

How is life treating you? Are you **frustrated**? Do you feel hard done by? Do you feel life is full of **injustices**? Have you a **conflict** in your mind over the **problems** of life? If so, then you are feeling exactly the way the author of this book felt when he wrote it!

He too experienced, **pain**, suffering, disappointment. As a **strong** believer in God, he knew what it was to have ‘unanswered’ prayer, and the **promises** of God, to him, **seemed** turned **upside down**. He’s writing about the “*unhappy business*” that can be ‘life on earth’.

The author was a **philosopher** and was very well **qualified** to write on the subject of this book, viz, answering the problems of life! He was a man of **wide experience**! Far, far wider than the experiences of any of us here There was no type of life, which he himself had not lived! He was a **king** - of a very **important** nation, a nation which changed **world history** - and is **still changing** world history! He was rich, very rich! He was **famous** and **successful**. He was a **hedonist** enjoying every type of **pleasure**! So, what he says is not coming from **conjecture** or **hearsay** or from **books** - although he was prolific author/reader. He is talking from the **reality** of experience.

He was so concerned about the inconsistency in life, that he **devoted** his whole **attention** and **concentration** on trying to find some **order** in the universe, some **pattern** to the ways of **God in Providence**! Thus: “*I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven*”[13] He comes to a conclusion! Its this:

‘You’re **wasting** your **time** Solomon! You’re **chasing** the **wind**!’ “*I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and striving after wind*”![14] At the close of his study he says “*Of making many books (on this subject) there is no end, and much study (of this subject) is a weariness of the flesh. The end of the matter. All has been heard. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil*”[12:14]

Sol wants to **demonstrate** to us, that he is **qualified** to pronounce a verdict. He **invites** us ‘Come, look at my life, see what I’ve found?’

Sol was a **workaholic!** “*I made **great works**. I built houses, and planted vineyards...gardens...parks...pools...(large staff) male and female slaves, and had slaves born in my house*”[2:4-7]

**Workaholics** are far more plentiful than we think. Almost 100% of businessmen are workaholics, they spend too much time at work! **Little** time for their **families**. Never take their **wives** out for a ‘date’, although they **do** have time to take clients out for meals! So Sol has a word for workaholics - “*Then I considered all that my hands had done and the **toil** that I had expended in doing it and behold... you were **wasting** your time, chasing **wind!*** [2:11]

Sol was **very rich!** “*I had also **great possessions** of herds and flocks...**more** than any who had been before me in Jerusalem Jerusalem...**silver...gold...treasure** of kings and provinces...I became **great and surpassed** all who were before me in Jerusalem*”[2:4-7]

Like the **Lottery** winners, he had, and could get, anything he wanted. But came to the same conclusion. Having riches, no more than filling your mind with work - is just **wasting** your time, chasing **wind!**

Sol loved **enjoying himself!** Ie, in **pleasure/hedonism!** “*I said of **laughter** ‘It is **mad** and of **pleasure** ‘What use is it?’ ” [2:2]*

“***whatever** my eyes **desired** I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from **no pleasure** for my heart **found pleasure** in all my **toil***”[2:10]

Who would have thought that pleasure was not satisfying and fulfilling! But that was just the problem - he was enjoying **himself!** You see pleasure **must** have **God** in it, otherwise it is **empty** - it has **no meaning/purpose!** Pleasure for its **own sake** is empty. If the pleasure we have is not glorifying to God it is empty of its **purpose** and **meaning**. You see **God** invented pleasure, and desires that we have it in **full!** But true pleasure is **located** in its **Creator!**

So Sol tried ‘**wine**’ [2:3], ‘**women**’ [2:8], and ‘**song**’ [2:8], and a host of many other attractive and tempting things which the world offers, yet “*all was vanity and a striving after wind...there was **nothing** to be **gained***” [2:11] The pleasures of sin are for a **season!**

So Sol never found true peace/joy/fulfillment in the very things which his society, and every society since, has heralded as the **best**

**things** in life! Life was not what he expected and what the ‘world’ had **promised**. \*\*And there was **more disappointments** in store! Sol discovered (2) **unchangeable principles** in his and **our** world!

**1.** There is **no guarantee** of **justice** in this life! There are times when we have to say ‘Justice was done’, but we also have to say at other times ‘What an **injustice!**’ *“If you see in a province the **oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter**”*[5:8]! **APP** So many people do **not believe** in a Higher Power (God), on **this basis** - no justice in life! ‘Why did my baby girl die?’ ‘Why did I lose my job?’, etc. Well, the **Lord** thru Sol here **wants** us to **know** beforehand, earth is not heaven where there is perfection. This life can throw anything at us - time after time and God still rules! Next time you hear someone state their unbelief in God because of misfortunes, **remind** them that God has **told** us in Scripture that in this life there **is** the **oppression** of the poor **and a violent perversion** of **justice and righteousness!**

(2) Sol also discovered **God** has said: the **Mystery of Providence Cannot be Solved!** *“then I saw all the work of God, that man **cannot find out** the work that is done under the sun. However **much** man may **toil in seeking**, he will **not find it out**. Even though a **wise man claims to know**, he **cannot find it out**”*[8:17] **APP** When you next don’t know the answers to someone’s questions about the Bible/God, etc, remember this verse. Man is **limited** in his knowledge and in his **understanding!!** He **cannot** find it out! Man does **not** have the ‘**equipment**’ to comprehend the Divine mysteries!

Paul, clever fellow, echoed the same truth *“Oh, the **depth** of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How **unsearchable** are His judgments and how **inscrutable** his ways”*[Rom 11:23]

So there are all these unresolvable **realities** which **human wisdom** finds daunting and **inhibiting** to his control of things. Proud man stalks this earth, as if he owned it, but his **proud** mind must **submit** to the fact that he **does** not, and **cannot**, know everything. He is but a **creature** on it - **utterly dependent** on his Creator for every breath he draws! He is **not** the master of his own destiny.

But Sol did discover **certainties!** Michael Faraday on death-bed: ‘What are you speculating now?’ ‘I am not speculating, I am resting on **certainties!**’ Sol’s study did find certainties “...yet **I know it will be well with those who fear God...but it will not be well with the wicked**”[8:12] Sol ends his study by saying what we express as: ‘When all is said and done’, “*The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the **whole duty of man***” [12:13] \*Imagine, this **king/philosopher/poet/author**, before whom other sovereigns **swooned** in admiration of size/extent of his kingdom, saying ‘Fear God, do what’s right (God’s command), don’t worry about the things you can’t understand’!!

And Sol says there is a **very good reason** why we do not need to worry about the mysteries of life!! Because “**For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil**”[12:14] This is exactly what Apostle Paul said to the wise men of his age. He said **God** “**has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness**”[Acts 17:31] God will see everything put right - in the **end!** Justice **will** be done ultimately, but not necessarily here on earth in ‘creation time’.

I take it, when Paul says God will judge ‘the world’, he means by ‘the world’, **everyone** who ever lived - the Greeks he was addressing with the Jews and other cultures and nations! And it is all going to happen on that **one day** that God has fixed!

So Sol is saying, that we have to **live by faith** on God’s **promises!** Not only the promises of ‘justice in the end’, but also of **salvation** to those who believe and fear God and walk in His ways. God will not break His promises.

**Lessons:** (1) Problems in Providence should **not hinder** our faith in God. Remember **Tyndales MSS!** \* John G **Paton** losing his wife and family! \***Emmaus** disciples! \***Joseph** in prison! \***Paul** imprisonment

(2) Remember, there is a **deliberate purpose** in adverse providences. God is **testing** you - because He wants to be **glorified** in your **faith** shining through!