

Ecclesiastes

Part Four

Ecclesiastes 4:1 [New King James] *“Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, but they have no comforter, on the side of their oppressors there is power, but they have no comforter.”*

Solomon is continuing on with the thought expressed in **Ecclesiastes 3:16**.

“No comforter” is mentioned twice to show the continued suffering without any comfort.

Ecclesiastes 4:2-3 [New King James] *“Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead, more than the living who are still alive. Yet, better than both is he who has never existed, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.”*

If God is not taken into account [Ecclesiastes 3:17] then to die as soon as possible would be desirable, so as not to suffer or witness these oppressions of evil humans.

Psalms 73:2-9, 16-17 [New King James] *“But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride serves as their necklace; violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge with abundance; they have more than heart could wish. They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.” ... “When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.”*

King David had the same thoughts and did not understand the situation until he consulted God, acknowledged and believed that He was aware of all that was happening, [verse 28].

Within the suffering of this present generation, as with many other generations, the leaders, both secular and religious, are saying “peace, peace” when there is no peace, [Jeremiah 8:8-12; Jeremiah 6:13-15]. This is a direct result of rejecting the Creator God and His Word, the Christian Bible.

Paul saw the same situation in his generation, [Romans 3:10-18].

God is allowing this situation to continue throughout every generation of human beings until they have exhausted every human solution to the corruption and suffering in the world and it comes to the brink of self-destruction [Matthew 24:21-22, 27] before sending Jesus Christ, this time as Ruler and Judge, to bring peace.

Without this understanding and also knowing the true reason for the existence of human beings [Genesis 1:26-27] then this profane statement of Solomon would make logical thinking.

Ecclesiastes 4:4 [New King James] *“Again, I saw that for all toil and every skilful work a man is envied by his neighbour. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.”*

Prosperity which humans so much covet is the very source of provoking oppression [verse 1] and envy, this shows just how far it is from being a source of good.

Ecclesiastes 4:5 [New King James] *“The fool folds his hands and consumes his own flesh.”*

Solomon sees the fool [Hebrew word “*kecîyl*” from a root word meaning to be fat, who “*folds his hands*” in idleness, [Proverbs 6:10; Proverbs 24:33] living on the means they wrongfully take from others is not to be envied even in this physical life, for such a person “*consumes his own flesh*” that is a self-tormentor, never satisfied.

Ecclesiastes 4:6 [New King James] “*Better a handful with quietness than both hands full, together with toil and grasping for the wind.*”

Solomon is advocating honest toil that will bring to us and our family all that is necessary, rather than grasping with both hands all we can which will only create vexation in some form.

Moderate pains and gains are best.

Ecclesiastes 4:7-8 [New King James] “*Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun: there is one alone, without companion: he has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labours, nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks, ‘For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?’ This also is vanity and a grave misfortune.*”

Frequently the more people have, the more they desire to have, and because of this they get no real enjoyment from what they have.

Such selfishness can cause great evil, for a selfish person does **not** care for the welfare of any other people, and will scarcely allow necessary rest for themselves or any people they may employ.

Many people are so set upon success in the world that in pursuit of such success and prestige they not only bereave themselves of the Creator God’s favour but their own pleasures in life. Any family relations who inherit such a person’s wealth, never thank them.

Covetousness gathers strength by time and habit, some people who are tottering on the brink of the grave grow more grasping.

A solitary life as a human being is not how the Creator God wanted us to become.

Genesis 2:18, 21-24 [New King James] “*And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’” ... “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*”

The ultimate relationship between humans is found in the marriage union of a man and a woman, and the family that such a union can produce, [Genesis 4:1-2].

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 [New King James] “*Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*”

Solomon expands on the value of intimate marriage relationship and family. We have all experienced the support that a family can give to one another.

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16 [New King James] “*Better a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more. For he comes out of prison to be king, although he was born poor in his kingdom. I saw all the living who walk under the sun; they were with the second youth who stands in his place. There was no end of all the people over whom he was made king; yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and grasping for the wind.*”

Advancement in our work or authority over other people are in the end meaningless.

Position, popularity and prestige are poor goals to have in life.

Although many people seek these, they are shadows without substance.

Many people seek recognition for their accomplishments, but people are fickle, changing quickly and easily.

Matthew 6:33 [New King James] *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*

Better to seek God’s approval, for His love and mercy never change, [Colossians 3:1-4].

Ecclesiastes 5:1 [New King James] *“Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.”*

When we approach the Creator God in prayer or the meditating on His Word, the Christian Bible, we need to have an open attitude ready to listen to our Creator not to dictate to Him what we think He should do, in any situation; that is acting foolishly and with evil intent.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 [New King James] *“Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.”*

Think deeply before you make a promise to your Creator God, make sure you can fulfil it completely, [Proverbs 20:25; Matthew 5:33-37].

Keeping promises to other people is important, it builds trust and makes committed human relationships possible. But to make a promise that you know you will not be able to keep is sinful in God’s eyes, because it breeds distrust in human society.

Ecclesiastes 5:3, 7 [New King James] *“For a dream comes through much activity, and a fool’s voice is known by his many words.” ... “For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.”*

We all have dreams of what we wish to accomplish in our lives. Solomon reminds us that any dream will come only through great activity not a great number of words talking about that dream, for that is the action of a fool.

Note this is central to our making promises to our Creator God.

Ecclesiastes 5:4-6 [New King James] *“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed, better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?”*

A promise that we make to our Creator God must be more than words but expressed in personal action to ensure what we promised is fulfilled.

Ecclesiastes 5:8-9 [New King James] *“If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them. Moreover the profit of the land is for all; even the king is served from the field.”*

The fear of the Creator God is coupled with the respect for authority in the country in which we live, [1 Peter 2:13-17] for there is no power and authority but from God, or what is ordained by God.

Not that these human ruling powers are beyond reproach. On the contrary, there is corruption at every stage of the political hierarchy.

Thus the existence of injustice and oppression is not to be marvelled at, for the only remedy does not lie in any human authority.

Yet this is the best form of human government and **Solomon expresses his preference for a patriarchal monarchy, where the king is intimately acquainted with the concerns of his [agricultural] subjects.** A judgement which is sound in its emphasis on agriculture and its implied rejection of bureaucracy, but difficult to apply to large industrial societies which are the result of Satan's influence in what is at present his world, [2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19].

Please download and study the articles on this website that are listed under 'Agriculture And The Environment' that show how the Creator God really intended humans to live in an agrarian society. Also the article 'Ancient Israel's Legal System' listed under sub-heading 'Judgement'.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 [New King James] *"He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity."*

The normal human being always wants more than they already have. This is the false basis of an industrial society. Capitalism can thrive only on an expanding market and the circle of supply and demand, too often fed by fashion and extensive advertising.

The bubble of prosperity based on goods often bursts and slump follows boom.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 [New King James] *"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*

The key to enjoying life is to substitute "grace for grab."

1 Timothy 4:4-5 [New King James] *"For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."*

Experience shows that the art of enjoyment usually comes to those least cumbered with worldly goods.

Ecclesiastes 5:11 [New King James] *"When goods increase, they increase who eat them; so what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes?"*

The more wealth a person has, the better house they must keep, the more servants they must employ, the more guests they must entertain.

Ecclesiastes 5:12 [New King James] *"The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep."*

The physical body is designed for active work, so a labourer will more easily sleep after a day's work, not only because they are tired, but because they have little care to break that sleep.

Ecclesiastes 5:13-14 [New King James] *"There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: riches kept for their owner to his hurt. But those riches perish through misfortune; when he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand."*

Riches do hurt, because they draw us away from our duty towards our Creator God and our fellow human beings.

Ecclesiastes 5:15 [New King James] *“As he came from his mother’s womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came; and he shall take nothing from his labour which he may carry away in his hand.”*

Having this fact constantly in mind helps us to have a balanced approach towards possessions.

Ecclesiastes 5:16-20 [New King James] *“And this also is a severe evil, just exactly as he came, so shall he go. And what profit has he who has laboured for the wind? All his days he also eats in darkness, and he has much sorrow and sickness and anger. Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage. As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labour, this is the gift of God. For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.”*

Life is a gift from the Creator God and we must never overlook the reason for this gift.

Genesis 1:26-27 [New King James] *“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

Only when we realise that life was given us to develop the “likeness” of God, Hebrew word “*demuwth*” meaning manner, attributes, character, which takes time with the person whose character you wish to reflect.

Our future eternal life depends on our developing this character because those who do not reflect the character of God will not be in His Kingdom, that is His created family, and receive the gift of eternal life.

Revelation 21:1-8 [New King James] *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.’”*

Listed as those who will **not** be in the Kingdom of God are those who have **not** overcome the evil nature that was prompted by Satan.

Revelation 22:12-15 [New King James] *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.”*

Listed people do **not** receive eternal life, “*right to tree of life*” nor enter into a fellowship with their Creator, [**John 17:3**].