

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18
The Search for Wisdom as Our Answer
Embrace God's plan of man's inability—1:1-2:26 (part 2)

- 1) His rightful position—1:12 ¹² *I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.*
 - a) Apart from David, this could be said of no other than Solomon. After Solomon, the kingdom divided into Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah). Therefore, no later king in Israel was ever king in Jerusalem.

 - 2) His efforts to fill the hole in his heart—1:13-15
 - a) Deliberate effort—1:13 ¹³ *And I applied my heart*
 - i) To do what? *to seek and to carefully examine in wisdom* (cf. 1st Kings 4:33-34)
 - (1) Perhaps Solomon sent out emissaries to other countries to search for answers to life's perplexing questions.
 - (2) Wisdom & wise are referred to @ 50 times in this book.
 - ii) The subject matter? *concerning all that has been done under heaven;*
 - iii) The conclusion? *it is a grievous task* (it's a "lousy job", but not morally evil) *that God has given to the sons of Adam* (but to none of His other creatures) *to be occupied with.*
 - First of approximately 40 mentions of God in the book.
 - (1) "Deep within each human being God implants the urge to seek truth. As sinful human beings, however, the desired result is fraught with frustration and failure. Without God the quest for truth and for eternity is fruitless."
(Barrick)
 - b) Careful observation—1:14 ¹⁴ *I have seen everything that is done under the sun,*
 - i) Elusive—*and behold, everything is transition and striving after wind.*
 - c) Concluding proverb—1:15 ¹⁵ *What (intellectual task) is crooked cannot be straightened, and what (information) is lacking cannot be counted.* (cf. 7:13)
 - i) Someone from outside the broken system must fix it and give it purpose.
 - ii) Unlike his peers from the surrounding kingdoms, Solomon admits his failure and frustration.
 - If Jesus Christ is not the center of my intellectual pursuit, I am headed for disaster.
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- 3) His internal conversation—1:16 ¹⁶ *I spoke with my heart, saying,*
 - a) "Behold, I have made great and increased wisdom more than all who were before me over Jerusalem."
 - i) Referring to all kings in Jerusalem over the centuries, not just David.
 - b) *And my heart has experienced much wisdom and knowledge."*
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- 4) The results of manward wisdom and knowledge—1:17-18
 - a) A broad-spectrum effort—1:17 ¹⁷ *And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know insanity and foolishness.*
 - i) Conclusion—*I perceived that this also is striving after wind.*
 - b) Grief but no relief—1:18
 - i) Wisdom—¹⁸ *For in an abundance of wisdom there is much frustration;*
 - ii) Knowledge—*and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.*

Take-home truth: Don't squander the wisdom that God gives us.