

Ecclesiastes 1

Sunday 9/26/2004

As you know, we have been coming through the Bible, and as we have been coming through the Bible, we have been bringing your attention to different aspects of the books of the Bible. We showed you how five of the books really show you the pre-millennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ as we came through it.

Then when we got into the book of Job, I told you how the book of Job began the five wisdom books in the Bible. These five books in your Bible basically represent everything in the rest of the Word of God. We talked about the book of Job. We talked about the book of Psalms. Last week we covered the book of Proverbs, and I showed you how the book of Proverbs was really the mind of God. Job being the sufferings of God, Psalms being the heart of God, and Proverbs being the mind of God. I showed you how the book of Proverbs is really the baseline for all truth in the Bible. If there is any book in the Bible that really opens up the mind of God, it is the book of Proverbs. I feel so inadequate in the things that I said last week, even though they were all true and everything was there. There is just so much that you cannot do. Even if we had all the time in the world to do it, we still could not get it done the way we need to. That book is something that continues to give us revelations about life and ourselves, even as we grow older in the Lord, and the Holy Spirit of God can show us those things.

Today we are going to talk about the book of Ecclesiastes. Where the book of Job shows us the sufferings of God, the book of Psalms shows us the heart of God, and the book of Proverbs shows us the mind of God, the book of Ecclesiastes shows us the mind of the Spirit. Romans 8:27 says that God's Spirit has a mind. That mind, the Bible tells us in Romans 8, searches the hearts of men. When you come to the book of Ecclesiastes, here is what you have. We are going to exhaust this today, and you are going to go home with a lot of information today that is going to help you understand a lot about life and a lot about why things are the way they are today, because the book of Ecclesiastes does something that really no other book of the Bible does.

Let us ask God's blessing this morning as we begin to study. Father, we do thank You and praise You for Jesus. We love You. We ask You now, Lord, in a very special way to open up our hearts, show us the truth that You have for us, give us wisdom and insight into all that we have before us today. Let us learn, let us glean, let us take home and apply. We thank You for those that are here today. We pray, Father, You will bless us as we study Your Word. In Jesus' name, for sake we ask it. Amen.

I. The Mind of the Spirit

The book of Ecclesiastes has been called the philosophers' book of philosophy, and I believe that to be true. Where the book of Proverbs shows you God's perspective of the world, and the book of Proverbs takes you through the issues of life and shows you what God's opinion is of it, the book of Ecclesiastes does something that is amazing, but totally different. Where the book of Proverbs shows you what God's concept is, remember now, the Holy Spirit of God searches the hearts of men, and the book of Ecclesiastes is the end result of that search.

I gave you a great verse last week in the book of Proverbs, one of many.

Proverbs 19:21

> There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

The book of Ecclesiastes lays out and shows us, Christians, men with understanding, women with understanding, it shows us those devices through philosophy. Solomon is the wisest man that ever lived. He is certainly, as we have studied already, the most unique man in all the Bible. I do not know of another man in the Bible that wears as many hats as Solomon does. He is the greatest type of Christ. He is one of the greatest types of the Antichrist. He is the wisest man that ever lived, and yet in a lot of ways, he is the dumbest man that ever lived. It is incredible. It is a situation where he is certainly unique. He is the wisest man that ever lived, the Bible says, but he is left out of God's Hall of Fame over in the book of Hebrews. Now go figure that one out. He is a mystery guy.

I believe that there are so many aspects of Solomon that God chose him to use to show us so many different things. Because Solomon is the wisest man that ever lived, here is what he does in the book of Ecclesiastes. He takes every device that man is going to come up with in the next 5,000 years of history, every philosophy, every 'ology' of man that he can come up with, everything that man can.

Let me give you a definition of philosophy: Philosophy is an unsaved or an unregenerate man who rejects God or rejects the Bible, and through the wickedness and the devices of his own heart (Proverbs 19:21), with the help of the devil, comes up with alternatives that put man in charge of himself and his own destiny rather than in God. Philosophy is nothing more than a man-made device that man uses and supports his position to get him around accepting Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior. That is simply what it is.

Solomon goes through every 'ology', every philosophy. Solomon goes through the devices of a man's heart and lays them out in every chapter. At the end of the book, he makes one of the greatest statements that has ever been made down through history by any mortal man. He says, "Okay, I have laid these things out. I have looked into these things. I am the wisest man that ever lived. God has given me the ability to study them and to lay them out and to look at them. I have laid them out." The book of Ecclesiastes is the mind of the Spirit by Solomon doing that. The Holy Spirit of God laid out, wrote out, laid bare for you and for me all the devices that an unsaved man will come up with in his life on planet Earth and wrote them in a book. At the end of that book, the wisest man that ever lived simply said this:

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.

This is the key to the book of Ecclesiastes, much like the book of Judges' key verse is the last verse, and much like many of the books of the Bible. He says, "The conclusion is this: fear God

and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." We will come through that a little bit later on.

II. Warnings Against Philosophy

In your Bible, you have two warnings. You have many warnings, but there are two particular warnings. The first warning is about science, falsely so called, over there in 1 Timothy 6:20. The second warning is found in Colossians 2:8, and it is a warning against philosophy. One warning against science, one warning against philosophy.

Colossians 2:8

> Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Clearly showing us the composite here of philosophy is vain deceit, traditions of men, and the rudiments of the world. We are going to remember that. We are going to come back to that just a little bit later on. The book of Ecclesiastes shows us the mind of God's Spirit, which we are told searches the hearts of men. As I already said, the book of Ecclesiastes then is the result of that search, laying out for us everything that you as a Christian and I as a Christian are going to find and experience as far as the devices of man's heart. The thing you have got to realize, and you have got to get this one simple basic truth down, is that all the teaching in the world outside the Word of God exists for one purpose: to get you around the issue of trusting Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. It is as simple as that.

III. A Brief History of Philosophy

When understanding the danger of philosophy and understanding how it works in the book of Ecclesiastes, I am going to take just a few minutes, and I want to help you understand philosophy by giving you a brief history of philosophy, because I think this is vital from the Bible standpoint. I think that it is very vital that you get a basis from which you can look at these devices to see how they develop, because it is quite an incredible thing. I am going to give you here in the next five or ten minutes what I got in about 160 hours, but we do not have time for that. We will do what we can do.

When you come to your Bible from Genesis, probably to First and Second Chronicles, at least up to First and Second Samuel, you find that the nations on this planet have no real philosophy. All there is are pagan traditions, there is mythology. There are all of the things that you find, you know, they have named the constellations, and what we call astrology today, they called it astrology back then. They have told the story of the stars based on the Babylonian mysticism and the Egyptian, from Genesis 6. You have all these things floating around, which tend to build religions and mythology, their traditions, their stories. Every culture has its own religion. Every culture has its own female deity that they worship. Every culture has some form of the sun. Every culture has its own story that goes along with that.

But by the time you come to First and Second Samuel, when David comes on the throne and Solomon, you will find that the world is impregnated with the Old Testament Word of God. You will find that literally, you do not get this in school, you never will, but you will find that during the time of David and certainly the time of Solomon, the whole world knows who God is. That does not mean they accept Him, but it means that God is known throughout the world. We see examples of that by the Gentile nations coming into Jerusalem, Queen Sheba being one of them, who meet with Solomon because they have heard of the fame of all that Solomon's kingdom is. This is played down in the modern day secular educational system simply because they are anti-Semitic, they are anti-God, they are anti-Bible, and they want to play down the nation of Israel. So you will never hear about it as far as how great that kingdom was. But during that period of time, God's name was known around the known world. The reason for that is because Solomon's reign, as you know, is a picture of the millennium. During the millennium, the book of Hebrews says very clearly that the whole world is going to know who God is.

After we see Solomon leave, and we have studied this already, we get into Second Chronicles, we find that the kingdom gets split and then it goes into apostasy. We know that God draws a line in the sand, so to speak, in our Bible and in history. We have talked about it before. We see the end of the kingdom of heaven in the Old Testament, and we see the start of the times of the Gentiles. During that period of time, for the next 400 years, till the first coming of Christ, for the next 400 years, these are called the great silent years. God gives nothing to man from heaven. The only revelation of God that man has is what he already has written in the Old Testament. By the way, just as a kind of a piece of sirloin steak to throw out to you, you can take home and eat later, there are 400 years from when God got silent at the end of Second Chronicles to the first coming of Christ when He brought about His Son. There are 400 years from the writing of the King James 1611 until the second coming of Christ when God reveals Himself. In between those two times, there is nothing written from God. So all this other stuff you get is worthless if you just follow the line of your Bible, but that is more we have got to have time to get into today, and I probably just ate some tape up that I should not have eaten.

So we begin to understand it. We see during this time the great Gentile nations: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Where Babylon was a military nation, when Persia comes along, Persia becomes a political nation. It is with Persia that the Jews get to go back, but then we have Greece. The Greek Empire becomes the greatest empire as far as knowledge and wisdom is concerned, as far as the world is concerned in the history of mankind. The Greek Empire impacted the world in such a way that it set the stage for modern day philosophy. In fact, when you go back and you study in secular history books, and you will study the Greek Empire and even the Roman Empire, those two empires are called the classical civilizations. In other words, they are civilizations that put about for us a classical way of thinking, which we call philosophy today.

When the Greek Empire comes on the scene, as I said, it impacts the world in an incredible way. You are going to find that with the Greek Empire, you find the three great philosophers that all the world knows about.

1. The first one, of course, is Socrates. Socrates says, "The only thing I know is I do not know nothing." He thinks his philosophy of life is "no harm will befall a good man after death." He lays down the basis for much of the philosophy that is carried on traditionally.
2. He has a pupil. That pupil is a second great philosopher. His name is Plato. In his book, *Apology*, he states that all governments, all nations, and all people should be run by a select group of philosophers. Of course, we see this come to light a little bit later on, we will talk about.
3. He has a pupil. His star pupil is a guy by the name of Aristotle. Aristotle teaches a pragmatic form of philosophy, which simply says whatever works is what is right.

You will find that these three men and their teachings, as they lay things out, really impact the world. To this day, the Greek Empire is looked at as the seed of all knowledge. Alexander the Great, the great military campaigner, by the time he is 30 or 33 years old, he has conquered all the known world. He follows as Greece puts herself into all the colonies that they conquer, you find the wisdom of the Greeks. It impacts the world to such a degree that even our democratic form of government comes from a man called Democritus, who you find with the Greek Empire. The very basic seeds of our democratic society are formed with the Greeks. You cannot go to a college in America today where the sororities or the fraternities are all categorized by Greek letters or Greek symbols, because the Greeks are always associated with wisdom and knowledge.

At the demise of the Greek Empire, about 100 BC, all this great philosophical wisdom, all the great teachings of Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato, and all of the things that they brought, they have formed now into their country, into their, I mean they have immersed themselves with the philosophical ideas of life, and not everybody agreed with everybody, but it is a hodgepodge of all these great things. But it all came down to one great concept that the Greeks and the Romans, and unfortunately the United States of America, all fell into, and just about any country in the world today. It comes down to the concept that the chief pleasure is the chief good in life, and that we exist for one reason, and that is to have as pleasurable a life as we can. Of course, at the demise of the Greek Empire, about 100 BC, when you find the battle of Carthage with the Carthaginians and Roman David and all that little stuff that goes on in there, you find that they are one, totally pagan; two, completely sports crazy; three, completely sexually perverted; and yes, number four, they are run by a select group of philosophers that have torn apart the Greek Empire to such a degree and eroded it to the place where it has just collapsed upon itself. If you cannot see the connection between that and the United States of America today because of philosophy, I will give you one better than that. If you cannot see that and the breakdown of the church today because of philosophy, then you know what, you are certainly blind and cannot see the things the way it is.

Rome conquers them around 100 BC, like I said, through the Carthaginians and all that. They fight back and forth and they take over for a while that great Phoenician city in North Africa, and you know finally about 100 BC Rome comes to power. When Rome comes to power, we find again philosophers, and Rome hitchhikes off of what Greece does. You will find that the Roman Empire now is a vast network of roads. In fact, we have talked about this, I think it was on a Thursday night where somebody asked the question, and the phrase is that all roads lead to Rome

because of the fact that back then it did. Rome conquered the known world by the time that Christ shows up. Rome is running all of Europe. She is running all of Africa, North Africa anyhow. She has got colonies absolutely everywhere. We find now that the Roman Empire, their seat of learning and understanding is in a place in Egypt called Alexandria. Alexandria around this time, about 100 BC up to about 200 AD, Alexandria is the seat of the world's knowledge. In there exists one of the greatest libraries, the great Alexandrian library, that you are ever going to find in all of the ancient world. All of the teachings of the great Greeks were housed there, and you find that all of this is coming about because in these 400 years between the end of the kingdom of heaven and the first coming of Christ, the devil made sure that by the time Christ showed up and the Word of God came, there would be 400 years of counterfeits on this planet by which everything would be trying to just take away from the Word of God. This is when your Apocrypha is written. This is when all of the things that take place that you find that come up later in Christianity that are supposed to be real, and of course they are not.

You find during this time, 100 BC up to about 1000 AD, you find guys like the early guys like Pantaenus, Philo, Clement of Alexandria, and of course our old buddy Origen. You begin to see that the philosophy begins to shift. Here is what they did in Alexandria. I need to tell you this. Here is what they did, and I am making a long story short, but this is a lot less boring than the guys that I read to have to get all this information, trust me. Here is what they did. Down in Alexandria, they had all the works of Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato. They also had a guy by the name of Aesop. It was tough to swallow, so nobody really read him. But during this period of time, they brought all of these teachings together, and they also had the writings of Solomon. They also had the Old Testament. What these men did is that they brought about different forms of philosophy, like theism, like deism, like paganism, and we will talk about them a little bit later on, where they began to mix and match Greek, Roman, and Old Testament Bible together. They began to correct the writings of Solomon. They began to take from the writings of Solomon and the Greeks and the Romans and all of the Babylonians and the Egyptians, and they began a hodgepodge of mishmash called philosophy that had a little bit of everything in it. From that would be spin-offs of knowledge and wisdom as an individual took those and began to cultivate a new way of thinking. Clement of Alexandria, as Philo, the word philosophy comes from him. You are going to find that men like Origen and men like Pantaenus, all in Alexandria, Egypt, all corrupt the Old Testament. Now Origen, one of our boys that lives after the time of Christ, around 180 AD, he takes the New Testament and does the same thing that Pantaenus and some of these boys did with the Old, and Philo did with the Old Testament. All these men are connected with the Alexandrian library there, the great seat of worldly learning.

Then we come up to about 300 AD with, of course, most of you know this, the great turn of events with Constantine, where he takes the pagan Roman Empire and makes it the papal Roman Empire. Now we go from pagan Rome to the Roman Catholic Church around 313, 325 AD. This is talked about in your Bibles in Revelation 2:12, where it is called the Pergamos church period, which means much marriage. It simply means a time when the Christian church was married to the philosophy of Alexandria and the Greeks and the Romans. From that we see all of the stuff that creeps into Christianity, and with that we see more philosophers, men like Origen, men like

Augustine, men like Alcuin, men like Thomas Aquinas, and men that brings us up to about the Reformation.

During the Reformation, you know what happens. These are called the Christian philosophers. There are not any worldly philosophers yet. You have the worldly philosophers in Greek and Rome, but when Rome switches to the religious side, all we have now are religious philosophers, religious philosophers within the Roman Catholic Church. That is why all of the priests in the Roman Catholic Church, many of them are atheists, many of them are philosophers, many of them have no belief about anything about the Bible. They are all humanists because they have been trained in the humanistic concepts of Alexandria. Even though they are in a church called the Roman Catholic Church during this period of time, there are very few of them who really believe the Bible and God the way that they even should. That is why you will find that men like Martin Luther, men who come out of the Roman Catholic Church, Savonarola, men who come out of the Roman Catholic Church, many of them at their beginning are deities or they are philosophers, and they embrace the truth, they find the truth, they get saved, then of course they leave the Roman Catholic Church.

But it brings us up to the Reformation. At the time of the Reformation, we find where the world is shocked and wrecked and the Roman Catholic Church gets clobbered and of course the gospel goes out to the world. After that, we find that the Roman Catholic Church institutes what they call the Counter Reformation. They open up a period of time where they are going to regain what they lost. Of course, they do this through education. They do this by the Roman Catholic Church sitting down and saying, "We will control Europe and the minds of Europe because we will put together a secret organization called the Society of Jesus, called the Jesuits, under Ignatius Loyola, and we will take those men and we will infiltrate into every university in Europe." 200 years after the Reformation, the Reformation was killed, the Reformation was dead, the churches were dead because the Roman Catholic Church through the Jesuits, went back in and reacquired the minds of Europe through education. You know how they did it? Through philosophy. They took philosophy. That is why every dictator in the European theater in the world, that is why every philosopher, every dictator, Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, every one of them were trained by the Jesuits. Many of them started out to be priests and wound up switching over and took their philosophy of life to bring about the destruction of this world through the Roman Catholic Church as the church brought everybody back. Thomas Hobbes, George Berkeley, from Berkeley in California, David Hume, Christian Wolff, Isaac Newton, Spinoza, Voltaire, Kant, Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was so caught up into all of the philosophy and that stuff that he actually hated Christianity and Christians so desperately that, and he believed, again, that the world should be run by a group of select psychologists, that he started his practice on Easter day in contempt for Christianity. Little did he know that he was right in tune because Easter is not a Christian day to begin with as far as the Bible is concerned, but he did not know that. He has figured it out since, but too late now.

Anyway, you have Frischbach, you have Nietzsche, and these are the boys that run from about 1500 to 1900. But at the time we get to Nietzsche, we find that philosophy has come to the point now where man, and I told you the definition of philosophy, where man has brought himself to

the point where he does not need God anymore. The concept with Nietzsche is, of course, God is now dead. That is where these men are called the German rationalists. These are the men that are the European thinkers that take the basic concepts that come through the Roman Catholic Church from the Greeks, from Plato, Aristotle, and mix it and match it and bring it about to take it over from there. From 1950 to our day and age we live in, we have men like Menninger, Maurer, B.F. Skinner, J. Adams, Gosser, Narramore, Rogers, and right up to your old buddy Dr. Phil. All of these guys today are hitchhiking off of the things that were done back there. We just change it and add it as you will see in just a little bit. They are all run by the Roman Catholic Church. I do not mean that these men particularly are getting paychecks by the Roman Catholic Church every month to do it. I am saying the institutions that train them were Jesuit. They had one goal, that is to destroy the Bible and man's life and to operate in the realm of philosophy.

You see, the Roman Catholic Church has one advantage that we do not have. I care what you think today about the Bible. You cannot be a Bible-believing Christian and not believe the Bible. You cannot be a Baptist today and not believe the Bible. But you can be a rank pagan atheist that does not believe in anything in the world about the Bible and still be a good Roman Catholic as long as you do not leave the church. You see, that is the difference. So they act, because I know where your mind was going, "Well, how can the Roman Catholic Church do all these terrible things?" Because the Roman Catholic Church has one goal, that is control and command. They want to control everything and command everybody. The way they do that is by letting you do whatever you want to do. As long as you do not leave the church, you can believe what you want to believe. That is why in Africa there are Roman Catholic priests who are witch doctors. They do not care that Monday through Friday they are doing a hoo-ba-hoo-ba-hoo out there and doing all the things that they do. As long as Sunday they are baptized Roman Catholics. That is the mindset that of course they have. The evidence of this is because the Roman Catholic Church builds into the education, the system that you, who are educated, been to college, not you guys, but you become more loyal to your school than you ever would the Bible. That is what they want. That is why you find such an intense loyalty. I will tell you the truth. That is why they build into it all the sports, all the things that draw you back in. That is why they have the Alumni Association. They want an intense loyalty about their school, because the Roman Catholic concept is, believe in your school. You know what? That is the first thing that they ask a Baptist preacher today when he is going to candidate for a church, "Where did you go to school?" That is the first question they want to know. You know what they want to know? They want to know where your alma mater is. The whole Roman Catholic system wants you to be faithful to your alma mater. Whatever school you came from becomes the premier concept of your life, because it is that school that gave you truth. The devil satanically through all this stuff, and the average American, the average European cannot even see it, the average Christian cannot even see it, that the devil wants you to be more faithful to your alma mater, whether you are lost or you are saved, than he does the Word of God.

I do not know if you know this or not. Alma is Hebrew for virgin, mater is Greek for mom or mother. He wants you to be more faithful to virgin mother, your alma mater, than he does the Word of God. See how subtle it is? That is where philosophy takes you. That is where it goes. We are in trouble, because that is just the end of page one, and I have four more to go.

IV. Structure and Themes of Ecclesiastes

The book of Ecclesiastes means "the preacher." Every preacher ought to understand the book of Ecclesiastes, because you are up against what the book of Ecclesiastes takes head on, and that is the philosophy of this world. It shows the man of understanding what he is up against.

The breakdown of the book is really easy.

- Chapter 1 through chapter 4 simply takes under the heading "All is Vanity."
- Chapter 5 through chapter 10 talks about the devices of man's heart.
- In chapter 11 and chapter 12 you hear Solomon's conclusion.

We will talk about that just a little bit. He hears the conclusion of the whole matter. Now, the book teaches several absolute truths about the Holy Spirit of God in history that you have to see.

1.) First of all, it teaches that the Holy Spirit of God runs in a circuit, a pattern. I want you to look at Ecclesiastes 1, and I want to pick it up in verse 1 and read some verses here. Follow with me.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-7

- > *The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.*
- > *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?*
- > *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.*
- > *The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.*
- > *The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirlleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.*
- > *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.*

I do not know how much you can pick out of that, but let me just make it easy for you. You have all three aspects there, showing you that the absolute truth about the Holy Spirit of God, God in history, always run in a circuit. Verse 5 says there the sun also arises, and the sun goes down. That is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a "his," Malachi 4, Psalms 119. The next one in verse 6 says the wind, type of the Holy Spirit of God, the wind goes to the south, turns about to the north, the world about continually, and it comes back. It has got circuits. The last one, verse 7, is the word. All the rivers run into the sea, showing you that God is a circular pattern. The Holy Spirit of God has a circular pattern, and the Bible is a circular pattern. We have talked about it before, and you are going to find the greatest thing that these books lay out is those three aspects. You are going to find that the Holy Spirit of God, in Genesis 1:2, filed a flight plan. The Bible says the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water. God's Spirit begins to move, and you never find it stopping or resting anywhere throughout the Word of God. The book of Ecclesiastes shows you it

has got circuits. It runs according to a pattern. It runs according to a plan. That plan is given in the Bible as east to west. That is why every move in the Bible, east to west, is good. That is why every move west to east in the Bible is bad. It is as simple as that. It is pretty simple.

2.) The second thing you want to see is the cycle of history itself. History always repeats itself. You are told this in Job 8:8-10, where he says, "If you want to learn, ask the fathers." Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, "There is nothing new under the sun." Of course, this is probably the greatest key to all of the Bible and Bible history. The book of Ecclesiastes shows you that man through time just reshapes, repackages, reforms, remixes, rematches, the old phony baloney philosophy from Aristotle, Socrates or Plato, and all the boys that we mentioned before, puts a new bow on it, new package on it, gives it a new paint job, brings it up to dumb, stupid people who do not have any understanding and says, "Look, I have got something new." When the truth of the matter is, that which is called new is not true, and that which is true is not new.

I told you. It is like a bowl of chili. Chili cook-off. Two things on my mind today, chili and Twinkies. The Bible is in there someplace. I am looking forward to good chili and praying for Twinkies. That is where I am at. But anyway, that is what it is. When you make a bowl of chili, who else is making, I do not want to offend anybody by you. You, you, you make a chili in a deal, honey. You are. Okay. Any other women going to do chili? I thought, you are going to do chili. Barb is going to do chili. Oh boy. Okay. You know what you all do. You know why it will all taste different? Because you all got different ingredients. Chili is just like philosophy. You have some base things, rudiments, traditions, vain deceit. Then you put it all together. Then you have your own. Those are the basics. You cannot make chili without beans. You cannot make chili without hamburger. Those are the basics. But then you have your secret ingredients that nobody in the whole world, not even God knows about. That is what brings it all into fruition to make your bowl of chili. But the bottom line is it is just like philosophy and really all philosophy and all chili is the same. Cause the end result, no matter what your spices are, what you do, it still gives you gas. So the bottom line is that is the great similarity between the two. I am telling you, man, that is how this thing works.

3.) The third thing that he lays out here is simply this: everything under the sun, everything under the sun is an illusion. You learn this truth by studying other places in the Bible, Egypt, one, the book of Daniel is another. When Moses goes in before Pharaoh, he goes in with miracles of God. Those miracles of God that Moses does are the absolute irrefutable, authoritative things of God. But you ever notice what Pharaoh does? Pharaoh calls in magicians. When Daniel goes before the King to give interpretation, Daniel has the infallible, absolute final authority, the Word of God that he speaks. What Nebuchadnezzar brings up, to counter it, is magicians. Now you find where one is a picture of the world, Egypt, the other one is a picture of the world system, Babylon. We do not have time to window all out today, but you find magicians in both cases. Why? Because magicians cannot reproduce anything. They do not do magic. I am impressed. I always try to watch them, but I am too fast. I mean, too dumb, too slow. I guess I watched David Copperfield one time make a 747 disappear. I watch a lady float in the air, and they are cutting, throwing underneath there, and at the top, and she is still floating. I mean, I do not understand that. I mean, that is a pretty good trick. I mean, I do not see any wires. It is not like Howdy

Doody when you used to see the wires glinting in the light. You know, from the TV thing, you say, "Hey, he is a puppet." No, this woman, I have seen all kinds of stuff. I have seen them put people in there and put them in a box that that box was just square. Put a woman in there, and you close the door, and they put swords all in it, and take the swords all out, and they open the box, and the lion comes out. Now, I mean, there is nothing under it, nothing over it. No, I do not figure those things out, but I know this. It is not true. I know this going in. If an unsaved man in his stupid little fooling arounds on Earth can put such an illusion together to fool you and me that you watching it cannot see it, how much better illusion must the devil be able to put on that you and I can look straight at it and not see it unless you have got a book that says, "Watch this, watch that, watch that." You know how you learn what the magicians do? You get a magician to break down the trick and show you. It does not happen very often, but every once in a while, they will show it, and they will show how he does it, and it is all illusion. What you have in the Bible is the magician's book of tricks, illusion. This is how to basic 101. You get understanding how the illusions take place, and that is why everything under the sun is an illusion. It is not real.

In fact, there are 10 vanities in this book.

- There is a vanity of wisdom.
- There is a vanity of labor.
- There is a vanity of purpose.
- There is a vanity of ambition.
- There is a vanity of fun.
- There is a vanity of money.
- There is a vanity of selfishness.
- There is a vanity of fame.
- There is a vanity of covetousness.
- There is a vanity of reward.

All of these vanities, and there are 10 in the book of Ecclesiastes, show you that everything under the sun without God in it is absolutely worthless and it is vain and it is vanity, and there is all an illusion because these are the 10 things that we invest our life in trying to attain, trying to get, and when we get because the devil is sleight of hand and he masks it and he hides it and we cannot see the trickery and we do not see the illusion of it, by the time you are 80 years old and you are laying on your deathbed, you will finally say it, but you are too old and too weak to do anything about it. That is how he operates. That is how he works. Everything under the sun is an illusion.

4.) The next thing he shows you is that what is really new is above the sun. If you want what is really new, it is above the sun in the Bible: a new birth, a new Jerusalem, a new song, a new heaven, a new earth, a new covenant, a new name, and a new nature. They are all above heaven. They are not below it. Everything that is new is above it. Everything that is not new, that is pretended to be new, is underneath of it.

In the book of Ecclesiastes, you find a word missing. You need to mark this. You only find it one time in the book of Ecclesiastes. You need to find in Ecclesiastes 9, where he is making a

reference to something else, but not particularly how it is used everywhere else in the Bible. You will find the word knowledge. You will find the word wisdom, but you will not find the word other than at one place. You will not find the word understanding. In the book of Ecclesiastes, because I told you last week, understanding comes from the Holy Spirit in Job 32. In the book of Ecclesiastes, you find that word missing.

You go through the book, chapter 1 through chapter 11, you will find 34 philosophies laid out, where he defines those philosophies.

- In chapter 1, Epicureanism.
- In chapter 1, Metaphysics.
- In chapter 2, Hedonism.
- In chapter 2, Fatalism.
- In chapter 3, Pragmatism.
- In chapter 3, Agnosticism.
- In chapter 3, Theism.
- In chapter 4, Fascism.
- In chapter 4, Paganism.
- In chapter 5, Deism.
- In chapter 5, Capitalism.
- In chapter 6, Socialism.
- In chapter 8, Gnosticism.
- In chapter 9, Modernism.
- In chapter 11, Liberalism or Humanism.

There are 19 more throughout the book. You will find that what he does is he goes through detail, and I will not go through the detail on him now, because when we started our church a while back, we went through the book of Ecclesiastes on a couple of Thursday nights, and all of those are detailed out on CD that you can get them if you want to go through them. We certainly do not have time to do it this morning, but they are all there. He lays out all of these, and we find that a new key phrase comes into our vocabulary, a key phrase that we find that we have never found before in the Bible, and it is the phrase called "vexation of spirit."

These philosophies, these devices in a man's heart, when they come about, and they come into our lives, and we embrace them because they are illusions, because they are not true, because they are certainly not new, and because we forsake the things of God, and we put God out of our lives, God out of our minds, God out of our country, God out of our schools, God out of everything, and we think that all these great philosophies are going to sustain us. We find out that a great new truth comes in called the complexity or the compound effect, that the more you have without God, the less satisfied you become, and the bottom line of all that is vexation of spirit. Vexation of spirit is nothing more than you trying to put all of these things into your life without God, finding out that there is no satisfaction in this life without the things of God. There is no satisfying the flesh. That is the greatest single truth about life you and I will never learn. That is why our lives are in a mess, that is why they are so complicated, that is because we get into these things, we operate with a philosophy of life, "Oh, I am going to party all night, do what I want to

do, I am going to live my own life," and it looks good and it sounds good, but as time goes on life gets more complex, the ramifications of your sin is more, it spreads out from you to your wife to your kids, to your family or whatever, and down the line as you go it gets more complex, it gets more compounded, and pretty soon your life is a mess, your marriage is a mess, everything is a mess, and there is no peace in your soul, and your spirit is vexed by the things of this world. You will never come to the conclusion that there is no satisfying the flesh outside of Jesus Christ, and then you cannot satisfy the flesh, the Bible just shows you how to crucify it daily.

When I start to deal with people in problems, in counseling, one of the first things that I do is I tell them a stupid little story, but it illustrates this point and every point that I want to make. The story is this: I come home one day and my wife tells me that the refrigerator is broken, and we need to call the Maytag repairman and he will come over and fix the refrigerator. Well, me being the macho type that I am, I am not going to concede to a Maytag repairman until I look at it first. So I open it up, you know, and I said, "Well," I say, "I remember when we bought this, there was an owner's manual with it, and the owner's manual had a back page says, 'Here is what you do if this does not work.'" So I am going through all the drawers and I find looking for the owner's manual and I call my wife at work and say, "Where is it at?" She said, "I do not know. I have not seen it since we bought it. I think you threw it away." And I said, "No, no, no, no, I would never throw it away. It is here someplace." After hours of searching, I have come to a great conclusion. I am an intelligent man. I am a fair guy. I know up and down, left and right. I can work things out. So I suddenly pull out the manual for the toaster and decide I am going to fix the refrigerator with a handbook from the toaster. Now that is probably the most absolutely absurd thing that I could ever do because I am looking at this thing and the toaster is not even shaped like the refrigerator. The toaster does not hold as much. It does not do the same thing. Nothing is the same, but I am intent on fixing this refrigerator with a handbook from my toaster. The absurdity of that is after a hundred thousand years of working at it, my refrigerator is still broke and nothing is fixed because I cannot fix it with that book.

The absurd of that is simply this. You are made by God in God's design and God gave you a carbon-14 unit. You think you are human, you are not. You are carbon-14 units. God made you out of the dust of the ground and in the dust of the ground are the same 14 elements that you have in your body. God made you out of the dust of the ground. He made you a carbon-14 unit. Then He wrote a handbook for fixing and maintaining carbon-14 units. You trying to solve your problems with philosophy out of the Greeks, out of the Romans or anyplace else other than the author of life who wrote the handbook to fix it is as stupid as me trying to fix my refrigerator with a handbook from the toaster. It will not work because there is no satisfying the flesh outside of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God. If there is one point you have got to get out of this that you never will, but I never will, it is the fact that there is just no satisfying the flesh and that is what gets us into complexity of problems and vex our spirit.

V. The Seasons of Life

Ecclesiastes 3:1

> *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

Then he lists from verse 2 down to verse 8, 28 things.

Ecclesiastes 3:2-8

> *A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*

> *A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

> *A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

> *A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

> *A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*

> *A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*

> *A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

28 things. Now he says everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under the sun. We have already talked about the times and the seasons. We know that you and I have a season. We talked about the four seasons that you have and I have. Psalms 1, many other places that we have looked at. Here in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, there are 28 things that match the 28 days the moon goes around the Earth in conjunction with the sun. So what we have are 28 things that are everything in our lives that we deal with. 28 things that match up to 28 days the moon, type of the church, goes around the Earth, picture of the world, in conjunction with the sun, type of Jesus Christ. These, my friend, are the issues of life. You know what? Philosophy cannot answer any one of these. These are the issues that you and I are faced with every day. These are the decisions that you and I have to make. These are the things that are connecting to these things that we have to struggle with everything in our life. These 28 things are the issues of life that we face that make the world go around and philosophy cannot answer a one. But anybody with understanding can, for the book. The Word of God is the only book that defines each one of these in the Bible sense from God's perspective that shows you the purpose of the season under the sun.

When the world talks about being born, they do not talk about the same way God does because God defines being born in Job 5:7. Same with dying, Ecclesiastes 7:2. You want to learn about planting? It is Jeremiah 18:9. You want to know what it means to pluck up that which was planted? 2 Chronicles 36. You want to know what a time to kill is? Genesis 9:6. You want to know what a time to heal? Hosea 6:1. You want to know what it means to break down? Jeremiah 1:10. Build up? Jeremiah 31:4. You want to know what it is to weep? Psalms 126:6. You want to know what it is to laugh? Psalms 126:2. You want to know what it is to mourn? That is Luke 19:41. Time to dance. It is not talking about the shimmy shimmy shimmy you were doing last night. It is 2 Samuel 6:14. Cast away stones. 2 Kings 3:25. Gather stone. Joshua 4:9. To embrace. Proverbs 4:8. Refrain from embracing. Proverbs 7, Proverbs 5. Time to get, time to lose. Judgment to Christ. 1 Corinthians 3. Time to keep. Revelation 3:8, Revelation 16:15, Revelation

3:11. Time to cast away. Isaiah 31:7. Time to rend. Matthew 27:51. Time to sow. Proverbs 31, saw it last week. Time to keep silent. Proverbs 26:4. Time to speak. Proverbs 26:5. Time to love. Psalms 119:97. Time to hate. Psalms 139:22. Time to war. Revelation 19:11. And the time for peace. Revelation 20. All defined for you in the Bible and from those definitions every issue of life gets laid out and gets defined. You know why? This is the book that defines it. This is the owner's manual for every carbon-14 unit that was ever made. I am telling you the book gives the sense and without the sense man is left to himself to give the definition for being born, dying, planting, healing, breaking down, building up, breakdown, nervous breakdown, switches in your eye, whatever the case may be and the whole thing falls apart because man has no concept of what he is laying out.

VI. Three Great Conclusions

Lastly, Ecclesiastes 11 and 12. Three great conclusions of life on planet Earth that you need to see. I have given you a pretty fair evaluation of the book of Ecclesiastes. Thursday night Bible study ought to be hot and heavy this week because you go through those things, but I am telling you, let me talk to you about the three great conclusions. I have told you before and I will continue to tell you this. There are only two things in this world, in this life worth investing your life in because they are the only two things that are eternal. One of them is the Word of God. The other one is the souls of men.

1.) In Ecclesiastes 11:1, you see a great conclusion. I want to read this to you. I want to make some comments for you and I want this to be one of the great conclusions out of everything that we have seen that the world has to offer. We are getting ready to look at the final result that Solomon says, but we are close with the book, but here is the concept.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

- > *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.*
- > *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*
- > *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.*
- > *He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.*
- > *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.*
- > *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.*

One of the greatest passages in the Word of God, and he says in 11:1, "Cast thy bread upon the waters." When you come through the Word of God, you will find that bread is a picture of the Word of God. The book of Exodus where the manna comes down, I think it is Exodus 16 some places back there. You are going to find John 6, Jesus Christ calls Himself the bread of life which

came down from heaven. It is all an incredible picture. Psalms 78, you know all kinds of places, and yet he says cast thy bread upon the water. Waters are a picture of people, nations. You find that over there in Revelation 17:15 and Isaiah 17:12, and he says cast thy bread upon the water for thou shalt find it after many days. It is a great principle. Isaiah 55:11 says this: it says that the Word of God does not return void and it likens it to water, rain coming down on a planet. The Bible says the Word of God does not return void but accomplishes the purpose where God is sent. There is always one thing you can relax in when it comes to putting out the Word of God and that is that God will use it. You can throw something out and nobody will ever give it. You can give somebody your phone number and they will never call you. You can give somebody your address and they will never come by and see you. You cannot give somebody the Word of God and God will not use it in their life at some point. That is a promise you have got.

Now the job is to us and the conclusion is this: we live in a world, we live in a world that is totally against God and everything that it is. We live in a world that has embraced every one of these philosophies, these theologies, these 'ologies'. We live in a world that is filled with man's devices to get man around the Lord Jesus Christ and we are the only stop between that and hell. The Bible says that your job and my job is to cast the bread upon the water. That is the job of this church. That is the job of every individual. That is what I am telling you. That is why we as a church have to find a way to penetrate this culture. Now we know how to do it. I know how to do it. The problem is getting us to the point where we are ready to do it. Starting out that we realize, you know, and I am going to tell you we have talked about how that growing in the Lord and all that is a balance, is the key, and I am telling you here is the dilemma we all face. Here is the dilemma we all face. Me and you. It is real simple. The problem is balance. You know what? You go to a church where they do not teach you the Word of God. You just get a lot of pigskin stuff, a lot of fooling around stuff and you know what? It has an effect on you and you never come to the place where you get lazy and you get lazy because nobody is keeping you accountable and human nature is such you get lazy. You do not get anything so you get lazy. You know what? There is an extreme to that on the other side and that is when you go to the church that you get a lot and you get everything and you do not have to dig for a lot yourself and you can come every Sunday and take a tape and fill up the next six months of your life studying the Bible and somebody does it for you. There is the tendency to get lazy there too.

Now there lies the danger. The only thing that keeps you and me from getting lazy is getting shot at. Being in the war. A combat soldier, a guy in the rear with the gear that sleeps all the day and gets to eat all the food he wants is different than a guy that is out there where every move he hears maybe somebody trying to kill him. He will stay on top of it a lot quicker than the guy in the back that knows that he does not have to think about anything because somebody else is protecting everything and he is in a protecting environment and that is the same problem we find ourselves in every church on the face of this planet and they fall into two categories. There is one over here where they do not give you anything and you get lazy or you go where you get everything you could ever want. It is the greatest thing in the world and you just love it and you would not trade it for anything in the world and you love it. But the bottom line is you still get lazy because it is easy to get out of the battle and the only way to stay in the battle is to find out a way to penetrate your culture with the Word of God and then do it and then take the hits as they

come and that simply is casting your bread upon the waters. We have got to be witnesses. We have got to invite people to church. We have got to win people to Christ and when we have events that we do, we, and I know, I know there is no way you can invite the same people over and over again because they are going to shoot you. I understand that but the bottom line is when we have events that we can open it up and there are different avenues you have got to use it. You have got to see it as a tool just like a craftsman sees the tools in his toolbox and knows how to fix whatever he has got to fix because if we do not, we fall into this lackadaisical society mindset where we just come, we get fat, we get all the Bible but we really do not do anything with it because we are so satisfied with what we have got and in these verses he tells you of that urgency. He says, "You will find that after many days you will get it back." God's Word does not return void.

Then he says, "Give a portion to seven and also to eight for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." We know that God's number is seven. We know that God does everything by seven and yet he says not only go seven but go eight, go over and above what God expects of you. The only thing that will keep you from falling back and me from falling back in a lackadaisical attitude is not just giving, I am not talking about money now, I am just talking about your relationship with God, not just giving the status quo. You have got to give above that because any athlete that ever won any award, event, Olympics, gold crown, silver crown, whatever the case, he did not get it by just doing the status quo. He won it by going over and above and let me tell you something the judgment seat of Christ is going to be the same way and you better grasp it. He says, "Give a portion to seven and also to eight." Get your head out of the clouds and realize where you are at, what you are doing, keep your priorities focused and then do what you need to do because you do not know what evil, you do not know where you are at, you do not know where God has put you, you do not know what is around you, you cannot see into the spiritual world. You have got to cover all the bases and you have got to cover them good.

Why? Verse 3: "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." You know what he is saying? God's judgment is coming and just like when the clouds get full of rain and water they dump it, God's judgment is going to come just as surely as the clouds get filled up with water, the rain falls. Here is what he says: "If the tree," people are like trees in the Bible, one time in the New Testament Jesus said that a guy, "What do you see?" "So I see people walk around like trees." And at Christ it is called the great bay tree, the righteous say people called palm trees. You are going to find that people in the Bible are like trees and he is saying if the clouds be full of rain they empty themselves, God's judgment is coming and if the tree, a man, falls to the earth, if the tree falls toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falls, there shall it be. He says you be your man about your father's business, you better be casting the bread upon the water because when that tree falls it either goes to heaven or hell, north or south, and wherever it goes that is where it stays. Incredible conclusion.

Then he says in verse 4, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the cloud shall not reap." You know what he is saying? Do not focus on what is around you. Do not focus on the cloud. Do not focus on the opposition. Do not focus on what scares you. Do not focus on this. Do not focus on that. He is saying, "Hey look, if you observe the wind, you will

not sow." Forget the world, get on course, hold the line, understand that your job and my job against the world of philosophy, all the ideologies, all the things that go on, our job is to cast the bread upon the waters. We will find it after many days. Give over and above what God has called you to do. Judgment is coming and when a man is dead in hell, that is where he is at. He says verse 6, "Sow in the morning, sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether thou shalt prosper either in this or in that." You do not know what God is going to do with it. You just know that God is going to do something with it and the job of this church and the job of you and me as individuals is to put out the Word of God, contact as many people as we can, show him Christ, do everything in our power to get them to understand where they are at, where we are doing and bring them to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.) Then the second thing that he says, second great conclusion, is Ecclesiastes 12:1.

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;

It is an incredible thing. I told you that last week that there are four seasons in our lives and we as Christians, we have young men and young ladies that God brings into our lives that get saved, come in and want to learn the Bible and it is our job to make sure that they get a foundation in their life when they are young in Christ. It is also true your own children that there is a time in your kids' life when you can influence them for the right thing because the evil days have not come yet. But when you get into Daniel 1, when you get into some of those places in the Old Testament, you will find that there is an evil day coming. You will find it over there in the book of Ephesians where he talks about the evil day, having done all to stand against the evil day. There is an evil day coming in your child's life and you better prepare him for it. There is an evil day coming in every young Christian that joins this church or gets saved and we need to prepare him for it. We need to watch out for the little one, the young ones, the ones that are trying to get their feet on the ground. I am telling you, "Remember now thy Creator." I always like that because specifically this is talking about raising up your children and I always like the way that he said it in 12:1, "Remember now thy Creator." He did not say God. He did not say the Lord God. He did not say the God of Israel. He did not say the God of your fathers. He said Creator. You know why? Because the Holy Spirit of God in His great infinite mind knew that the issues that your kid, my kid was going to face growing up in the day and age that we lived in was, "Was God Creator?" And yes, He was.

3.) Then the last thing, the last thing, the last thing over here is he says in Ecclesiastes 12, and he starts in verse 10.

Ecclesiastes 12:10-14

> The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

> The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

> 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.

> 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.

There is the conclusion. There is what he says. He says the preacher sought to find out acceptable words that were written upright, even words of truth, and when he found them, he said, "Wow, there is no end of all the books that are written and in much study there is much weariness of the flesh." But by these, my son, be admonished, the words of truth. Now when you get the words of truth versus the words of man, the devices of man that we studied today, you will find the conclusion is very clear: fear God, keep His commandments, that is the whole duty of man. The book of Ecclesiastes is the mind of the Spirit searching out the devices in man's heart, writing a book to you and me about it so we would have the understanding that we would come to the right conclusion in life based on the absolute principles of this book that God has given us, the wisdom books and the complete Bible that show us everything that God wants us to know about the issues of life. 28 issues all connected with the 28 days around the sun with the Earth, all bring us in perspective of showing us God's perspective on every issue of life because those are the definitions that will lay them out for you in the Bible where you can build on them from there.

Let us pray.