

## *Ecclesiastes 12:1-14*

**“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; 2 while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: 3 in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, 4 and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; 5 also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is high*, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: 6 or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. 7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it. 8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. 9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs. 10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and *that which was written was upright, even words of truth.* 11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd. 12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. 13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole *duty* of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be good, or it be evil.*”**

*Introduction: Remember Your Creator In The Days Of Your Youth*

“There’s no break here when he’s writing this, so he says **“Remember now”** this is what to do, **“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days”** in the context here, “the difficult days” **“come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:”** (verses 1-2) and again, he’s challenging a young person to remember their Creator in the days of youth. Now look, the public school system is doing everything it can possibly do to have you not remember your Creator, you’re supposed to remember your revolver not your Creator in this school system, and you came from monkeys, and you have no purpose, and they hand you some condoms so you don’t reproduce too fast, *“and we don’t want to see more of you than we have to deal with,”* and then they’re shocked when you act like animals, just they indoctrinate that way, and then human life is not worth any more than our brothers and sisters, the birds and the dogs out there, and Mother Earth, and I’m thinking *‘You gotta be kidding me!’* you know, when I took LSD I didn’t buy all of that stuff, how can they teach this in public schools? Solomon says **“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,”** each of you is a divine creation [see <https://unityinchrist.com/Psalms/Psalm%20139%201-24.html>], every one of you. Again, scientists don’t know how that happens. The more they learn about the human genome the more mystery there’s in it, how you can go from one cell to two cells, to four cells to eight cells, to sixteen cells, they’re all exactly the same, every one of those exactly the same, every one of those has the same exact information. And why all of a sudden some cells again decide to become bone cells, why some decide to become muscle cells, all of a sudden some cells decide to become eyes, they have no idea. With the brains, the cells all of a sudden decide to become brains that are in their heads, they can’t figure out why any of that goes on. It’s because each one of us is a creation. There’s “Somebody” superintending all of that [and that “superintending” doesn’t show up in the DNA code]. **‘Remember now thy Creator when you’re young, have the right perspective, think about the Lord, while the evil days, the difficult days come not,’** because he’s watched people age, he’s aged himself, **“for the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;”** (verse 1) Now again, that’s for an

unbeliever, at the age I am now, I'm very much enjoying my family, my grandkids, I'm very blessed at the age I'm in. But, he's just looking at the world in general, he says, people think *'You know, you sow your wild oats, because when you get older, there's nothing.'* He says, **'No, no, when you're young, when you're young, realize there's a Creator, before the evil days come.'** Now, by the way, evil days can come to young or old, difficult times can come to either. He's not saying anywhere here that young people, their life is filled with joy and old people, their life is filled with misery. Because sometimes young people find themselves in very miserable situations, sometimes older people are filled with joy. What he's saying is, in our relationship to the Living God, much is determined on how we live out our lives. When we try to live out our lives without him as part of the equation, there's much heartache and much frustration.

### *The Process Of Getting Older, Aging*

Verse 2 onto verse 6 he's going to talk about the process of getting older. I used to think this was a great study when I was in my 30s, these verses here. Now it's a little more serious. And understand, again, I've been pastoring the church here for almost 40 years, nobody's ever died of good health, that I know of, that I've been involved in. You know, this *'tabernacle'* this temporary thing wears out, the space-suit. And inside, you know, I was saved when I was 22 years old, inside I'm still 22 years old. I try to convince my Bible class, got all teenagers, *'I'm as young as you are, I've just been young longer than you, so I'm telling you not to do all that stuff, because I've done all that stuff, not because I'm old, because I got saved when I was 22, that's when eternity entered into me, I'm still 22, it's just this stupid body wearing out, but the rest of me is good.'* Maybe that's some kind of denial, but I'm completely happy there, in my senility. He says, look, **'Remember God, do the right thing while the difficult days come not,'** verse 2 he says **"while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:"** before, you know, your eyesight begins to fail, before the mind dulls in senior moments and turn into senior ten-minute breaks, and they come more often. I was out with a friend of mine not too long ago, Willard Richardson, we were having lunch, and

he said, he's a pastor downtown, he said "Joe, he said I tell my wife, don't interrupt me, because at my age, I may not remember the rest of what I was going to say, and it might have been good for her." [I've already reached that point.] So, he says, remember your Creator, while the evil days come not, while the sun, the light of the moon and stars be not darkened, you're still enjoying the light he talked about back in verse 7 of Ecclesiastes 11, just life itself, nor the clouds return after the rain, to be somebody where every day ends up becoming a dreary day. He says, now this is a poetic, any of the scholars you read, a poetic picture of aging, and he says "when the keepers" would certainly be a picture of your hands and your arms, "of the house," that's you, you know Peter says 'I must shortly put off this tabernacle,' it tells us that Jesus dwelt, tabernacled among us, Paul picks up the same thing, calls his body a tent. He says here **"In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened," (verse 3)** trembling, it comes with age, my Mom, she's 87, when she writes a card now it's trembly-writing, it's beautiful, because I can see her age in it, and it's beautiful because I can hear so clearly what she's trying to say in her shaking writing. He says **'Remember your Creator, get your heart before God, before these things start to come, and the day comes when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, peopled start to become stooped, walk a little bit crunched over, their strength, the thighs, their legs begin to weaken a little bit.'** [this is downright depressing Pastor Joe] Everybody here looks young, I know nobody here can relate to what any of this is saying. **"and the grinders cease"** anybody relate to that here? he's talking about teeth, **"the grinders cease because they are few,"** actually that's good as you get older, you got less potential to take in calories, that means they keep you a little bit healthier, I right now have to be selective where I chew, depending on what it is, I chew certain things on the back right, I can still chew certain things right in the front, not much goes in the back over here right now, you know I have to be very selective as I work through the plate, I have different categories in my mouth where those things are chewed. That's what comes, he says they tremble, strong men bow themselves, the grinders cease because they are few, they are fewer than they were for me. I like my grandfather, he was born and raised in Austria, he came across the North Atlantic in a sailboat,

he was really old-school, I remember growing up, he was in the house, he shoveled coal until he was 70, he had an engineering degree, remarkable. When he would get a toothache he would go out in the garage with a washcloth and put it over his teeth, take a pair of pliers and get the bad tooth and pull it out. Ah, ya I know. Grandpa, he was a man, he had suspenders, he was remarkable. **'the grinders are few,'** ok, we're there **"and those that look out the windows be darkened,"** here we are right here, here's the windows, Solomon didn't have windows like these, I think I was 42 when I went to the eye-doctor for the first time, because we had a communion service, you know, we would turn down the lights, and I'd picked up my Bible to read, and it was gray [laughter] you know. And I kind of knew the text, because I could fake through it, you know, ah **'That which I received of the Lord I delivered unto you, the night in which he was betrayed he gave thanks, he brake...'** and I was, you know, kind of go with it. And I went to the eye-doctor and he said *"Well how old are you?"* and I said *"42"* and he said *"I've been waiting for you,"* so I wear these things now, and I just said *"give me the biggest ones you can, because I don't want to see the rims, rims drive me crazy."* Some people want to look cool so they wear these little rims, you know, John Lennon glasses. I said *"I don't care about looking cool at all, my teeth are going, my ears are going, I can't hear what people say about me anymore, so give me the biggest glasses you can find."* I put them on in the morning, I don't see the rims, I don't take them off until I go to bed, and they don't bother me because I can't see the rims, my philosophy. **"and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets,"** (verses 3c-4a) probably talking about speech, David says in ***Psalms 141***, ***"Set a watch O LORD before my mouth, keep the door of my lips,"*** Solomon here no doubt learning from his father, he says ***'there's a time when the doors are shut in the streets,'*** just not talking as much as you used to when you go out, **"when the sound of the grinding is low,"** now that's not grinders [teeth] because you don't have enough grinders to make any noise, it's just in this culture you always heard somebody grinding at the mill, it was a constant sound during the day, people grinding grain. If it gets to the point where you can't hear the sound of grinding, which you heard for a lifetime, now it's low, you can hardly hear it, and yet **"and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird,"** the thing that you want to hear you can't hear, and the things you don't want to hear is what you hear [once when I was

staying at my mother's summer home, taking care of the place, this loud, nasty, raucous Robin sat on the grape arbor under my open window at sun-up squawking, I wanted a BB-gun right about then to shoot it]. It's like you remember the things you want to forget, and you forget the things you want to remember. Everybody has somebody in their life they want to forget so bad, it drives them nuts [I have two individuals in this category], that's the person you can't forget, and the person you want to remember is the person *'I can't remember, what's his name?'* It's the same thing here, the sound of grinders which you heard every day, and then you go to bed, and beep! And you're up, where's my shotgun, you know, kill my friend [a bird] out there, but because you can't see out the windows [your glasses] you can't even aim. You know, it's funny, where am I going here, yes, 2nd Samuel, Barzilai whose a wonderful old man who helped David when he was driven out of Jerusalem, he says ***"I am this day four-score years old"*** 80 years old ***"can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink, can I hear any more the voice of singing, singing men and singing women. Wherefore then should thy servant be a burden?"*** David had said to him *'Why don't you just come live with me?'* he said ***'I can't hear any more, I can't taste, if I was 20 years old I'd love to move into a king's palace, but at this point I'm getting ready to go into the tomb where my fathers are, just let me stay here, take one of my kids.'*** So we have a picture here, the sound of grinding is gone, you rise up at the voice of a bird, insomnia, ***"and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;"*** (verse 4d) ***"Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and the desire shall fail: because man goeth to his is long home, and the mourners go about the streets:"*** (verse 5) ***"afraid of that which is high"*** that just comes, doesn't it? My wife says to me *'What are you doing on the roof? call somebody to do that!'* I say *'what are you talking about, I'm 60 years old, it's my roof, these are my gutters, I'm going to clean them out.'* I remember my Mom would call me up, because my Dad was in his 80s and he's up on the ladder, and then his knee would lock up sometimes, so then he'd be up there, trying to bend his leg to come down, he would finally have to let himself down with his other leg, one rung at a time, *'Dad! What are you doing? Call me up, I'll go out and clean up your gutters, you're 80 years old, you're going to die falling off*

*the roof.*' And then when he was 83, they got a new exhaust fan in the kitchen. Well my Dad worked at the Navy Yard for 30-some years, old German, he was an engineer, that exhaust fan, he had caulked that thing in, screwed that thing in, and he felt bad for the guy who was coming with the new exhaust fan, because he knew the guy was never gonna get it out of the wall, so he's out there on the ladder at 83, prying that thing, unscrewing, and finally it came loose and he went backwards off the ladder, of course. And my Mom said she was in the basement doing the wash, and heard *Boom!* this thud, and she looked out, luckily he had hit the clothesline, and I'll explain to some of you what that is in a minute, he hit the clothesline and spun around in the air, then hit the ground. So he was all cut up from the clothesline, but it broke his fall. And I just said *'Dad, you can't...that's what you're paying the guy for,'* but you know I'm going to be the same way, my wife always says *'You love that movie Second-hand Lions, because you want to be an old guy on the front porch in a rocking chair with a shotgun,'* I said *'Well of course, what else would I want to be?'* Clothesline, that's when in the old days you would wash your clothes, we still do that, but driers were far and few between, so you'd take your clothes outside, and you'd hang them on a line, it was a rope, it was a special rope, especially sold for laundry, it was called a clothesline. And they had these little things called clothespins that you would pinch it on the line, and occasionally there was a casualty from a bird flying over, you couldn't help that, and they smelled nice and fresh and clean when they came in, then if you put too many things on the clothesline it hung down too far, then you had a prop, a clothesline prop that you'd put under the middle of it. The problem is, if you ran through the yard at night (which kids would always do), you forgot that the clothesline was there, you've probably if you watch the NFL you've heard the phrase *"He got clotheslined,"* where somebody takes the guy, takes his feet from out from under him. Well that came from my day, when you were running through the yard in the dark and hit the clothesline, and it would take your feet out from under you, it's a lot of history there, it's important that you understand this, but there was a time when there were not dryers, and you put them out in the sun and God dried them with the wind, it was a different time, but look out for things that are high, you shouldn't be up there [cleaning the gutters] at your age. And then it says **"and fears shall be in the way,"** it was funny, because the older people, they warn you about everything, *'be careful when you go*

*there, make sure you do this, make sure you take your phone, don't get out of the car when you get there,'* you were just on the ladder, you're 83 years old, you're telling me not to go out to McDonald's, are you kidding me. But it's the same thing, in their perspective, they break the rules when they're older, and you're warned about everything, *'look out, don't go here, be careful when you go there,'* just understand, the whole thing. **“and the almond tree shall flourish,”** you have to understand, when you're in Israel in the Spring, almond is from the, Hebrew is always from a verb root, it means to burst forth, the first thing to blossom in Israel is the almond tree, in the Spring the blossoms are white and gray. He's making a wonderful picture of what's on my head now, the almond tree blossoming, the white and the gray hair there. You know, you can't go high anymore, you're kind of afraid to be high, you stumble, you fall, the almond tree is blossoming. This one's interesting, **“the grasshopper shall be a burden,”** I read and study, you should hear the array of explanations that are given to this, it's ridiculous, grasshoppers a burden. I mean, the stupidest things you ever read, that it means this, or they come in a swarm, or the grasshopper, one tries to translate it *'they drag their legs,'* one guy renders it, *'the only reason grasshoppers hop, they're grasshoppers, they hop, they don't drag their legs, the only reason they drag their legs, if you step on them and squish the back of their body, then they drag their legs.'* I think what he's saying is you just get to that age, they didn't have Anderson Windows or anything, Solomon's got the most beautiful palace Israel's ever seen, and you kind of just get to that age, if there's a grasshopper in the palace it ruins the whole palace [the Pharaoh of the Exodus had this happen with the plague of grasshoppers, and flies, and lice, and frogs, just to name a few]. I remember my Dad, you know, with a fly swatter, *'You know, that thing, if he goes by here again I'm going to get him!'* and he takes a swing at it, it ruins your day with a fly around. I think it's just saying here, when you get to the point where it doesn't matter how big and beautiful the palace is, the grasshopper's the only thing you can think about. The grasshopper becomes a burden, he says, **“desire shall fail:”** Solomon had tested all of that out, with all kinds of things, 700 wives, 300 concubines, he says it just comes to the point where all of that vigor of youth, impotence, it all fails, it all wears out with time, he says, **“because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:” (verse 5)** King James says “to his long home,” the Hebrew says **“man goes to the house of his**

**eternity**” it literally reads out, going to the house of his eternity. And he says **“and the mourners go about the streets:”** He says, **‘Remember God when you’re young, give yourself to the things that are important.’** This is what happens, time marches on. And you hear from your parents, your grandparents *‘Well when I was a kid, we used to do this,’* you hear that, next thing you know you’re saying to your kid *‘When we were kids,’* oh my goodness I’ve become my father, become my grandfather, because it goes by so quickly. In other places in the Scripture it says life is like a dream, a vapor, all of a sudden it’s gone. Solomon says, the wisest man that ever lived, look, **‘secure the things that are important about your relationship with God while you’re young, because the time comes when your life and age itself, no matter how much pleasure you had, how much money you had, age itself just wears you out, the eyes don’t work anymore, the ears, your hearing, eeh? Eeh? your hearing doesn’t work anymore,’** and that’s not all bad, because you don’t hear people talking about your teeth, and even if you do, your memory’s going so you don’t remember too long, you know, everything wears out, your strength, your hands begin to shake, life takes its toll. I remember my Dad in the last days, just I remember when I was a kid he was so strong. Anybody that needed to move a refrigerator would call my Dad in the family, and then all of a sudden the tables are turned, and I’m driving him and we’re stopping fast and I’m putting out my arm so he doesn’t lean forward in the car, and taking him through heart surgery, and it just goes by like that **snap!** The wonderful thing is my Dad came to Christ before he died, in hospice in the very end, *‘Dad are you afraid?’ ‘Nope, I’m ready.’* It’s very different than the picture that Solomon is saying here, just the sad thing where mourners are going about in the street, people’s hearts are broken. But the old age of a believer can be very, very sweet. **Psalm 71:18** says this, **“O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hither to have I declared thy wondrous works, and now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God forsake me not, until I have showed thy strength to this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.”** He’s saying, **‘LORD, when I was young, you worked in my life, you were faithful, now I’m old LORD, but grant me strength, don’t forsake me, until I tell the next generation about who you are, about your faithfulness, about your goodness.’** A great, great perspective, other than just the depressing thing that Solomon puts before us in the lives of those who don’t believe. He

says this in *Isaiah*, he says **'Hearken unto me O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb, even to your old age I am he, even to hoary hairs will I carry you, I have made, I will bear, even I will carry, and I will deliver you. There is none like me'** he goes on to say. How wonderful for us as we get there, all just say *'Hey I'm ready,'* you read through 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapter 4.

## *The Process Of Dying*

He's just saying here, ***'This is the way it goes for everybody, this is the way it comes down, man goes to his eternal home, where there are mourners walking around the streets,'*** and verse 6 he says **"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."** Now verse 6, very interesting, it's giving us some pictures **"where the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."** it says here that the golden bowl, it is smashed, and the wheel is smashed, the pitcher is broken, there are different words there, ah, silver cord is loosed, he's giving us a picture of that final struggle in death. I have been with many people and watched them go through that process, and have seen on their end, very different experiences. I've sadly, unbelievers, go through that passage of death terribly. But I've seen unbelievers [I think he meant "believers" here, but said "unbelievers" by accident] all of a sudden open their eyes and say *'Do you hear that?'* *'ah, no, what do you hear?'* *'Do you hear the music, can you hear the singing?'* and I think of one who just sat up, shortly before he left, and say *'Jesus'* and just laid down, and fifteen minutes later was gone. I believe that he reaches across, you know, he says ***'In my Father's house are many mansions, if that wasn't true I would have told you. I'm going to go and prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you I'll come again and receive you,'*** some of us he sends for, some of us he collects individually, and when he finally blows the Trumpet and we all go, but every one of us when we go, it's under his care. And I don't think he lets any of us, *'Ah!!'* go into death, and fall into darkness, and then he catches us, I think he reaches across, he's a good

Shepherd, he reaches across. Some hear the music, some see the light, he reaches across, and he says it's like the silver cord is broken, a beautiful picture, he talks about silver and gold, the golden bowl, life itself contained, it's like birth. Our nursery is always full, we've always got babies coming, and if you had talked to that little baby in the mother's womb, there was a book, it's called "Living With Cancer", it was written by an oncology nurse, and she wrote the book realizing all of a sudden she was the patient, she had cared for many patients with cancer, all of a sudden she was a patient, and she was getting the spinal tap, she was going through the chemo, she was losing her hair, that she was also on the other end, *"And I Wow, I've not been on this end,"* so she wrote a book called "Living With Cancer." In part of the book she talks about standing outside of the OBGYN department in the hospital, in her bathrobe, with a bald head, looking at all these little babies who were just born. And she said *"The Lord said to her, 'That's the way it's going to be,' she said 'What do you mean, Lord?' 'That's the way passage takes place,' she said 'What do you mean?'* and he said *'If you had said to that baby a day ago, there's a whole other world a foot away from you,'* that baby would have said *'Well what do you mean? this is my world in this fluid,'* and he said *'No, no, you're going to go through a dark tunnel within several hours, and you're going to come out into the light, your father has prepared a place for you, it's called a nursery.'* Jesus and our Father have prepared a place for you. He said *'There's people in light there, waiting to receive you, OBGYN doctors and nurses, and you're going to come into the light,'* and then the baby would say *'What do you mean, the light, what is light?'* *'Well you have capacities you don't even know about, you have these eyes, and what they were made for is something you haven't experienced yet. And when you come out they're going to cut the silver cord.'* *'I can't live, if they cut the umbilical cord,'* *'No, you have an internal system, as soon as that is cut, your internal systems switches on, and you're going to hear,'* *'What do you mean hear?'* *'Well there's kids singing, you hear this muddy sound now, but you're going to hear the charion, there's parks, there's trees and there's flowers, there's rainbows, there's sunrises, there's a whole other world inches away from you, you have all of the capacities for that world, but you've never exercised it. Do you think your life depends on that umbilical cord? You're going to pass out into the light, your father's been waiting for you, they've made preparation for your coming, you're going to realize then what eyeballs are really for. You only think*

*you know.*' It's the same with us when we make that passage, the silver cord is broken, you only think you know what eyes are for. When you see him on his throne, you see the cherubim gathered round, you see the Sea of Glass on fire, and multitudes of angels and men in glory, then you'll know what eyes are for. You only think you know what ears are for. We got our eyes looking at stuff we shouldn't look at sometimes. We let our ears listen to stuff, we're going to realize then what ears are made for, when we hear that singing and hear that praise. And the great thing there, is my wife doesn't control the thermostat, the Lord does, there's only one thermostat in heaven and he's in charge of it. The temperature is always perfect, that's what you're always trying to get, *'no it's too warm, no it's too cold,'* no, the perfect temperature, it's there, this is what I've always longed for, I'm home, this is the place, now I understand, every fiber of what we are and of our existence all of a sudden comes in for a landing and we're in the right place. This is what it was all for. Because sometimes I'll be at a funeral and somebody will say *'I know they're up there looking down,'* and then when I share, I say *'I hate to tell you, they're not there looking down, imagine what's in front of their eyes right now, why would they watch a funeral, that's depressing, what's in front of their eyes is the Lord of Glory, looking into the face of Jesus, the angels are there, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, they're in the middle of the whole thing, what are they watching this for?'* So he says there's a passage, and he describes it poetically, he says it's like **the silver cord is loosed**, the person you set free, the baby when the umbilical cord is cut, coming into what life really is. **The golden bowl** that's contained in life in this earthly journey is broken, or, and it seems to be a contrast here, **the pitcher is broken at the fountain,**' sometimes death seems like a waste, sometimes it's somebody 22 years old. All the potential, it seems like a pitcher broken at a fountain, there's a lot of broken hearts tonight in San Bernardino, somebody left for work this morning, young, vibrant, then at a Christmas party they were gunned down. And it seems like a waste, it's like the pitcher being broken at the fountain, it doesn't make any sense, it's like the wheel of the cistern it says, having a picture of the heart, beating, it stops. When that wheel is broken, there's no more drawing of water, no more drawing of life. So, he seems to set the contrast, sometimes that old age, you live life out, the cord is loosed, there's that passage. Sometimes, like a pitcher being broken at the fountain, sometimes it seems like, I don't understand, it's such a waste when this happens. You know,

Isaiah says this, if I can find it, **Isaiah** says ***“The righteous perish and no man layeth it to heart, merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from evil to come. He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one of them walking in their own uprightness.*”** Isaiah says, sometimes righteous people perish, that people are just tortured by it, nobody lays it to heart that what’s happened is merciful men have been taken away, none considering that they’re taken away from a greater evil that was to come. There’s actually mercy in it, and “taken away” there is the Hebrew word which means “to collect” or “to gather to oneself.” And he says, you know, from eternity’s side, sometimes when it seems like it’s just the pitcher being broken at the fountain, it seems like such a waste, but on the other side of eternity, it’s a righteous person, a good person, God has gathered someone because he can see a year or two down the line there’s going to be a terrible suffering or a terrible thing, he’s gathered them from a greater evil to come. [And God knows when the evil is going to come in our day, WWII, the Tribulation. see [https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming\\_4.htm](https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/2ndcoming_4.htm)] So Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, thinking through these things, musing, stretching them out, looking at them. He says, like sometimes the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, and sometimes it’s like the pitcher being broken at the fountain, it comes early, it seems like a waste, or the wheel broken at the cistern. You know, many of us have prepared for a retirement, but not for eternity. Paul says we should walk worthy of the vocation that we’re called to, we’re not called to live our lives in retirement and play golf in Florida. What we’re called to is stepping through the veil into eternity, that’s our vocation, that’s our calling, this is only the beginning, this is a temporary state, this is the launchpad, the rest, the whole of it is on the other side. And especially as Christians, we love people, we love their presence, we love to hold onto them, the heartache is so great when we have to let go of someone that we love. I remember after my Dad died, I thought if when a loved one in your family died, when he took his last breathe, within a minute his color changed, he was pale, I could see he was gone, it was vacancy. But if he’d taken his last breath and he had disappeared, the covers just fallen flat, then you’d say ‘*Oh there’s another one gone,*’ it’s there’s this assurance, they’re on the other side, I’ll see him again. The hard thing is, that frame that you love, that spacesuit, the tent, the

tabernacle that they dwelled in, is still there, and it seems so final, and God calls forth faith from our hearts to believe, no that's going to get up again one day. I'm going to see him when he's 30 [and 30 forever].

*Where The Physical Body Goes, And Where The 'spirit-in-man' Goes Upon Death*

He says, you know it's at that point, verse 7, and Billy Graham, his last book was great, he said "*I was prepared to die,*" but he said "*I preached the Gospel my whole life, I know I'm saved,*" but he said "*but no one ever prepared me for old age, I was ready to die, I just wasn't prepared to get old. I don't like hobbling around in the hospital, going from room to room to witness to people. Ruth is gone, I still want to do things, but I'm in this broken down container now,*" he just said "*I was ready to die, but I was never ready to get old.*" Solomon says, **'Don't just prepare for retirement, prepare for eternity.'** He says, it's at that point, **verse 7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."** And again, our philosophy in this is vastly different [for the Calvary Chapels, who don't use Solomon in Ecclesiastes for influencing Bible doctrine], Paul says **'I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me at that day, and not to me only, but to all of those who love his appearing.'** [The doctrinal differences between the Calvary Chapels and the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God, in a sense are minor, and revolve around soul-sleep at death as opposed to the soul [the spirit in man] remains conscious upon death, until the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection which occurs at Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. They think that the spirit in man of all believers go to heaven conscious upon death, and are with Jesus until his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection where then their spirits are united with their immortal bodies in the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection at Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. The Sabbath-keeping Churches of God believe as Solomon teaches here, that **all** the spirit's in man, of the good, the saved, and the bad, the unsaved, **"return unto God who gave it." (verse 7b)**, and reside up there until the major

resurrection they're destined to be in, the saved to the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection to immortality or the unsaved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection back to physical life (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:49-56; Revelation 20:11-13 and Ezekiel 37:1-14), where each spirit in man of the dead individual is then united to their resurrected body, the saved to their new immortal body, the unsaved back into their normal physical resurrected body. Paul and all believers, regardless of which doctrinal interpretation one holds still receive their eternal reward and crowns of glory, nothing in that regard is changed, that spiritual/Scriptural truth is unchanged. In the soul-sleep/the dead know nothing interpretation which Solomon teaches, from the time of a person's death to their resurrection is like a deep sleep, where the dead are not aware of the passage of time, so at the time of a person's death, in their next waking moment, say for Righteous Abel and all the dead saints, they find themselves instantly alive, coming up in the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection to immortality in resurrected immortal bodies. The dead are not aware of the passage of time. In either interpretation, the receiving of eternal life and our rewards appear to us as being instant. So believers tend to make a doctrinal mountain into what is to God a spiritual ant-hill, and amounts to nothing in the final analysis, where the truth of the matter will be learned once we experience death and the resurrection to immortality. Having been in active membership in both the Calvary Chapels and the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God combined for over 45 years, I on this site do not take a doctrinal stand on this issue, I am merely pointing out the differences, and I, upon my death, will learn the actual truth of the matter when I get there. For a clear explanation on some of these different interpretations see <https://unityinchrist.com/plaintruth/battle.htm>] That's a different perspective on just a depressing journey through these things. But he says at that point the dust returns to the earth, the same 17 elements that are in the ball field out there, are the same 17 elements that you're made of. So the Lord says, from dust you're made, you're going to return. **"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."** "shall return, shall rise and return to God who gave it.

*Closing Verses To Ecclesiastes, The Conclusion Of  
The Matter*

Then he says **“Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.” (verse 8)** life without Christ is, what’s the point, it’s all empty, there’s no beauty in aging without Jesus Christ. Isn’t it wonderful to get older [no,] in the Lord [yes], and to have that. He says **“Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.” (verses 8-9)** he saw the vanity of living without the LORD’s presence, without the LORD’s direction, without the Law of the LORD, he said but, because he was wise he still taught the people knowledge, **“yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.” (verses 9b-10)** not a lot of that in our culture today. He says now, **“The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.” (verse 11)** it doesn’t say they are goads, but they are **as** goads, and **as** nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, the one’s who set up camp, words which are given from one shepherd. This is what he says, he says, **‘I understood all the vanity, I saw the insanity of life. And I still taught the people.’** that’s why he did it, **‘I still taught truth, I still taught knowledge, I still set things in order, the things that are written, they were words of truth,’** it says here, **‘given from one Shepherd,’** and he says **‘those words, they are as goads.’** Now the goad, Paul, when he was on his way to Damascus to kill Christians and the Lord appears to him there on the Road to Damascus, he says **‘Saul, Saul, it’s hard for thee to kick against the pricks, isn’t it?’** the idea, that’s the goad, and it’s a long stick with a metal point in front, and when you would steer your oxen you would stick them with that [i.e. a cattle prod], it would hurt, so it would steer them, it would keep them plowing straight, it was a goad there. And he says here, look, **‘the word is from one shepherd, the Scripture, the Word of Life.’** Because we’re a little bit like, we’re a little ox-like once in awhile in our stubbornness and our laziness and our getting off track. But these words are like goads, they guide us, they poke us, **‘ya, you’re right Lord,’** they keep us on track. He says they’re like nails, those are “tent-stakes,” they make things of our life secure, they provide a foundation so everything in our life doesn’t shake. The picture here in the Hebrew is somebody with a

hammer driving a tent-stake into the ground. And he says, those words, that can do that in your life, that can goad you and steer you, you guys, all experienced that? Just two of us, including me and somebody out here. But you know, then the wonderful thing is, if we blow it, we make a mistake, that same Word says ***‘if you confess your sins, he’s faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness’ (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9)*** If you do sin you have an advocate with the Father, they still goad us. God’s Word ends up to be like tent-stakes we drive down, our whole life is secure when we realize this is the Word of God. And those are words he says, ***‘they’re like goads, they’re not goads, they’re like goads, they steer us, they’re like tent-stakes, they secure us, and they come from one Shepherd.’*** That’s where those words come from. I’m so thankful. ***“And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” (verse 12)*** “my son,” or you can say “my daughter,” don’t exclude yourselves, please. Now all of these chapters of frustration and all the things he’s talked about, now he gets down to this, the Word of God, and how important it is, it’s Divine, it’s from heaven from One Shepherd, ***‘and by these words, my son, my daughter, be admonished, be warned’*** is the idea. And he says ***‘Here’s the truth, of the making of many books there is no end, but none of those books compare with this one Book,’*** he’s talking about. ***“and much study is weariness of the flesh.” (verse 12c)*** you can wear yourself out studying [the study, transcribing, studying history and combining it with the Word of God to write articles, it’s fun, but it really wears me out. So much knowledge going into my brain, and I find it leaks out faster than I can put it back in now. I won’t really assimilate and be able to apply all that I’m learning until I’m in glory with my new immortal body and mind. Our minds are finite. I came to realize in my study of history, that I’m barely scratching the surface of the earth in a deep diamond mine of knowledge, which I will never attain to, perhaps, until the plan of God is wrapped up in Revelation 22.] Most of the time we don’t lack for knowing, we lack for doing.

## *The Conclusion Of The Whole Matter*

Because he's going to say in the next verse, look, **“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”** (verse 13) that reverence and obedience are the bottom line. It's not just studying to see how much theology you can learn so you can argue with the next person about your theological position. That's good, study to show yourself approved, and rightly, literally it's straightly dividing, straightly cutting the Word of God, it isn't just theologically filing everything, it's understanding what it means. But here he says, **‘My son, my daughter, be advised, of the making of many books, there's all kinds of stuff out there,’** and I don't want students here to get the wrong idea, study algebra, study math, don't go home and say *‘Pastor Joe said ‘Studying wears you out,’* I didn't say that, I'm talking about things that try to compare themselves with the Word of God, which your subjects don't do that [unless your biology books are teaching ‘blind evolution of the species,’ then that course is ‘comparing itself with the Word of God,’ and you have to then believe the Word of God over that text, which is filled with a combination of truth and error.] Chuck Smith said when he was in high school, in his Latin book, written in the front, it said *‘Latin is a language is dead as dead can be, first it killed the Romans, and now it's killing me.’* [laughter] Listen, the Word of God shouldn't be *‘ah, I've got to get up and do devotion [i.e. Bible study],’* it should be our daily bread, it should be our bacon [beef bacon for you Messianic Jewish and Sabbath-keeping Church of God brethren] in the morning, if you're a vegetarian or something else. It should be our delight, to get up and spend time with the Word should be a delight, not a labour. He's saying here, making of many books, there's no end, studying, that can be weariness to the flesh. You know, pride can be involved in that. He said **‘Here's the conclusion of the whole matter,’** long chapter as he took to get here [i.e. Ecclesiastes 1 through 12], **“Fear God, and keep his commandments:”** the fear there is “reverence, stand in awe,” look there's one fear, **1<sup>st</sup> John** tells us about, **“fear hath torment.”** God would rather have us love him than fear him. It's not his deal, like he wants us to live our lives shivering and afraid of him. But it does tell us in **Psalm 119, ‘The fear of the LORD is clean, and it's good for us.’** He is God, after all. And there should be a reverence, and the more we know him, the more we should want to do what's right, because we don't want to hurt his feelings, we don't want to disappoint him. There's another aspect to it. Anybody who had a good dad, I had a

good dad when I grew up. I feel bad sometimes, when I talk to people who had a brutal father or an abusive father, I had a good dad. And I feared him and loved him, because he was a good dad. When my mother said *"I'm telling your father,"* there was a sobriety there, because my mom just beat me, just to the point where I wasn't going to let it happen anymore. She had no compunction about just swinging at me. Because her mother, my grandmother, she had twins and then my aunt, she had three in 15 months, so when they grew up, if anybody did anything, she just beat all three of them. Her philosophy was, if I do that they'll keep each other straight. So my mom said *'I remember running around the dining room table, we were all screaming, we called her The Fuhrer, she was chasing us with a big wooden spoon, and she would catch us and beat all three of us, and then we'd be mad at each other.'* But that's godless, you don't do that to kids. My mom got that stuck in her head, so I got whacked lots of times with a wooden spoon. But it was vastly different when she said *"I'm telling your father,"* because, I love my dad, my dad wanted peace in the house, he was a peacemaker, he was a reasoner, but when he got the strap in his hand, it was memorable. I never doubted his love. So fear God, keep his commandments, this is not complicated. He says **"for this is the whole duty"** *'duty'* is in *italics*, the idea is ***"this is the whole of man, the whole of man's life, the whole purpose of breathing, the whole of your life is not so you can do this or do that, somewhere in the chemistry of all of that, the whole purpose of your existence is to live with a reverence for Almighty God."*** And the keeping of his commandments. Jesus said, you know when we read in the New Testament, that's not burdensome, it should be a delight, that's the thing that keeps us. Because those are words that come from heaven from one Shepherd. And they steer us and they secure us, it's not burdensome to do that [i.e. to keep his commandments], I will tell anybody in this room. If you rebel against the Scripture in God's Word, you will regret it down the line. There will never come a day when you regret and look back and say *'Man I wish I hadn't done what the Bible said,'* you're never going to have that day. And when the Ultimate Day comes, when the silver cord is ready to be broken, when That Day he talks about comes, nobody ever lays there in hospice and says *'I wish I had smoked one more joint, I wish I'd have slugged that guy,'* no believer does that. Every believer at that point, is thankful for the things that they did do right, and the reverence they did show to the Lord, because they're

going to show major reverence right then getting ready to take that last breath...every believer then is thankful for all the steps they took in their life with the Lord, because all of a sudden everything's redefined [as they step into the Wedding Feast of the Lamb of God, cf. Revelation 19:7-9], this pilgrimage, this temporary life. This is the whole man, this is the whole of existence, to live your life in reverence to Almighty God, and to keep his instructions, the things he says, he says **"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."** (verse 14) I'm glad Christ bore that judgment for me, aren't you glad that he bore that judgment for you? I love this, we have this in **1<sup>st</sup> John**, it says this, **"I write unto you"** Solomon's talking about these words coming from one Shepherd, **"I write unto you little children because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake,"** there's so much more sweetness than when Solomon wrote, *'remember God in the days of your youth,'* **"I write unto you little children because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake, I write unto you fathers because you have known him that is from the beginning, I write unto you young men because you have overcome the wicked one, I write unto you little children,"** again he says, **"because you have known the Father, I have written unto you fathers because you have known him that is from the beginning, and I have written unto you young men because you are strong, the Word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world and neither the things that are in the world,"** Solomon would say *'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'* **"love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."** The idea is, the human heart is not endless, it can only focus its affection on a certain number of things at a time. *'If any man love the world, the love of the Father finds no room in him,'* **"for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away,"** I love the King James because it says "the world passeth away" the "eth" tells you the tense, **"the world is already in the process of passing away"** if you watch the news today you realize the world and the country and the culture we live in is unravelling, is falling apart. **"for the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."** *'This is the whole duty of man, to reverence God, keep his commandments.'* "He that

**doeth the will of God abideth forever.”** What is his will? **Jesus said** to his disciples, **‘this is the will of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent.’** It’s so simple, isn’t it? Isn’t it wonderful? It’s so simple. We’ll continue next Wednesday evening, expect to see you all here for that...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Ecclesiastes 12:1-14, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

related links:

How we are a divine creation starting before conception. See <https://unityinchrist.com/Psalms/Psalm%20139%201-24.html>

Necessary Comment at the end of Ecclesiastes: The Calvary Chapels and many other Christian denominations do not use Ecclesiastes and what Solomon wrote in it to determine or influence Bible doctrine, whereas the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God include Ecclesiastes within the entire Word of God as sola scriptura, the inerrant Word of God. How does this play out doctrinally between these two parts of the Body of Christ? The doctrinal differences between the Calvary Chapels and the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God, in a sense are minor, and revolve around soul-sleep at death as opposed to the soul [the “spirit in man”] remains conscious upon death, until the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection which occurs at Jesus’ 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. The Calvary Chapels and most Christian denominations think that the “spirit in man” of all believers go to heaven conscious upon death, and are with Jesus until his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming and the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection where then their spirits are united with their immortal bodies in the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection at Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. The Sabbath-keeping Churches of God believe as Solomon teaches here, that **all** the spirit’s in man, of the good, the saved, and the bad, the unsaved, **“return unto God who gave it...” (verse 7b)**, and reside up there until the major resurrection they’re destined to be in, the saved to the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection to immortality or the unsaved to the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection back to physical life (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:49-56; Revelation 20:11-13, Ezekiel 37:1-14),

where each “spirit in man” of the dead is then united to back into their resurrected body, the saved to their new immortal body, and the unsaved back to their normal physical resurrected body. Paul and all believers, regardless of which doctrinal interpretation one holds still receive their eternal reward and crowns of glory, nothing in that regard is changed, that spiritual/Scriptural truth is unchanged. In the soul-sleep/the dead know nothing interpretation which Solomon teaches, from the time of a person’s death to their resurrection is like a deep sleep, where the dead are not aware of the passage of time, so at the time of a person’s death, in their next waking moment, say for Righteous Abel, dead 6,000 years ago, to all the dead saints, they find themselves instantly alive, coming up in the 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection to immortality in resurrected immortal bodies. In this interpretation the dead are not aware of the passage of time. In either interpretation, the receiving of eternal life and our rewards appear to us as being instant. So believers tend to make a doctrinal mountain into what is to God a spiritual ant-hill, and amounts to nothing in the final analysis, where the truth of the matter will be learned once we experience death and the resurrection to immortality. Having been in active membership in both the Calvary Chapels and the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God combined for over 45 years, I on this site do not take a doctrinal stand on this issue, I am merely pointing out the differences so that this site can be compatible to the secondary doctrinal beliefs of **all** without discrimination. We will learn the actual truth of the matter when we die and are ushered into the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, then Jesus will explain everything. For a clear explanation on some of these different interpretations see

<https://unityinchrist.com/plaintruth/battle.htm>