

## The Spirit Gives Life; the Flesh Profits Nothing

Fred R. Coulter—September 24, 2013

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the sixth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, 2013. As we always say, time marches on. The Feast is going forward, we're past the halfway mark, we're moving toward the finish of the Feast.

However, there's still a lot for us to learn; there's still a lot for us to know. Today we're going to ask: What is going to be the most important thing that we are going to teach during the Millennium? *and* What will be the thing that will be the biggest stumbling block for people to overcome?

You would think that when everything is perfect, when everything is right, when everything is good, that people would respond. But how many times do they not respond like they ought to.

Let's learn a very important principle concerning the Word of God. John 6 is something we need to remember in everything that we do, study, learn, and why it is that the Word of God is so layered in understanding: 'precept here, precept there; a line here, a line there; a little here, a little there.' It is such in-depth. The reason is, is because these are the words of God!

John 6:63 is a key, important Scripture that is overarching everything, and especially during the Millennium, and those coming into the Kingdom of God during the thousand-year period.

John 6:63: "**It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing...**" When everything is perfect in the flesh, when there's abundance of whatever you want in the flesh, when there is everything going the right way, will people slack back? Will they not remember these words?

Verse 63: "**It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing.** The words that I speak to you... [says Jesus] ...**they are spirit and they are life.**" These are the things that go into our mind and, with God's Spirit, brings about conversion.

Now let's see some other things concerning how we are going to teach the people to worship God. In this particular case, Jesus and the disciples came to the well near Samaria and there He was talking to the woman who came to draw water. After Jesus talked to her and said, 'Go get your husband.' She said, 'I don't have a husband.' And He said, 'You're correct, you've had five!'

John 4:19: "The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.'" Immediately when that happens, people like to show themselves

off as spiritual, knowing something—don't they? *Yes!*

Verse 20: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, but you say... [because You're a Jew] ...that the place where it is obligatory to worship is in Jerusalem." That was true at that time if you wanted to come and offer sacrifices.

Now then, wherever God places His name, beginning with those that have the Spirit *within* them, that is where God is dwelling. Let's see how we are obligated to worship God under those circumstances.

Verse 21: "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. **You do not know what you worship...**'" (vs 21-22).

Take that statement and think about this: This was occurring in Samaria, and who was the great religious leader in Samaria, deceiving the people with sorceries and giving himself out as a 'great one'? *Nothing less than Simon Magus!* "...You do not know what you worship..." because when you do that you are worshipping Satan the devil!

Jesus said, "...We know what we worship... [especially Jesus] ...for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming'..." (vs 22-23). See how He brings it to a higher level so that we cannot say, 'I'm of Abraham's seed' *or* 'I'm a Jew' *or* 'I'm a Gentile.' That does not become a important thing any longer.

Verse 23: "But the hour is coming and now is, 'when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth..." Tie that together: *it is the Spirit that gives life!* We are seeking after eternal life, and we will be teaching those during the Millennium how to obtain eternal life, how to use this physical life in a way so they can be led by the Spirit. The only way that is going to happen is exactly as Jesus said here.

"...the hour is coming,' and now is, 'when the true worshipers..." (v 23). That also shows that there are *false* worshipers, and we've seen that with the scribes and Pharisees, and others.

"...the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth for the Father is indeed seeking those who worship Him in this manner" (v 23). That's quite a thing to understand—*isn't it?*

Here is the whole reason why, and we put this together. This is going to be an overarching thing that we're going to be teaching all during the Millennium, and for people coming into the Kingdom of God during the Millennium. We're going to see that overcoming the abundance of things in the flesh, and not trusting in them will be the most difficult challenge of all. Maybe perhaps, in some ways, is harder than we have it today.

We still have trials and troubles and difficulties, and what happens when we enter into those? *We seek God! We pray to God!* How is it going to be when *everything* physical is in abundance and is as perfect as can be? Here's why we are to worship God in this way, and this is tied together with loving God with 'all your heart, mind, soul, being and strength.'

Verse 24: "God *is* Spirit... [He is composed of spirit] ...and those who worship Him **must**... [obligated] ...**worship in Spirit and in Truth.**" That's why you read in the Bible that God doesn't delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices. But what He wants is a 'contrite heart' and a spirit yielded to God.

Let's see some other things concerning this. Isa. 11 tells us an awful lot. It tells us what the Millennium is going to be like, what the Kingdom of God on earth is going to be like. This is not talking about the spiritual realm of the Kingdom of God. This is how it's going to be for a thousand years!

Isaiah 11:9: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all **My Holy mountain**... [all the government of God over this earth] ...for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Think of that! They won't have to say, 'Where will I go? Where's the Word of God? How shall I understand?'

Isa. 30 tells us that we're going to be the teachers and we're going to say, 'Here's the way, walk in it; don't go to the right hand or to the left hand.' Notice how fantastic this is going to be:

Verse 10: "And in that day there shall be the Root of Jesse standing as a banner for the people; to Him the nations shall seek; and His rest... [the Millennial period] ...shall be glorious." That's quite a thing to really think about and contemplate—*isn't it? Glorious!*

Let's see what is the most important thing, because there's going to be an abundance of everything. They will not lack a single thing all during the Millennium.

- God will be with them!

- God is going to teach them!
- We will be there!
- We will teach them!

They will have every spiritual witness to understand that it is ***the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing!***

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool....'" At that time there will be a throne of Jesus on the earth, at the tabernacle (Isa.4). People like to do things for God *their* way. We're going to see what happened to Solomon after he built the temple. We covered some of it up to that time. Now we'll cover a little bit of it after that time.

God says, "...Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD...." (vs 1-2).

Here's the most important thing: Always, all down through history concerning ***God toward us and our relationship back to God***; this is what God honors, because He can make whatever He wants to make. But with the Spirit of God, we need to develop the character of God. That's why this is the most important thing.

"... 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (v 2). That's what God looks to!

Let's see what happened here; we will see what goes right along with that in Psa. 119. This is the model of a converted attitude:

- toward God
- toward His ways
- toward His laws
- toward His commandments
- toward everything that God does

Of course, everyone is going to be keeping the commandments of God. If things start getting out of hand then we'll be there to say, 'Don't turn to the right hand or to the left hand; this is the way, walk in it'—because that's the way to eternal life!

Here's an attitude that we need. Here's what we need to do all the time. What I would like you to do is really study all of Psa. 119 and think of it this way: Like David said, 'Oh, how I love Your law.' Jesus did the same thing! I am sure that not only does this apply to us as human beings, but this also is a prophecy of how Jesus understood and looked at the laws and commandments of God. Here's the central heart and core of it all, right here in these verses:

Psalm 119:123: “My eyes fail for Your salvation and for the Word of Your righteousness.” Not only think of yourself, because there is a way that it applies to us now, but there’s a way that it’s going to apply to those who come into the Kingdom of God during the Millennium: their attitude, the way they need to look at things and “...for the Word of Your righteousness.”

Verse 124: “Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, and teach me Your statutes.” We need to learn everything about God. Remember:

- it is the Spirit of God that teaches us
- it is the Spirit of God that gives us the understanding of the deep things of God

That’s what we’re going to be teaching the people during the Millennium. This is going to be the greatest harvest of people coming into the *spiritual* Kingdom of God.

Verse 125: “I am Your servant; give me understanding that I may know Your testimonies. It is time for the LORD to work...” (vs 125-126)—always in our lives.

Notice the contra-distinction of it: “...for they have made void Your Law” (v 126). That really applies to us today. As Jesus said that ‘lawlessness will be multiplied’ and look how it’s affecting everybody:

- in crime
- oppression
- wrong government
- bad judgment
- arrogance
- narcissism

*creating difficulties everywhere.*

- people obsessed with sin
- people obsessed with drugs
- people obsessed with sex
- people obsessed with gaining things illegally

whatever it may be “...they have made void Your Law”

Always remember this: ***Don’t look longingly over at the Evangelicals or the Protestants*** or think because you have come out of that, ‘*Well, they did have some things right.*’ How much did they have that wasn’t right? *They didn’t have the way to salvation*, because they “...made void...” the Law of God! It is time for God to work; that’s all during the Millennium.

If you love God, you will love His Word, you will love His commandments. But how? Verse

127: “Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold.” Now the world—because the economic system is beginning to crumble apart with all the fiat money that we have—is just printing like there’s no tomorrow. They want gold! Yes, the trick was played; drive the price of gold down so we can get them out of all of the paper instruments of gold.

Well, man’s ways never work! They can get all the gold and silver that they want, unless they have the blessing of God, what good will it do? *None!* But everything about God, His Word, Truth, righteousness and salvation is worth more than all the gold in the world. Because none of the gold of the world, even *all of it*, being the most precious thing in the physical realm will be able to give you eternal life. *Never happen!* Nor will it be able to give those during the Millennium eternal life. Remember: ***It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing!***

Verse 127: “Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold.”

This is especially true when you consider that the Church of God—at one time the largest Church of God that has been known in the history of the world—has now been scattered and disintegrated because they didn’t learn this lesson.

- Where are they?
- Where are those who attended?

We were there, yet, we’re still here keeping the commandments of God, loving God and doing what He wants us to do. We’re looking forward to the Kingdom of God.

- Where are they?
- What are they doing?
- What is going to happen when the judgments of God come upon us as a nation?
- What will they do?
- Will they be like the ten virgins (Matt. 25)? ‘*O Lord, save us!*’
- Will He do it? *That’s a decision that God is going to have to make!*

We can’t make that; and we don’t want to go there. But here is the most important thing that will carry us through every difficulty, every trial, everything that comes along:

Verse 128: **“Therefore, I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way.”**

Keeping this in mind, let’s find out about what Solomon wrote, and let’s see how he started

out. Solomon started out with the greatest, the most.

- How is the Millennium going to start out and develop?
- How is it going to be?

Let's see how it was; let's see everything that was given to Solomon. He started out with a tender heart, wanting wisdom to judge the people of God. God was so pleased with that He appeared to Solomon twice, and said, 'Because you haven't asked for long life, and you didn't ask for wealth, I'm going to give you long life and wealth and the abundance of everything! What did Solomon do with it?

Very instructive; let's see how it was 1-Kings 9:1: "And it came to pass as Solomon finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. And the LORD said to him, 'I have heard your prayer and your cry which you have made before Me. I have made Holy this house which you have built to put My name there forever. And My eyes and My heart shall be there perpetually'" (vs 1-3). That's why at the end it's going to be New Jerusalem, a new heavens and a new earth.

Verse 4: "And **if** you will walk before Me as David your father walked... [Interesting; what are we going to tell the people how to live God's way?] ...in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you; **and if** you will keep My statutes and My judgments."

Let's understand that during the Millennium we're going to be teaching: **IF** you keep the commandments of God; **IF** you love God. Also remember, God is going to change the heart and mind so it's not quite as hostile and carnal as we have today.

Here's the thing that's always important to understand: *God always works with what you could call reciprocity*. He is the One Who gives the conditions—**IF**; and *if* we do it then He fulfills the promise *then*. That applies to everything that we do. You think about that concerning

- the Sabbath
- the Holy Days
- loving God
- loving neighbor
- loving the brethren
- tithes and offerings
- business deals
- husband and wife relationships
- childrearing

Life is full of responsibilities, and **IFs** and **conditions**, and **thens**. A lot of people want to prosper, but they

don't want to give anything to God. A lot of people want the blessings of God, but they don't want to stop sinning. A lot of people think they can do 'good' for God, and improve on God.

- How can you improve anything that is perfect?
- Can the imperfect make the perfect more perfect?

*No! It's the other way around!* The perfect improves and makes the imperfect *perfect!* That's how God always works.

Verse 5: "Then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever as I promised to David your father, saying, 'There shall not be cut off from you a man upon the throne of Israel.' **If**... [a warning this time] ...you shall at all turn from following Me, you or your children, and will not keep My commandments *and* My statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the face of the land which I have given them. And this house, which I have made Holy for My name... [He gave the plans to Solomon, the men build it, but God had them do the work, but He made it.] ...I will cast out of My sight. And Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people" (vs 5-7).

Think about that! The stakes during the Millennium are going to be the same! The terms for the people for conversion will be exactly the same. I really believe that having everything in the flesh—all that you want—is going to be the hardest, most difficult thing to overcome. All the blessings of God will be there, **IF** you continue in *His way*.

Verse 8: "As to this house *which now* is exalted, *then* everyone who passes by it shall be amazed and shall hiss. And they shall say, 'Why has the LORD done this to this land and to this house?'" During the Millennium there's no way that will happen. But those who do not yield to God will never enter into the spiritual realm of the Kingdom of God.

Verse 9: "And they shall answer, 'Because they left the LORD their God who brought out their fathers from the land of Egypt, and have taken hold of other gods and have worshiped them and served them. On account of this the LORD has brought upon them all this evil.'"

- Was Solomon warned?
- Directly by God, in a vision from God to him?
- Don't you think Solomon was exceedingly more responsible because God did this?
- *Yes, indeed!*

Solomon did many great things, and after his kingdom was raised in power and understanding, then the Queen of Sheba came; she came to Jerusalem. She was awed by everything that was there; awed by the wisdom of Solomon, the beauty of the temple, the beauty of his palace, the beauty of the land because God's blessing was on it—delightful and wonderful. Everything was perfect physically.

1-Kings 10:4: “And when the Queen of Sheba had seen all of Solomon's wisdom, and the house which he had built, and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their clothing, and his cupbearers, and his burnt offering that he offered up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her” (vs 4-5). Just took her breath away! So awesome!

Verse 6: “And she said to the king, ‘It was a true report which I heard in my own land of your acts and of your wisdom. And I did not believe the words until I came and my eyes had seen. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and blessings are more than the fame, which I heard. **Happy** are your men, **happy** are these who are your servants, who stand always before you, and who hear your wisdom. **Blessed is the LORD your God**, who delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel. Because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king to do judgment and justice’” (vs 6-9).

Then she gave him a gift of 120 talents of gold, precious stones, spices, everything. It was just absolutely amazing! Then the kings of the earth came to hear the wisdom of Solomon; they came from afar, all around the world. Solomon had a trading system. He had a tax system. All of those nations that came to him brought him gold so that he had a regular tribute of gold of 660 talents every single year. He became the most wealthy man, the smartest man, the one with great understanding and wisdom and power. *Israel was blessed!*

Now then, complacency set in! That's going to be the #1 thing that we'll combat during the Millennium, as we will see tomorrow. Solomon rested on his laurels. In Deut. 17, God said that if you set a king, he's not to ‘multiply wives’; he's not to ‘gather all kinds of horses.’ But Solomon did all of those.

Let's see what happened to Solomon, 1-Kings 11:1: “And King Solomon loved many foreign women, even the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites; of the nations which the LORD had said to

the children of Israel, ‘You shall not go in to them, and they shall not go in to you; surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.’ **But Solomon clung to these in love**” (vs 1-2).

If/then—remember that. He failed the *IF*, so *then* you know what happened. He did it with such diligence and zeal in turning from God.

Verse 3: “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And **his wives turned away his heart.**” It didn't happen all at once; bit-by-bit! We know what happened, but in the book of Ecclesiastes, written by Solomon, we see what Solomon wrote. So, let's do a little survey of Ecclesiastes. The reason being is for us to learn the lesson for us today, because we're still living in a time of abundance. Are we going to respond to God when we're in this condition? *or* Do we have to wait for some trial to come upon us to wake us up and bring us back to God?

Let's see what Solomon discovered as he was leaving the Light of God. Remember, it says in John 3 that those who are Christ's are coming to the Light so that they may learn the way to walk in the way of Christ and God. But evil men don't come to the Light, because they don't want their deeds exposed. What we have here is Solomon with the Light behind him coming toward the ‘twilight zone’; still saying things ‘good’ *of God*; still admonishing things *because of God*, but then not doing them himself. So, instead of believing God and trusting him, he began to experiment, so he wrote it in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 1:1: “The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. ‘Vanity of vanities,’ says the Preacher, ‘vanity of vanities! All *is* vanity’” (vs 1-2). *True! Yes!* But He didn't want to learn it from God, because God said so, he wanted to learn that by *self-experimentation!*

Verse 3: “What profit does a man have in all his labor which he labors under the sun? One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth remains forever” (vs 3-4).

A lot of very true things here; great analysis of many, many things. But the final sum of it is that Solomon never repented of leaving God. All of this is part of his journey *away from* God.

Verse 5: “The sun also arises, and the sun goes down, and hurries to its place where it arose. The wind goes toward the south, and it turns around to the north...” (vs 5-6). They had compasses then; what do you know about that! They knew the earth was round. They had ships that went around the world trading. *Nothing new under the sun*—right?

“...it whirls around continually; and the wind returns on its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea *is* not full; to the place from where the rivers come, there they return again. All things *are* full of labor; man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing” (vs 6-8).

We’ve got to see it; we’ve got to hear it; we’ve got to do it. Think about that! Then he makes this conclusion:

Verse 9: “That which has been *is* that which shall be; and that which has been done *is* that which shall be done; and *there is* nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing *of* which it may be said, ‘See, this *is* new’? It has already been in days of old, which were before us. *There is* no memory of former things, neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who shall come afterwards” (vs 9-11). *Yes!*

- What do we know about the world before the Flood?
- What do we know about the ancient world after it developed?
- What do we know about how they built the pyramids?
- What do we know how they made those statues?
- What do we know about all of those things to serve other gods?
- How did they move rocks from the top of one mountain down into a valley to the top of another mountain, perfectly cut, formed and fitted?

*We don’t know!*

In the history past we now know they had planes and they flew. Isn’t that something?

Verse 12: “I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.” He was the only king over all Israel after David. So, this has to be Solomon.

Notice what he left off, v 13: “And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under the heavens....” What’s missing? ***It is the Spirit that gives life, and the flesh profits nothing!*** All of these experiments were going away from God; ***he was not seeking God!*** This is what we’re going to have to be continually be teaching during the Millennium— isn’t it? *Yes!*

“...*It is* a grievous task God has given to the sons of men to be exercised by it. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all *is* vanity and striving after wind” (vs 13-14). **What do you have when it’s over and done? You may have**

*a physical trophy if you win some kind of championship! But what do you have? That can all be melted down and made into something else! What do you have? Maybe the memory of it!*

***But if you have the Spirit of God then you have something more than all the labors and experimentations of life!***

Verse 15: “What *is* crooked cannot be made straight; and *what is* lacking cannot be numbered. I spoke within my own heart...” (vs 15-16).

- instead of praying to God
- instead of repenting to God
- instead of coming to God

and saying, ‘O God, I’ve been studying Your words and you told Me not to multiply wives. I put them all away!’ *No you didn’t!* He was looking to himself, and you know what it says in the Proverbs, some of them that Solomon wrote: ***It is sport to a fool to discover himself.***

If that doesn’t depict this modern young generation today: dumb, ignorant, uneducated; and furthermore, many are afflicted with what is called *digital dementia*. Some of them don’t even know their own phone numbers. Couldn’t give you a phone number of their friends because they’ve got in on their SmartPhone and it’s #3—BING! So, you push that and it automatically rings because the number is in there. What are you going to do if you don’t have it? *Digital Dementia!* You think you’re smart, but it’s all in your phone, and it’s not in your head and you don’t know how to use it in your head.

Whenever the power goes off, how many clerks in stores know how to count and make change? *Well, not very many!* That happened to me. I was buying something and the power was out, and the clerk said, ‘I can’t do anything, the power is off right now.’ Really?

Verse 16: “I spoke within my own heart, saying, ‘Lo, I have become great and have gathered more wisdom than all that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart has experienced great wisdom and knowledge.’ And I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also *is* striving after wind. For in much wisdom *is* much grief; and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow” (vs 16-18).

And the reason is because *you have left off the knowledge of God, and you quit seeking God. You were seeking to do your own thing!*

(go to the next track)

Let’s see some more of Solomon’s experimentation to find out about things, *but not*

*seeking God the way that he should.* This is really a good example that when you have an abundance of everything, *you get distracted from God.* As the New Testament shows we become lukewarm (Rev. 3). Then Christ has to correct us so that we can repent.

Let's see what Solomon did, and always remember this: *In all the accounts about Solomon, it's never written that he repented!* That doesn't mean that he didn't repent, and it doesn't mean that he did repent. However, with such grievous sins that he had, surely—if it's recorded about the repentance of Manasseh—it would have recorded any repentance by Solomon.

What I want you to do is—this is the same as Job—look at all the *I's*, and that translates to woe, *woe, woe!*

Ecclesiastes 2:1: “**I** said in my heart... [Remember what it says about the fool, that it's *sport to discover himself!*] ... ‘Come now, **I** will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.’ and, behold, this also *is* vanity. **I** said of laughter, ‘*It is* madness;’ and of mirth, ‘What does it accomplish?’ **I** sought in **my** heart to give **myself** unto wine, yet, conducting **my** heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, until **I** might see what was good for the sons of men, what they should do under the heaven the few days of their life” (vs 1-3).

Let's see something about wine. This is really quite hilarious; here it talks about drinking wine and strong drink and all this sort of thing, Proverbs 23:29<sup>[transcriber's correction]</sup>: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has fighting? Who has babbling? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?” You can tie this in with drugs, as well; pot smoking, as well.

Verse 30: “Those who stay long at the wine, those who go to seek mixed wine.” He said he wanted to see what it was like to get drunk, and yet, keep a modicum of wisdom.

Verse 31: “Do not look upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its color in the cup, *when* it goes down smoothly; in the end it bites like an asp and stings like an adder. Your eyes shall look upon strange things...” (vs 31-33). You could have hallucinations; when you get drunk everything is spinning around. Your stomach is doing flip-flops and your eyes are rolling; you can't focus on anything.

“...and your heart shall speak perverse things” (v 33). Isn't that when most people get in trouble? When they get drunk? *Of course!*

Verse 34: “Yea, you shall be as one who lies

down in the middle of the sea, or as one who lies upon the top of a mast.” Climb up 60-80 feet at the top of the mast and you're out there and the ship is rolling back and forth, to and fro, and you're leaning over the edge vomiting and all that sort of thing.

Verse 35: *Saying*, ‘They struck me; I was not hurt; they beat me, *but* I did not feel it. When I awaken, I will seek it yet again.’” This is someone given over to much wine and drunkenness and alcoholism. Notice how it ruins and destroys the life.

When people get hooked on that, what they need to do is come to God, repent of it and stop; don't touch another drop except for Passover. Same way with smoking; don't touch another cigarette or cigar; same with 'pot'; drugs; with any of the experiments that Solomon went through. Rather than seeking God for the correct answer, he was trying to find it himself. But the truth is this: ***you cannot find the purpose in life by pursuing physical things! It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh—or the physical things—profits nothing!***

Notice what else Solomon did, Ecclesiastes 2:4: “**I** made great works for myself; **I** built houses for **myself**; **I** planted vineyards for **myself**. **I** made gardens and orchards for **myself**, and **I** planted trees in them, of all fruit. **I** made pools of water for **myself**, to irrigate groves of growing trees. **I** bought men slaves and women slaves, and servants *were* born in **my** house; also **I** had great possessions of herds and flocks, above all that were before **me** in Jerusalem” (vs 4-7). All of that!

Remember: ***the flesh—the physical things—profit nothing!*** When you start doing this and you get all centered in *self* you become narcissistic. When you become narcissistic, only *you* are right in the world; no one else is! Sounds like someone who is living in the government called *the White House*, today?

Verse 8: “**I** also gathered silver and gold to **myself**, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces. **I** got men singers and women singers for **myself**, even the sensual delights of the sons of men, and many women.” What is Solomon going to do with 300 wives and 700 concubines? *You've got to have parties all the time*—don't you? You've got to have singers, entertainment, food, all of this! I wonder what some of those servants who were doing the service really thought when they came to the king and bowed down and said:

- O king, here is your wine
- O king, here is the meat that you ordered
- O king is the wife that you asked for, for today

Verse 9: “So, **I** was great and increased more than all that were before **me** in Jerusalem; also **my** wisdom remained with **me**.” He thought, but if he was wise he would have been seeking God instead of these physical pleasures.

Verse 10: “And whatever **my** eyes desired **I** did not keep from them; **I** did not withhold **my** heart from any pleasure; for **my** heart rejoiced in all **my** labor, and this was **my** portion of all **my** labor.”

Now then, he did one thing; he stepped back and said, v 11: “Then **I** looked on all the works that my hands had done, and on the labor that **I** had labored to do; and, behold, all *is* vanity and a striving after the wind; and **there is no profit under the sun**.” Because if your heart and mind are empty of God’s Spirit, *nothing* will satisfy you.

Verse 12: “And **I** turned to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what *can* the man do who comes after the king? Only that which has been already done. Then **I** saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness. The wise man’s eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walks in darkness; and **I myself** also perceived that one event happens to all of them. Then **I** said in my heart, ‘As it happens to the fool, *so* it happens even to **me**; and why was **I** then more wise?’ And **I** said in **my** heart that this also *is* vanity” (vs 12-15). Now he was beginning to see that all of this doesn’t work!

Verse 18: “Yea, **I** hated all my labor which **I** had done under the sun...: It didn’t bring what he wanted. Sounds like today, people are out there trying to ‘find themselves’; experimenting with this, do this: go skydiving, go down to the bottom of the sea, go to the tops of the mountains, go out into space. All of those are great accomplishment, but if you don’t seek God what good is it going to do?

Solomon is still philosophical about all of this and he looks at life as it is. Let’s see what he says, because there’s still a good deal of wisdom here. He hadn’t lost it. He was discovering some, but losing others. He was discovering physical things, but losing contact with God.

Ecclesiastes 3:1: “To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what *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 throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing” (vs 1-5). All of this; there’s a time for everything! All human beings do all of these things—right? *Yes!*

Verse 6: “A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, 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. What profit does he have who works in that in which he labors?” (vs 6-9). What do you have if you do all of these things? Think about it!

When you’re young you want to go out and do all these things. This is why Ecclesiastes, in addition to Proverbs, is good for all young people. It’s good for old people so you can look back and see all of the things that you wasted; all of the times that you didn’t do right. All of those who are young don’t even have a thought in their mind as to what it’s going to be like when they get old. You look at all of us old people and you say, ‘My, they’re old.’ Never think about that they were young like you. Never think about the fact that all of us once were little babies. All of us once weren’t here!

All is vanity? *Without God, yes, indeed! It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing!*

Verse 10: “I have seen the task which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised by it. He has made everything beautiful in its time; He has also set eternity in their heart...” (vs 10-11). Very interesting—isn’t it? Everyone wants to live forever! Even though there was a time when we didn’t exist, we don’t want to die. Then there comes a time when we die, or about ready to die, and we wonder: ‘What did I do with my life? I’m going to die and leave all these things.’ What if your sons and daughters turned out to be foolish? Well, no man is taking it with him, not even the Pharaohs. They may have put it in the pyramids, but thieves came and took it away. They’re still there, they didn’t go anywhere; they’re still wrapped up in all of their funeral clothes. That’s why the only thing that will satisfy is

- the *Spirit* of God
- the *love* of God
- the *commandments* of God
- the *Truth* of God

*the purpose in life spiritually, because the flesh profits nothing!* It matters not what you have in your mind. We can have great dreams and these sorts of things, but what matters is

- that we receive the Spirit of God.
- that we grow and overcome spiritually

God will take care of all the physical things. That’s they whole story of it here.

I suppose I could spend the whole Feast going through the book of Ecclesiastes, and, yes,



there are many lessons here. He looked at all the contradictions in the world: war and fighting; those who have good physical things, those who are cursed, those who are oppressed, those who are in trouble. *No solution!*

Why don't you spend some serious time reading the book of Ecclesiastes? I think you'll find it very important. You'll learn an awful lot of things. He does talk about God, but as you can see, *he was walking away from the Light*. He was consumed in doing *physical* things. Those never satisfy! That is the biggest problem with the people coming into the knowledge of God, as we teach them and so forth, in the Millennium. Lukewarmness or complacency, a take it for granted attitude, will always be popping up it's ugly head.

Here are some important things for us to remember. Always consider this: What you have already done, if it's been good, *don't lean on it and be satisfied*. If it's been that which is not good, *repent of it and learn the lesson*. Remember—as it says in the Psalm—'While it is today...'—***seek the Lord, seek His way***, and then likewise, tomorrow and the next day. Here are the things that we do with our lives, our experiences and likewise, with the Word of God. God does the same thing here:

Ecclesiastes 11: "Cast your bread upon the waters; for you shall find it after many days." As you sow, so shall you reap!

- What are you doing today?
- What are you doing that is going to help you tomorrow?
- What are you doing that is going to help you the day after that?

Spiritually speaking, the same thing is true. It will come back to you, "...Give a share to seven, and also to eight; for you know not what evil shall be upon the earth." (v 2).

Verse 8: "But if a man lives many years, *and rejoices in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness...*" You'll have good days and bad days; learn the lessons from it. Don't keep the trauma of the emotions involved in it.

"...for they shall be many. All that comes *is vanity*" (v 8). If you're not seeking God, all is vain. You can do many wonderful things in this world. You can accomplish a lot of things like Solomon was doing. But where will you be? What is your standing before God?

Verse 9: "Rejoice, in your youth, O young man... [or woman] ...and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes..." God has set

before us choices; you have to choose.

- What do you want?
- How do you want it?

He gives a warning here; always remember this: "...**but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment**" (v 9). Think about Solomon. Remember the judgment concerning Solomon because he did what he did. *God took away the northern ten tribes and left him Judah and Levi and part of Benjamin!* He left that to Rehoboam, and he turned out to be kind of 'dim-witted.' Jeroboam was given the opportunity of the ten tribes and really never believed God, because the first thing he did was set up the pagan Egyptian religious system within the ten northern tribes. Not one king of the ten tribes was righteous. Some in Judah were. But just like it says here, it's all vanity, and you're all going to be brought into judgment concerning it.

If we are Christ's and have His Spirit, and love Him, and love the Father, and are growing and overcoming, *then the judgment is going to be for eternal life*. We need to remember that.

Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years of *old age* draw near, when you shall say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"

When you get old and you get bent over and stiff, lack of energy and all of that, there are days that are difficult to come by. When you're young, you don't think of that. When you have youth and energy, you don't think of that. When you become 30 you're not going to 'fall apart.' Or 40 or 50! Maybe beginning 60, 70 and into 80 your decline starts going pretty fast. But nevertheless, we need to make the best we can with it.

Verse 2: "When the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, are darkened... [Your vision goes and is not what it used to be. Today we have glasses and things like that and it will last a little longer.] ...or the clouds return after rain, in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men are stooped *over*, and the grinders cease because they are few, and *the eyes* of those who look out of the windows grow dim" (vs 2-3). That's just saying that you're going to lose your teeth and your eyesight.

What happens then, when you get old and can't get about? Verse 4: "And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and you shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; also when they are afraid of heights, and terrors along the way..." (vs 4-5).

When you get older you're not sure of what you're doing, where you're going, and different things affect you differently. When you become old you don't view things like you did when you were young. In all instances, when you're young, when you're old, **seek God!**

- Don't seek your own way!
- Don't seek vanity!

Remember: ***It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing, spiritually!*** It is vanity!

Verse 6: "Before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." That's talking about dying! In other words, you come to a point that you just 'fall apart' and die. Very poetic the way he puts it. Everyone wants to avoid this, but there's one thing you can't avoid: ***getting old in the flesh. But you can live forever if you seek after God and do His will!***

So, Solomon finishes up, v 7: "And the dust return to the earth as it was, and **the spirit returns to God** who gave it. 'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher; 'all is vanity.' And more than that, the Preacher *was* wise; he still taught the people knowledge. Yea, he pondered and sought out and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find out pleasing words; and words of Truth written by the upright. The words of the wise men *are* like goads; yea, their collected words are like nails driven home; given by one Shepherd. And further, by these, my son, **be warned**. Of the making of many books there is no end, and much study *is* a weariness of the flesh" (vs 7-12). Just talking about the ordinary things of life.

Verse 13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God, and keep His commandments. For this is the whole man.**" Isn't that interesting?

- How much is in here concerning loving God like David wrote?
- How much is in here concerning really believing God, like David taught?
- How much is in here that in your troubles and your difficulties that you cry out to God?
  - ✓ to help you
  - ✓ to deliver you
- as David did?

Solomon was in the process of leaving God by experimenting with the things of the flesh! He forgot the lesson: ***It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing!***

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) John 6:63
- 2) John 4:19-24
- 3) Isaiah 11:9-10
- 4) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 5) Psalm 119:123-128
- 6) 1 Kings 9:1-9
- 7) 1 Kings 10:4-9
- 8) 1 Kings 11:1-3
- 9) Ecclesiastes 1:1-18
- 10) Ecclesiastes 2:1-3
- 11) Proverbs 23:29-35
- 12) Ecclesiastes 2:4-15, 18
- 13) Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
- 14) Ecclesiastes 11:1-2, 8-9
- 15) Ecclesiastes 12:1-13

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 30; 4
- Matthew 25
- Deuteronomy 17
- John 3
- Revelation 3

FRC:bo  
Transcribed: 8-1-13

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