

The Futility of the Perfection of the Flesh

(Day 6—Feast of Tabernacles)

Fred R. Coulter—September 28, 2010

Greetings, brethren! Here we are moving right along day-by-day. I'm sure you're having a great Feast, and I'm having a good time doing these videos, getting them all done for you. These will be the same that I will bring when I travel so everyone will have the same Feast of Tabernacles regardless of where you are.

What is going to be the most difficult thing for people to understand after a certain given period of time during the Millennium? It's going to be *to understand the vanity and futility of human nature!* Even though God is going to give a new heart or new attitude, human nature is still going to be there. There's still going to be deceitfulness that needs to be overcome. *It's just like it says in:*

Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

The whole thing we're also going to be teaching—and let's use this as a lesson for us; that we understand that all the physical things around, though they may be the greatest that has ever been, are nothing!

Jeremiah also said that 'the way of man is not in him to direct his steps.' We were created and made by God, given the *spirit of man* to need God, to need His Holy Spirit to complete the very purpose of His creating us. We need to overcome human nature and we need to understand what it is, and so will all the people during the Millennium. Think on this: It's going to be much more difficult for them to understand the futility of human life, to understand the temporariness of human life, even though they are going to see people grow in grace and knowledge and live their lives—as we'll see tomorrow—perhaps to be about 100-years-old. Then there will be a 'going out' party. They will see people change from flesh to spirit.

Just like we have today, kids growing up in the world today are used to cell phones, computer games, iPhones, iPads. We have a computer and all you do is take your finger and everything moves and you go where you want to go, and that's all natural; that's all normal.

They cannot conceive of a time when people would study the Bible or read something by candlelight. Or go back a little bit further, a little lamp that they had in the Middle East with some olive oil in it with a little wick sticking out the end and that was their light. No, we're all use to

electricity. As a matter of fact, without electricity we couldn't be doing what we're doing here today. It's all done by electricity.

Think what it's going to be like for hundreds of years to have the sons of God doing the teaching, to have people growing in grace and knowledge and entering into the Kingdom of God. Just think how hard it is for them to be able to accept the fact that ***physical, fleshly life profits nothing!*** They can look around them and see:

- look at all the profitable things that have been done
- look at how great people have become
- look at what they've been able to build and do

Of course, the Millennium and the civilization of God the Father and Jesus Christ is going to be so much better/greater than what human beings have ever devised. There's going to be no comparison! But the one thing that is going to be hard to grasp is the *wickedness of human nature* and the *vanity of human life*. Let's read what Jesus said concerning physical life, spiritual life, the Word of God, and so forth. Here's what we have to learn today, and here's what they are going to have to learn in the Millennium.

John 6:63: "**It is the Spirit that gives life...**" *They are going to have:*

- perfect bodies
- perfect minds with great ability to think
- the perfect education
- perfect environment

Everything around them will be perfect!

As they're born into it, they will just take all of these things for granted. They won't know anything of the history, except as they're taught that has gone on in the past. What was the earth like when Satan ruled?

They're going to be under the rule of the saints and Jesus Christ. They're not going to have to live under Satan's rule and domain. So their way of coming to salvation, in some ways, is going to be easier than ours. Of course, we have a greater reward! Being in the first resurrection has greater blessings for all eternity, that is true. But for them it's going to be very hard.

Notice what else Jesus said: "...**the flesh**

profits nothing....” (v 63).

Yet, everywhere they look around them, everything is going to be successful. It’s going to be hard to mentally grasp *the flesh profits nothing*. True!

Let’s also see that there are still going to be those—especially when we get to the end of the Millennium we will see what will happen—who really didn’t learn the lesson!

“...The words that I speak to you, *they* are Spirit and *they* are Life” (v 63). *Eternal life comes from God through His Spirit, through His teachings!*

This is what we are to convey to all the people during the Millennium: “**they...** [the words Christ speaks] ...**are spirit and they are life.**”

All of the human thoughts that we have—and they’ll still have lots of human thoughts—all the things that they’ll have to overcome and to grow in grace in knowledge and to change, they’re going to have a whole level of civilization that is not going to be wrought with conflicts and war and fighting evil and things like that. All of the perfection in the flesh is just going to be assumed as ‘normal.’ That’s the way that it has always been.

It makes me wonder if we’re going to have some ‘spiritual video’ that God has taken which shows the different sections in history and that’s how we’re going to teach them during the Millennium, and how human beings acted and behaved. That would be good teaching tool—don’t you think? *But this is going to be their greatest obstacle:*

“It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life.”

When we apply this to the Word of God, let’s understand something here very important: This is why when you read the Word of God, having the Spirit of God in you, you are able to learn things and new things come right out of the Scriptures. I’ve been studying the Scriptures since 1960, *and I’m still learning*—having been a minister for most of those years—that *these words are Spirit and these words are Life!*

We might entitle this *The Futility of the Perfection of the Flesh*, because many people are going to be thinking:

Oh look, we’re almost like them. Oh look, they can do these things, but look what I can do.

So let’s refresh our memories in understanding about human nature. Let’s come to

the book of Psalms. We’ll look at a lot of things in the book of Psalms and then we’ll go to the book of Ecclesiastes, *the vanity book of the Bible!* That’s what they’re going to have to learn.

Psa. 39 is quite a Psalm and this is one that everyone is going to have to learn. They’re going to have to overcome human nature like we have to, but for them, in a way, it’ll be a two-edged sword. It’ll be easier in one way and harder in another way.

Psalm 39:4: “O LORD, make me to know my end and the measure of my days...”

Time marches on; time never stops! Just like we have to measure our days, those who live under the Kingdom of God during the Millennium are going to have to measure their days. They’re going to know 100-years is coming.

“...what it is, that I may know how short lived I am” (v 4).

To us 100 years is a long time, but compared to eternity it’s not even an atom or a molecule of time. It’s nothing!

Verse 5: “Behold, You have made my days as a handbreadth...”

Want to see how important you are, look at your hand. That’s it, that’s how big and important you are. Not much, is it?

“...and the span of my days is as nothing before You. Surely every man **at his best state** is altogether vanity. Selah” (v 5).

That’s going to be the hardest lesson for the people in the Millennium to learn. It’s plenty hard enough for us to learn. But at “...his very best state...” when he’s the strongest, the most handsome, the most intelligent, the most whatever you want to add to it. Same way with a woman: the most beautiful, the most gorgeous, the most loved, ah, wonderful! What can be better than this? And to turn around and say, ‘This is vanity? Are you kidding?’ Well, the Proverb says that ‘beauty is vain.’ God doesn’t delight in the ‘strength of man’s arm’ or his legs, but human beings do, don’t they? *Yes!*

“...the span of my days is as nothing before You. Surely every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah” (v 5)—**stop! pause! think! mediate on this and think about it!**

This is why, though it’s good to accomplish things and do things—which is fine—but we’re not to get all lifted up in self and say, ‘Look what I’ve done.’ You know, put your thumbs under your suspenders and lift them up and be proud. This is a

time that I like to call the belly-button exam. Do you have one? *Yes!* You came from your mother and your father, and God gave you life, and God gave you what you are—for His glory! for His purpose! And without that *altogether vanity!*

Now, try this on for size: The next time you watch television; think about this with all these ads—whenever I see an ad I hit the ‘mute button’ and I watch them; and, of course, I can read the closed caption as it goes along. I am especially wiped out all the time by these ads for drugs. ‘You’ll be happy, you’ll be healthy, you’ll be wonderful if you take this drug’ and all these people are smiling and happy. I’ve never seen a sad, glower, gloomy ad. ‘Don’t take this rotten thing because it’s no good.’ They’re all happy. But you read the caption:

It may lead to insanity or suicidal tendencies, or you may have a heart attack or your liver may fail, but it’s a wonderful, *wonderful, wonderful* drug!

Verse 5: “Behold, You have made my days as a handbreadth, and the span of my days is as nothing before You.... [v 6]: Surely every man walks about in a vain show!”

Isn’t that true? *That’s the way human beings are!* Think about the Days of Unleavened Bread: getting sin out of your life, yielding to God, learning humility, learning Truth, learning righteousness, and how much we need God. Then compare that to Easter and think about the songs that they have—and you all know them because you’ve heard them:

‘Put on your Easter bonnet,’ put on your best; ‘Come to the Easter Parade,’ show off your best, show off the greatest that you are.

Look, the truth is, you are who you are when you’re in a room by yourself and no one else is around. You have no one to pretend to. You have no one to show off to. *It’s just you and God!* Think about when you’re weak, when you’re sick! Then you begin to understand the weakness, vanity and futility of human life. That’s why we need God to intervene for us.

Verse 6: “Surely every man walks about in a vain show! Surely they are in an uproar in vain....”

Think about it! Look at all the political movements that have been going on in America, and it’s all in vain! It’s not going to solve the problems! It’s not going to change anything! Is there one man out there who is really honest? That’s why I refer to Washington, D.C., as Washington, DLC—District of Liars and Corruption.

“...**He heaps up riches and does not know**

who shall gather them” (v 6).

You want to see something that’s *a vain show*? Look at all the mummies and the tombs in Egypt where they were mummified so they could go to the ‘other world.’ They had all their wealth buried with them; they had food put there so they could enjoy it on their journey to the ‘other side.’ Then we look at them today, ‘Hey, this guy is nothing but a corpse.’ Someone came in and stole all of his wealth right out from beneath him. It’s like when a rich man dies, the first question is: How much did he leave? Well, the truth is, *everything*, because you can’t take it with you! That’s going to be hard for them to understand.

Verse 7: “And now, LORD, what do I wait for?....”

What is the purpose in my life; in your life; in their life during the Millennium? What do they wait for?

“...**My hope is in You.** Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the fool” (vs 7-8).

That something! Yes, there is going to be correction; yes, there are going to be things that will come along.

Verse 10: “Remove Your stroke away from me; I am consumed by the blow of Your hand. You correct a man for iniquity with rebukes, and you make his beauty to vanish away like a moth. **Surely every man is vanity. Selah**” (vs 10-11).

That’s going to be what they’re going to see during the Millennium: all these great physical things that people have always, always wanted. And what is it going to amount to in the long run? *Absolutely nothing, unless there is conversion!* That’s something to contemplate.

Psa. 62—this one I like. What you need to understand: This tells us exactly the sum of every man. Then we will go back and see what we need to do and what we need to teach the people in the Millennium to do. After a while it will be ‘old hat’ to them, that the sons and daughters of God appear and disappear before them. That’s just like having a video screen or an iPhone and you just take your finger and move things, they’ll be use to it. They’ve known nothing else.

When you watch these political ads coming up, and what’s going to be happening, and you hear the pronouncements of all these men who are speaking out of all sides of their mouth. There are some few who are dedicated; some few who are looking for truth, but can they really, really,

hold to it when the crunch comes? *NO WAY!*

Psalms 62:9: “Surely men of low degree are vanity... [that is true] ...and **men of high degree are a lie**... [look at all these great mucky-mucks in the world] ...when weighed in the balance, they are altogether **lighter than vanity**.”

Can you get anything ‘lighter’ than vanity? *Think about that!*

Verse 10: “Trust not in oppression... [maybe a lot of politicians need to learn that] ...and do not take pride in stolen goods...”

That comes with taxes; stolen from the people. But the people said, ‘We don’t want God. We want a king.’ God says, ‘You’ll get a king, but he’s going to tax you to death.’ Look at what happened with Solomon.

“...if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them” (v 10).

Whatever the blessings of God that He gives you, physically in this life, be thankful, be grateful, but don’t set your heart on it. Set your heart on the Kingdom of God, because that’s where we’re aiming; that’s what we are to do. Think of that!

Verse 11: “God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: that power... [of wealth] ...belongs to God.... [He grants it!] ...Also to You, O LORD, belongs mercy; for You give to every man according to his work” (vs 11-12).

Let’s see how we overcome this. Right here in the first part of Psa. 62, it tells us how we overcome, and this is what we’re going to teach the people, and this is what we need to learn. God is going to take the thing of vanity—being human beings and human nature—and change it and convert it. We have our part. We’ve got to yield to God and grow in grace and knowledge. We’ve got to overcome. We have to apply ourselves. And God has given us every breath that we have and everything about us that we have for that very purpose. So here’s how we overcome this:

Verse 1: “Only for God does my soul wait in silence; from Him comes my salvation.”

We’re not going to save ourselves. Has any man saved himself? ***The only One raised from the dead is Jesus Christ!*** Even Houdini couldn’t do it.

Verse 2: “He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved.”

Notice how we stay centered on God and Christ by doing this. Then you look at those out in the world doing all the things that they are doing.

Verse 3: “How long will you imagine mischief against a man? You shall be slain, all of you; you shall be like a bowing wall and as a tottering fence.”

And all it takes is just waiting for that one little thing—POOF!—and it’s gone! The wall comes crashing down together.

Verse 4: “They only consult to cast him down from his great height; they delight in lies; they bless with their mouth, but inwardly they curse. Selah... [what a situation; sounds like our society today, to be out there in it] (Here’s the solution): **...My soul, wait in silence for God alone; for from Him comes my hope....** [notice how that ties in with v 1, *from Him comes my salvation*] **...from Him comes my hope**” (vs 4-5). *How many times have we said:*

- *walk in faith*
- *believe in hope*
- *live in love*

That’s what we have to do with our lives today. That’s what we have to teach all the people to do in the Millennium: For them to come to realize that the flesh is vanity, the flesh is nothing, the flesh doesn’t profit anything at all whatsoever. The words that Jesus speaks and the words that we will speak: ***they are spirit and they are life!***

Verse 6: “He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; **I shall not be moved.**”

Remember what Jesus said there in Matt. 7 about ‘blessed is the man who hears My word and builds his house upon a Rock. And the floods came and the rain came and the wind blew,’ but it was not moved because it was founded on *the Rock!*

Then compare that to the foolish man—built his house upon the sand. Oh it was easy; it was nice; it was great; lovely dwelling. But he didn’t realize that he built it in a dry riverbed and the rain came and the floods came and the wind blew and—POOF!—it was gone! So likewise, we’re going to teach them that in the Millennium.

Verse 7: “In God is my salvation and my glory...”

- not in human endeavors
- not in human works
- not in human thoughts
- not in anything of the flesh

“...the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God.... [here is how to maintain this all the time; this is what we’re going to teach them during the

Millennium]: ...**Trust in Him at all times...**” (vs 7-8).

- faith
- belief
- trust
- love

...you people; pour out your heart before Him...” (v 8).

You need to stop and think: When was the last time that you really poured your heart out to God, crying out to Him:

- for help
- for strength
- for understanding
 - ✓ to realize how pitiful we are
 - ✓ to realize how pitiful that this world is
 - ✓ to realize what absolute vanity and futility it is
 - without God
 - without His Laws
 - without Christ
 - without the proper government that only can come from God

Everyone who thinks he’s something!

Psalm 94:11: “The LORD knows the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.”

Whatever you think of yourself and your accomplishments and what you’re doing, if you don’t understand that God has given you everything that you have, your thoughts are vanity. What is that going to profit? ***The flesh profits nothing at all!***

Let’s come to the book of Ecclesiastes and let’s see this book that you might also subtitle: *Vanity of Vanities, All is Vanity*—because that’s the way it starts out.

We’re going to do a survey of the book of Ecclesiastes. As a matter of fact, this was the main book that was read during the Feast of Tabernacles. Why was that? *So that everyone would learn the lesson that the abundance of the blessings that God gave, unless you’re right with God, are vain indeed!*

Let’s start out in Ecc. 3 so we get a good perspective, so that we understand, so that we can realize what we also need to be learning today and teaching in the Kingdom of God tomorrow, when the Kingdom of God comes on the earth.

Ecclesiastes 3:1: “To everything *there is* a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens.” *There’s a purpose for everything:*

- a purpose for your life

- a purpose for the difficulties
- your joys
- your sorrows
- your ups and downs
- your ins and outs

And the purpose is that we learn and develop the character of God!

Verse 2: “A time to be born, and a time to die...” *There comes a time to die; ‘we all die in Adam.’*

If you die in the faith—it’s not a sin to die—you’ve accomplished your mission; you have completed your course; you have run the race. ***Now there’s a crown of righteousness laid up for you!*** And there are some of those who are hearing my voice or watching me on the video here, that by this time next year they’re going to be in the grave—their place of safety—waiting for the return of Jesus Christ and the resurrection. So there is a time to die.

“...a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what *is* planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal...” (vs 2-3).

That’s why when Jesus Christ returns the whole world is going to be absolutely just turned upside down. Not literally flipping the whole planet, but all the mountains, the hills, everything. There’s a time to kill all the wicked. You can’t establish the Kingdom of God by having the wicked running around the way they do today. If they’re going to fight Christ, He’s going to eliminate them.

As we’ll see on the Last Great Day there is the second resurrection. They will have their opportunity, but you cannot begin a righteous government by having it filled with a bunch of sinful, carnal people. You must start from scratch. That’s why there’s going to be about—who knows—nine-tenths of the population killed? It’s going to be a mammoth number. We don’t know, we’ll find out when that time comes.

“...and a time to heal...” (v 3) *That’s what the Millennium is all about:*

- to heal the planet
- to heal the people
- to heal their minds
- to heal their bodies

“...a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance” (vs 3-4).

All of these things are the activities of human life that we need to see that without God and without Christ it all becomes futile. What is your life

when it comes down to the last weeks of it? How has it been? By that time, what is, *is*; what is said, *is said*.

Verse 5: "...a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to gain, and a time to lose... [that sounds like the stock market] ...a time to keep, and a time to throw away" (vs 5-6).

I saw clippings of a special—I haven't watched it—that there are some people who gather junk and junk and fill their houses, every nook and cranny, with junk and waste and stupidity, that they should have thrown away, and there's hardly even a path to walk down in. This one that I saw: This woman, one of her relatives came and said, 'Where's such and such?' *Oh, that's over here under this and under that.* She went and got it immediately, so she knew where all the junk was. I thought about the command that God gave to Adam and Eve: 'Dress it and keep it.' Nothing but junk! These people need to throw it away!

Verse 7: "A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak... [Have you ever spoke when you should have shut up?] ...a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. What profit does he have who works in that in which he labors?" (vs 7-9).

Without God what is the profit? You take of your family, you lead a decent life, you come to an end, you die. That's it! Like one poor man who lived alone, he peacefully passed in his sleep. The neighbor hadn't seen him for three days and called the police. They got in the house, there he was in his bed, dead. His whole life, everything he had done had an end.

Verse 10: "I have seen the task which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised by it. He has made everything beautiful in its time..." (vs 10-11).

None of us, when we get old, can stop the wrinkles. Not even the cosmetics. You know the best cure for wrinkles? I'll tell you right now: ***the resurrection!*** You'll get a total change of complexion. Do away with all the wrinkles. We're like:

- the grass that withers
- like the branch that is cut off and dries up
- like the flower that is beautiful, then it fades away and wrinkles down

That's life! God made it beautiful in it's time!

Here's something else that God has done,

and every human being has this, what experts in human nature call the religious element of man, which none of the other creatures that we know of have.

"...He has also set eternity in their heart..." (v 11).

Men have an idea—even if they don't know God, even if they have some strange and weird religion, even if they live clear in a barbarian society out in some jungle someplace—*they all believe in an afterlife one way or the other!* Now, there are some who say when you die that's it, it's all over. But that's very few. And the reason is that God "**...set eternity in their heart...**"

Can you think of a time when you didn't exist, I mean, in your own mind? You can look back and you can see people who were born before you; you can see family almanacs and all that sort of thing; and see the pictures of them and all that sort of thing. But you, in your own mind, can you conceive of a time when you didn't exist? *No!* Even though you know when you're going to die, can you really conceive of a time when you won't be here? *No!* Regardless of how old you are, and even in spite of the fact that you know you are going to die. In your own mind you cannot conceive of a time that you will not exist. And that's because ***God has put eternity in the heart of every man!***

Verse 14: "I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever..."

God has an eternal plan, and God has an eternal plan for us. But you know, when reading the book of Ecclesiastes, even though Solomon understood some of these things, he still didn't grasp it. So, the book of Ecclesiastes is kind of like a philosophical experiment in life, and that's why we have it, so we can see the futility of it.

"...nothing can be added to it... [Who's going to add to what God does?] ...nor anything taken from it; and God does *it* so that men should fear before Him" (v 14).

Isn't that something? What a thing that God has done! What a creation that He has made! That's why we need

- the Spirit of God
- the Laws of God
- the Truth of God
- to know the purpose of God's plan in our lives.

And think about how many people down through history never ever knew. They lived out their lives and died, or their lives were cut short with war and

famine and plague and disease, whatever. God is not going to waste any of that. Yet, for them, that was it. That's why we have to wait for the Last Great Day.

(break)

As we go through this, let's see how this is going to apply to human life during the Millennium. They're going to have the best, the greatest, the most perfect, the most peaceful, the most productive civilization that the world has ever seen, and it's going to go on generation after generation after generation.

They will grow in knowledge and understanding. I don't know how fantastic that human life will be at that time, but still, nevertheless, unless they attain to being entered into the Kingdom of God, then what is it worth? We'll see tomorrow that it says, 'the sinner that dies—that is buried—is accursed!' So that shows that there are going to be some people that are never going to learn the lesson. Why is that? *Because even in the Millennium there's going to be choice!* God sets before them—just like He does with us—life and death; blessing and cursing.

They're to choose life! That's the whole purpose in life, and to remember that ***the flesh profits nothing and only the way of God leads to eternal life.***

Let's continue our little survey so that we can understand why this will be so important during the Millennium.

Ecclesiastes 1:1 "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.... [the only one who was that was Solomon] ...'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher, 'vanity of vanities! All *is* vanity'" (vs 1-2).

He's learning the lesson! He's getting the point! Let's see how he came to it. Let's see how hard it was for him. Remember, when he became king that was a miniature type of the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. All the enemies round about were at peace. All the wealth and everything that God had given to David, he contributed for the temple.

Solomon was given the blessing of constructing the temple—the one that David designed; he designed the plans under God's inspiration. He laid out the temple, built all of that and saw the presence of God enter into the temple, all of Israel with him. What a great and fantastic day that must have been. Then when he got old, what happened? *Vanity of vanities!* Isn't that correct? *Yes, indeed!*

Here talks about it, v 4: "One generation

passes away, and another generation comes..."

Every generation thinks, 'We're it! We're going to improve over the last generation, and they always end up in the same ditch. Why? *Because human nature, of and by itself, is sinful and vain!* Though they start off with good intentions, with knowledge and understanding. And every generation thinks it knows more than the previous generation.

"...but the earth remains forever. The sun also arises, and the sun goes down, and hurries to its place where it arose. The wind goes toward the south, and it turns around to the north..." (vs 4-6).

They understood the way that the winds were and the movement of weather and everything like that.

Verse 8: "All things *are* full of labor..." *Yes, we are to work!*

One of the things that frustrates people more than anything else is not working, because God made us to desire to work; to build; to do these things. But, ***without God it's all vanity!***

"...man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing" (v 8).

You still want to see more; you want to see greater; you want to see better; you want to hear more!

Verse 9: "That which has been *is* that which shall be..."

Now they're discovering that there were societies in ancient times that knew more than we do. We still do not know how they took the stones from this mountain—4,000-feet above the valley floor—and brought those stones down to the valley floor and up 4,000-feet on the other side and built a temple. Or how about the one in Peru that's at 12,000-feet. How did they get all those stones up there and put in perfectly? We don't know! But there it is, witness and testimony for us. You talk about labor!

Verse 9: "That which has been *is* that which shall be; and that which has been done *is* that which shall be done; and *there is* nothing new under the sun.... [I think at the resurrection we're going to really find that out] ...Is there a thing *of* which it may be said, 'See, this *is* new'? It has already been in days of old, which were before us. *There is* no memory of former *things*, neither shall there be any remembrance of *things* that are to come by those who shall come afterwards" (vs 9-11).

Think about it. We have Memorial Day

every summer, May 31st in America. What do we do? *We remember the dead who died in the wars trying to bring peace and democracy and all of those things to mankind.*

- Has it worked?
- Do we remember them really?

We drive by those graveyards and see the thousand and thousands of white crosses and stars of David!

- Did they really accomplish what they wanted?
- Will man ever learn that war doesn't pay?
- Will man ever learn that vanity and jealousy and lust and greed is what causes all the problems?
- Isn't that what happened in the past?
- Don't we look at the ancient civilization and their ruins and say, 'My, I wonder why this civilization collapsed and became nothing?

Can't we look around at our own civilization and see the same thing is happening to us? So, Solomon was going to do something:

Verse 13: "And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under the heavens. *It is* a grievous task God has given to the sons of men to be exercised by it. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, **all is vanity and striving after wind**" (vs 13-14).

- Have you ever tried to catch wind?
- Have you ever tried to run faster than the wind?

"...striving after wind" *Nothing is more elusive than that!*

- Isn't that true, nothing in this life—*when separated from God, not knowing His Truth*—really has any value or substance to it?
- Aren't people doing the same thing that Solomon experimented with?
- Aren't they doing the same thing today?
- What profit is it to them?

Verse 15: "What *is* crooked cannot be made straight..."

If you want to learn a lesson, here's one I always think of: bailing wire, all wrapped up in a ball and someone gives the ball to you and says, 'Straighten this out like it was new.' And you look at that and think:

- How are you going to do that?
- Have you ever tried to take a wire that's

been bent up and try and straighten it out so it's as good as new?

Never works!

Also, we can learn a lesson with that with our lives. ***Only God can straighten us out!*** We can't! To draw the analogy a little bit further: There is a way in which you can straighten out that bent up wire. It takes heat! The way that is done, you get a thick metal plate and you have the diameter of a hole cut, which is just right exactly what the wire would be. Then you thread it through there, and then you have a blowtorch that as you pull the wire through, you pull it through when it's being heated by that blowtorch. That's the only way you can make it straight. ***You can liken that to the process of conversion through fire!*** Not very comfortable, but it gets it done.

"...and *what is* lacking cannot be numbered" (v 15).

This is great for do-gooders. There's always something to do.

Verse 16: "I spoke within my own heart, saying... [he's having a conversation with himself] ...'Lo, I have become great and have gathered more wisdom than all that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart has experienced great wisdom and knowledge.'"

Solomon wrote many of the Proverbs; counted the greatest wise-man the world has ever seen; he had wealth untold. So, here's what he did:

Verse 17: "And I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I perceived that this also *is* striving after wind.... [What good does it do?] ...For in much wisdom *is* much grief; and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow" (vs 17-18).

Isn't that true? ***The more that we learn, the harder it is for society to understand what is right when they're cut off from God!*** They can't understand it, they don't know. That's why we have the Bible.

So, he said, 'Ok, I want to learn by doing. Experience is a good teacher, but not the best teacher. The experience of others, that you learn from seeing them and see what they are doing—and you learn from that—is much easier than you going through it yourself. Well, Solomon wanted to find out.

Ecclesiastes 2:1: "I said in my heart, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.' and, behold, this also *is* vanity. I said of laughter, '*It is* madness;' and of mirth, 'What does it

accomplish?” (vs 1-2).

You know there’s even a ‘Laughing Church’? Yes, there’s a church that laughs, says that God makes you laugh and you’re happy. But what does it accomplish?

Verse 3: “I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine...”

Let’s see how much we can drink? Let’s have a guzzling contest here; see if you can take the whole wineskin and drink it all down in one gasp.

“...yet conducting my heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, until I might see what was good for the sons of men, what they should do under the heaven the few days of their life” (v 3).

Here he had contact with God. God appeared to him twice in vision. He had the Word of God given to him by David. Had all of that, yet, he wanted to go out an experiment. When he woke up with his hangovers and all that sort of thing, he found out that’s not really the best thing to do.

He wanted to become famous, v 4: “I made great works for myself; I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself. I made gardens and orchards for myself, and I planted trees in them, of all fruit. I made pools of water for myself, to irrigate groves of growing trees. I bought men slaves and women slaves, and servants *were* born in my house; also I had great possessions of herds and flocks, above all that were before me in Jerusalem” (vs 4-7).

Couldn’t have it any better; possessing more than he could ever want. You talk about satiated and rich. Just thing what’s going to happen during the Millennium when all of these things are there—normal, natural—hey, it’s all right here. This is all you’ve ever known:

- plenty
- peace
- prosperity
- goodness
- everyone getting along with one another

Oh, what a bore this is going to be for some people who are evil.

Verse 8: “I also gathered silver and gold to myself, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces. I got men singers and women singers for myself, even the sensual delights of the sons of men, and many women.”

Yes! He had 300 wives and 700 concubines! Even all that didn’t satisfy him. Even after all of that, we find in the book of 1-Kings that his wives turned his heart away from God. Knowing he did all

of this, no wonder he said it was vanity.

Verse 9: “So, I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them... [this is better than a credit card, you want it, just take it] ...I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor, and this was my portion of all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, **all is vanity and a striving after the wind; and there is no profit under the sun**” (vs 9-11).

Just like Jesus said, *‘The Spirit is Life. The flesh, and all the pursuits of the flesh, do not profit.’* In other words, *it’s vain!* So, he said okay, I’m going to wise up here:

Verse 12: “And I turned to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what *can* the man *do* who comes after the king? Only that which has been already done. Then I saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness. The wise man’s eyes *are* in his head; but the fool walks in darkness; and I myself also perceived that one event happens to all of them. Then I said in my heart, ‘As it happens to the fool, *so* it happens even to me...’” (vs 12-15).

Comes a time in life you look and you see all of this going on, and all of a sudden you’re going to say, ‘I’m going to die, too.’

“...and why was I then more wise?’ And I said in my heart that this also *is* vanity” (v 15).

So, the whole lesson is, if you do not serve God through all of the things that He has blessed you with, and:

- acknowledge God
- thank God
- love God
- believe God

look at all of the things that you can do

- What is your life going to be?
- What are you going to be remembered for?
- What is it that you have done?

Then he thought on it a little longer:

Verse 16: “For *there is* no memory of the wise *more than* of the fool forever, since that which is now shall all be forgotten in the days to come. And how does the wise die? Even as the fool!”

He gives up his last breath and it’s over with. Isn’t that amazing? He was really in a quandary. Instead of turning to God the way that he should of, he was trying to find all of this on his

own.

- What happened?
- Was he happy?
- Was he joyful?

You talk about narcissism; you talk about self-serving; you talk about having the best of everything given and poured out to you—he had it! Then he ended up saying, ‘Oh, I’m so happy, this is wonderful. Oh, what a wonderful time!’ *NO!*

Verse 17: “Therefore, I hated life...” Why? *Because he left off the purpose of life! Turned his back on God!* He was going to do it himself.

You can see that not only is this a lesson for us today, but this is also going to be a perpetual lesson for all the people during the Millennium. We are going to see that that last generation of the Millennium is going to fall victim to all of this **big time!**

Everything is there. Everything that their little lives can think of during the time that they live, this is how it’s always been. They’re going to want to experiment and do things like Solomon did. They’re going to tell God: ‘we know; we’ve lived in this; we’ve seen this; and we really would like to try it for ourselves.’ Just like Solomon said. What is God going to do? He’s going to say, ‘Go ahead!’ We’ll see some more of that tomorrow.

“...because the work that is done under the sun *is* grievous to me; for all *is* vanity and a striving after wind. Yea, I hated all my labor, which I had done under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who shall be after me.... [can’t take it with you] ...And who knows *whether* he shall be wise or a fool? Yet he shall have rule over all my labor in which I have labored, and have shown myself wise under the sun. This *is* also vanity” (vs 17-19).

Wasn’t that a true prophecy of his son Rehoboam? *Yes it was!* Rehoboam wouldn’t listen to the elders—oh no!—the new generation and the younger advisors. Sound a little bit like something we see in Washington, D.C., today—the young, the smart, the intellect, the elite—‘we know better’? *Yes!* But it didn’t work out that way, did it? So, he goes on:

- What’s going to happen?
- Didn’t it turn out to be vanity, because of the sins of Solomon, which he did?
- The sins of Rehoboam, which he did?
- What did that do to the 12 tribes of Israel? *Split them! Ten tribes went with Jeroboam!*
- What did God say to Jeroboam?

Jeroboam, if you’ll keep My commandments and statutes, I’ll give you a dynasty like I promise to David! You rule over the ten tribes.

- What did he do? He said:

I’ve got to devise a new plan here, because if these people go to Jerusalem to worship God, I’m going to lose them. I’m going to lose power and people. I can’t do that.

So he devised a way; he said:

Here’s what I’m going to do. I’m going to have a ‘feast’ in the eighth month—a month later, make it easier for everyone—the fifteenth day of the month. Just like the one in Jerusalem, only we’re going to make it better, because we’re going to have a golden calf here in Bethel and one in Dan in the north. And the people can go there and they can worship the idols.

Look at what Solomon did down here in Jerusalem with all of the things that are supposed to be of God. So, what happened? *Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, ended up being the worst king in the entire history of the kings of Israel!*

- Is that not vanity?
- Didn’t he do the same thing that Solomon did?

So, if you look at someone’s life and you say that’s vain, ‘I’m going to do better’; you end up doing worse and become more vain.

- Is that not the story of life?
- Is that not what we’re going to have to teach the people during the Millennium? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 19, *concerning the one who comes after Solomon:* “And who knows *whether* he shall be wise or a fool? Yet he shall have rule over all my labor in which I have labored, and have shown myself wise under the sun. This *is* also vanity. And I turned to cause my heart to despair of all the labor which I had done under the sun” (vs 19-20).

What’s it worth? *No, no, get rid of it!*

Verse 21: “For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and with skill; yet to a man who has not labored in it, he shall leave it *for* his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what has man from all his labor, and from the striving of his heart, in which he has labored under the sun?” (vs 21-22).

- What happens when you do that?
- What happens when you turn yourself to

that way?

- Is it going to profit? *No!*

I don't know exactly how all this is going to work out during the Millennium, but I can certainly tell you one thing for sure: ***These are going to be the lessons that are going to be taught and are going to be learned, and we're going to help them understand it.*** Let's also understand it in our lives today so that:

- we are *striving for the spiritual*, not the physical
- we are *looking to eternal life*, not this present life
- we are *looking to eternal riches*, not the present riches

—which, as it says in Proverbs, it 'flies away.' Or as one book that we covered this summer, all the money goes to 'money heaven,' meaning *it just disappears*. Is that not also vanity? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 23: "For all his days *are* sorrows, and his labor vexation; yea, so his heart does not take rest in the night. This *is* also vanity."

So then he concludes, he comes to a simple understanding that is correct:

Verse 24: "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and make his soul see good in his labor? This I also saw, that it *was* from the hand of God."

In other words, understand that all these things come from God. Use them! Enjoy them! But understand, it's all temporary.

Verse 25: "For who can eat, or who can enjoy it, more than I?"

Yes, they'll have everything to the full, riches to the full: food, clothing, prosperity; we've seen that. Yet, if they do not grow in grace and knowledge, and grow in understanding and Truth, of what value is it? *This is the lesson that we're going to have to teach them!*

Verse 26: "For *God* gives wisdom, and knowledge, and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight. But to the sinner He gives labor, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to *him who is* good before God.... [Isn't that true? *Yes, indeed!*] ...This also *is* vanity and a striving after wind."

We're going to teach the people in the Millennium the real purpose of life; the real understanding of why God put eternity into their minds so they can enter into the Kingdom of God through the glorious reign of the Kingdom of God and the rule of the saints for a thousand years!

Tomorrow will be the seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, technically the last day of the Feast; but there's one more day after that. So let's see as we began, ***how the Millennium begins and tomorrow we're going to see how it ends!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Jeremiah 17:9
- 2) John 6:63
- 3) Psalm 39:4-8, 10-11
- 4) Psalm 62:9-12, 1-8
- 5) Psalm 94:11
- 6) Ecclesiastes 3:1-11, 14
- 7) Ecclesiastes 1:1-2, 4-6, 8-11, 13-18
- 8) Ecclesiastes 2:1-26

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Matthew 7

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 7-5-10
Reformatted: bo—9/2021