

Looking for Life in all the Wrong Places. (Ecclesiastes)

Guide Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Feb. 19th

Satan is a master of deception. (2 Cor. 11:14) God plants “eternity” in each heart. (Eccl. 3:1,11) This means that while God has placed us in time, He has also placed the awareness (hunger) for eternity in our hearts. Satan seeks to “satisfy” that hunger using disappointing (worldly) distractions. This is ultimately what he offered Eve! As the “god of this world”, he still uses the things of this world to distract us from focusing on the things of Eternity. While he failed this with Jesus (Luke 4:6,7) he has a much better track record with others! This includes the “wisest” mortal who ever lived! As a young “king” he was overwhelmed by the challenges and so sought God’s Wisdom. (2 Chron. 1:7-12) Satan sought to “seduce” Solomon using the things of this (his) world. Solomon began to focus on his own Kingdom and used his vast “wisdom” and “resources” to pursue meaning and satisfaction “under the sun.” He journals his “journey” in Ecclesiastes.

Solomon sought “peace” through:

1. Pleasure. Eccl. 2:1-3 *“I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure:”*

A. God is the very source of pleasure. Ps 16:11 *“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”* Nā’im: delights!

B. Satan uses this world’s temporary “pleasures” to tempt us.

1) Moses recognized this! Hebrews 11:25,26

2) Solomon fell into this trap. Eccl 2:10 *“I withheld not my heart from any joy”* Śimhâ’: pleasure
1 Kgs 11:1,3,4 *“Solomon loved many strange women... he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines: and his wives turned away his heart after other gods...”*

2. Production. (accomplishment) Eccl 2:4-6,10 *“I made me great works; I builded me houses... for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was my portion of all my labor.”*

A. This also left him empty! 2:11,17-19 *“Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought... and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit...”*

3. Profit/possessions: Ecclesiastes 2:7-9

“I got me servants and maidens, ... also I had great possessions ... above all that were ... before me: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me ... the delights of the sons of men... So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me”

A. Consider his income from Gold alone.

1) 120 Talents from King Hiram. 1 Kings 9:14

2) 420 Talent of Gold from Ophir. 1 Kings 9:27-28

3) 120 talents of Gold from the Queen of Sheba. 2 Chr. 9:9

4) Annual Tribute money: 1 Kings 4:21

5) Countless amounts from others. 1 Kings 10:24-25

1 Kings 10:14 *“Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold...”* One talent = 75 pounds! 666 talents each year = 50,000 pounds of gold.

In today’s dollars, that’s almost \$1 billion/year (just in gold) for 40 years!

Conclusion:

Solomon had almost unlimited: Authority, Ability, Opportunity, and Resources
With which to find “fulfilment”.

What did he find on his “search for significance”?

1) Sin’s Pleasure is seasonal: Heb. 11:25

- Eccl 12:5 *“desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home...”*
- 1 Jn. 2:17 *“and the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof...”*

2) Production (accomplishment) also left him empty. Ecc. 2:11,17-19

“Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought... and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, there was no profit under the sun... Therefore I hated life; ...for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labor 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 wise or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labor.

This is also vanity!”

3) The pursuit of Profit/Possessions are ultimately frustrating.

- Eccl 5:10 *“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.”*
- 1 Timothy 6:9,10 *“they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

By the end of his journey he realized that death was inevitable and wrote that pursuing “life under the sun” was: *“Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.” Ecclesiastes 12:8*

Application:

So what’s the Point? 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, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

Solomon “wasted” most of his life in the vain pursuit of purpose “under the sun”, only to realize that it’s what’s “beyond the sun” that really mattered! Mt. 6:31-33; 1 Cor 10:11-12

Far too many are following the same foolish paths!

How do we “cross over” to experience the “abundant life” of which Jesus Spoke in Jn. 10:10?

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me...” John 10:27

Instead of pursuing temporary purpose *“under the sun”*,
why not find it by walking *“with the Son”*? Mt. 11:28-30

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”