

Ecclesiastes 12:9-14
March 2, 2022

IV. Epilogue (12:9-14)

DON'T FORGET YOUR QUESTIONS FOR ME!

This morning, we reach the epilogue of Ecclesiastes, which seeks to reorient the reader to the wisdom found therein, as well as drive the message home one final time. It can be broken down into two sections, each beginning with the word the Hebrew word translated *moreover* (v. 9) and *further* (v. 12).

In vv. 9-11, the focus is on the *Preacher* himself (vv. 9-10). We've taken the view that this man is Solomon (cf. 1:1, 12; 1 Kings 4:29-34; 10:23). Because he was *wise*, *he taught the people knowledge*. As we grow in our understanding of the Word of God, as we grow in wisdom, it is our duty to share that Truth (Matt 5:15; 2 Tim 2:15; Heb 5:12; 1 Pet 3:15). *It is required in stewards that one be found faithful* (1 Cor 4:2).

For this reason, Solomon *sought out* ways to make his teaching known that would be pleasing and easy to follow (vv. 9-10). I think we can all agree that there are verses in Ecclesiastes that aren't so easy to follow! Nevertheless, it seems like it wasn't due to lack of trying!

When wisdom is taught, Solomon says that these words *are like goads*. A goad is an instrument used to spur or guide livestock, like a cattle prod. In this case, however, we're the cattle! The wisdom of Ecclesiastes – as with all biblical wisdom – is designed to propel us forward and discourage us from going backwards in our walks with the Lord. How foolish would we be, and what harm we would inflict upon ourselves, to neglect to heed their prodding!

There's a shift from Solomon and his delivery to the message of the book itself in vv. 12-14. Solomon warns in v. 12:

Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.

This verse is oft quoted by those who wish to affirm an anti-intellectual stance on the Word of God. "See! Oh, how Solomon frowns upon too much mind and not enough heart!" Yet, the context paints a different picture.

Solomon is directly saying that there are many books trying to explain life, and how to view it properly. Think of all the secular philosophers that have tried in vain (no pun intended) to make sense of life – What is reality? What is good? How do we know anything? There's only one source text for the answers to these questions, and it lies open before us now. Yet it doesn't stop unbelievers from continuing to try.

Also, *much study* must be kept in check, as well. After all, isn't that one of the complaints of the book? That pursuing wisdom for the sake of wisdom is a *wearisome* endeavor?

Therefore, let's keep *the conclusion of the whole matter* in mind (v. 13):

*Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all.
For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.*

Rejoice in what the Lord has given to You. Enjoy what you have today, let tomorrow worry about itself. See everything as coming from His good and perfect hands.