a complete and woeful ignorance of and an unwillingness to live in reality.

I have repeatedly stated on this safari — and I am going to continue to repeat it — that psychology is not an answer to man's problems. The mind tricks, medication and psychiatric clichés that attempt to explain and then solve the problems of life cannot simply be wrapped in a veneer of Bible-sounding stuff, and labeled a solution. The Word of God has all of the solutions to the problems of life; but merely turning pages like a roulette wheel, and grabbing a few verses here and there while calling it the answer, is like taking a placebo for pancreatic cancer. Many men do quite well financially mishandling other souls. Overall, the so-called Christian public is simply being hoodwinked. Well, why don't we get back to the Bible and turn to Christ? There's no easy solution for our problems; and studying the Word of God requires a whole bunch of mental perspiration. Oh, how that is needed today — in the home, the school, the marketplace — and particularly in the church.

Being wiser and richer than the others, Solomon apparently possessed a certain level of arrogance and conceit. Remember, Paul said, “... *knowledge puffeth man up.*” Knowledge inflates the natural mind to dangerous pressures when that person feels they are a bit smarter and better-educated than others. Well, unfortunately, education must fall back on experience; and experience is something we cannot trust. Most people attempt to test the Word of God by their personal experience; but their experience must be tested by the Word of God. That’s the only way our experience can be tested to determine if it withstands God’s standard.

Interestingly, there is a very fine line between being wise and playing the fool! So many smart men in this world have played the fool. Solomon did; and he is one of the most notable examples. We call our Bible the King James Bible; but King James had nothing to do with the translation of the Bible. He was totally incapable of doing any translating; and his nickname was James the Fool! He was called that because that’s what he was; although he believed himself to be a very smart and capable individual! Someone has said, “... *when ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise.*” Well, apparently, there is, at least, a certain amount of truth in that....

18 For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

~ The more we know, the more our problems increase. As a result, modern life has become tedious. It feels futile; and the scientific technological gadgetry produces nothing but tension. Modern devices required to function make our life almost unbearable. People cannot get away from the television and computer; those things have literally become their masters. Entertainment controls many people’s entire lives. Machines produce most of the work performed around us today, and they simultaneously contribute to a wholesale pollution of the earth. We call technology wonderful as it drives us to madness. Remember, Solomon did not live in the technology age, and I doubt he foresaw the so-called industrial revolution – but he knew exactly what he was talking about....

II

1 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.

~ Solomon moves on to experiment with pleasure when philosophy, and the laws of nature and learning were no longer enough to satisfy him. I'm

sure he tried everything in the realm of pleasure; and, before we complete Ecclesiastes, Solomon will have tried to gain satisfaction of life from everything known to man. Naturally, King Solomon was able to overindulge in anything he wanted. Very few men – even today – could do the things Solomon was able to do. With a thousand wives, I am sure Solomon became saturated with sexual fantasies; just as man is today — in epidemic proportions. I’m sure Solomon was an expert at sex. Most people think sex should be taught in schools and in church, but I think that’s a horrible idea; because sex-education has not done anything to reduce unplanned and unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, or seriously damaged emotions; particularly on the part of women. Well, Solomon’s first experiment yielded nothing new to him that would be of lasting fulfillment or that could bring new life – and neither will this one in this chapter.

Most Christians just want to have a good time, relax, and enjoy themselves, their family, and friends all the time. Some groups take cruises, and others go to camps or conferences that have become nothing but social gatherings in the name of a religious philosophy. Now, to be honest – because I always am honest with you readers – if someone asked me that, if I could be imprisoned or executed for writing my reports, would I still write them? Well, I love writing these reports for you, but I have to admit, I am not sure how many I would write under the duress of penalty of incarceration or death. See, these questions are totally ignored as we go about street preaching, attending conferences, and making our marriages and homes Heaven on earth. We’re simply determined to chase the tail of life like the dogs we are. I hate to tell you this, but Jesus isn’t interested in our happiness; especially when there is unconfessed sin in our life! Jesus wept over Jerusalem, but there’s no one weeping over that city today. No, friends, God is interested in our *holiness*. Christians are trying to use religion to get as far away from trouble and problems as they can. Solomon says pleasure isn’t the answer to life down here; and Solomon could have produced a show that would make Vegas and New York look like sideshows in a village carnival.

So, our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with Solomon continuing to probe and make experiments in

life apart from God. Houses, horses, vineyards and women were nothing but hobbies for Solomon. What we need to begin to understand is that we have been placed here on earth for an extremely solemn and serious purpose of God. That doesn't mean we are not to have joy and nice things; and it doesn't mean we are to go around fasting in sackcloth and ashes our entire lives. In fact, the child of God should have joy in his heart at all times; irrespective of their external conditions – as we learned in Philippians. Here, however, Ecclesiastes looks us straight in the eye and tells us that pleasure seeking is simply not a route that a genuine Christian or man of God can go; it will not lead to joy – but to death. That's the way of the world. I hope we can all receive the message of this mysterious and very different book of the Bible as we continue on from here. This is where things truly become weird ~

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