

Nothing New Under the Sun

That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.

(Ecclesiastes 1:9)

Solomon remains the second wisest man to ever walk the earth. He held the 1st place record for a pretty long time until it was shattered by the son of a carpenter from Nazareth. However, being number two in this regard is still sufficient to consider Solomon an authority. I know, I know, in our society “number two” just means the least person to lose, but in the Bible, that’s not the case. I’m certain Solomon’s self-esteem will be just fine when he is resurrected and learns that his wisdom was actually surpassed and by whom.

Solomon goes on to impart incredible wisdom and philosophy in the book of Ecclesiastes. He speaks many things being vain pursuits. We can relate to almost all of them and also draw analogies from them into our modern walk. One of these vain endeavors is attaining great wealth. I don’t know about you, but I would like to experience the vanity of attaining wealth myself just to test this concept. They don’t call it “the show-me state” for nothing!

But I digress. What I want to focus on today is how Solomon spent time specifically on books and learning.

The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly. The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd. But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body. (Ecclesiastes 12:10-12)

Solomon spent time in the “studying and blogging” phase! But he warns that excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body and endless. This

is a phenomena that happens on no small scale in our circles. I call it “studying yourself stupid”. Many of us land in this stage of the walk and spend considerable time there. It’s intoxicating to keep learning new things and honing and perfecting our faith from an academic perspective. Solomon enjoyed writing and consuming words of truth. One can only imagine the level of wisdom there must have been in the books Solomon studied for him to be impressed by them. But studying is not the destination, it’s a waypoint on the journey.

Our way of approaching the scriptures is exploding today. A great calling has been heard and thousands of people are coming to the knowledge of the first century believers at an astounding pace. This learning is happening largely to people who are all by themselves for a long time with no assembly to visit. Learning takes place with one-way conversations, as many receive information from YouTube (or by listening to mp3 sermons, hint, hint) and never have a chance to bounce those ideas off other believers or enjoy the blessings of a fellowship.

This is not where our faith is supposed to land. Take a look at Solomon’s last words of the book:

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

We have been told that the goal of the learning, the earning, and all the other wonderful things articulated by King Solomon is to fear God and keep His commandments. Guess what? Many of those commandments are about having assemblies. Like the whole chapter of Leviticus 23. We’re supposed to get together. This requires action and effort. We have to learn how to get along on a weekly and annual basis. Take a break from the studying, brethren. Get together, share a meal, discuss some scripture, sing,

dance, laugh, pray, listen, console, etc. For in doing this, we keep the commandments. And those commandments are not burdensome.