What Ecclesiastes Reveals to Us About God

Mike McKinley

"Thinking rightly about God is the foundation issue of our life search."

Ecclesiastes 12:10-11

words of delight
words of truth
words of the wise
like goads...like nails
given by one Shepherd."

A.W. Tozer

"The history of mankind will probably show that
no people has ever risen above its religion....
Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself,
and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like.
We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God....
Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God,
just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid,
for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech....
Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question,
"What comes into your mind when you think about God?"
we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man."

What comes to your mind about GOD after studying Ecclesiastes?

Charles Spurgeon

"If we were greater students of God, how much happier we would be."

1:13

"It is an unhappy business
that God has given to the children of man to be busy with."

2:24-26

"There is nothing better for a person than
that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil.
This also, I saw, is from the hand of God.
Apart from God who can eat or who can have enjoyment?
For to the one who pleases him
God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy,
but to the sinner
he has given the business of gathering and collecting,
only to give to one who pleases God…."

* This first thought very similarly stated also in 3:13 5:18 8:15 9:7

Paul Tripp, about GRACE

"It should be the thing that greets your mind
and fills your heart as you wake each morning.
It should be your final thought as you settle in for a night of sleep….
It should be at the forefront of your thoughts in times of trouble or disappointment.
It should alter how you think
about finances, possessions, decisions, relationships, and everything else.
It should be a central theme of your existence.
It is so huge, so gorgeous, and so glorious
that once it gets hold of you, you will never be the same again….
If you are God's child, grace is the stunning core reality of your existence.
It is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to you, or ever will.
It has changed everything you have, do, and are….
It is an absolutely essential ingredient of productive living on this side of eternity."

3:11

"I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with.
He has made everything beautiful in its time.
Also, he has put eternity into man's heart,
yet so that he cannot find out what God has done
from the beginning to the end."

Derek Kidner

**"Qoheleth…enables us to see perpetual change not as something unsettling
but as an unfolding pattern, scintillating and God-given.
The trouble for us is not that life refuses to keep still,
but that we see only a fraction of its movement
and of its subtle, intricate design.
Instead of changeless, there is something better:
a dynamic, divine purpose, with its beginning and end.
Instead of frozen perfection
there is the kaleidoscope movement of innumerable processes,
each with its own character
and its period of blossoming and ripening beautiful in its time
and contributing to the overall masterpiece which is the work of one creator."**

David Gibson

**"God is not being unkind to us by not sharing it;
the point is that we are not built to understand the big picture,
precisely because we live in time and God does not.
If we could see the end from the beginning,
and understand how a billion lives and a thousand generations and unspeakable sorrows and
untold joys are all woven into a tapestry of perfect beauty,
then we would be God."**

3:16-17

**"I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness,
and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness.
I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked,
for there is a time for every matter and for every work.**

11:9

**"Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.
Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes.
But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment."**

12:14

**"For God will bring every deed into judgment,
with every secret thing, whether good or evil."**

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,
so that each one may receive what is due
for what he has done in the body,
whether good or evil." *(2 Corinthians 5:10)*

A.W. Tozer

"God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters,
all mind and every mind,
all spirit and all spirits,
all being and every being,
all creature-hood and all creatures,
every plurality and all pluralities,
all law and every law,
all relations, all causes,
all thoughts, all mysteries,
all enigmas, all feeling,
all desires, every unuttered secret,
all thrones and dominions,
all personalities,
all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth,
motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell."

3:18

"I said in my heart with regard to the children of man
that God is testing them
that they may see that they themselves are but beasts."

5:1-7

"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God.
To draw near to listen is betterthan to offer the sacrifice of fools,
for they do not know that they are doing evil.
Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God,
for God is in heaven and you are on earth.
Therefore let your words be few.
For a dream comes with much business, and a fool's voice with many words.
When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools.
Pay what you vow.
It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.
Let not your mouth lead you into sin,
and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake.
Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?
For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity;
but God is the one you must fear."

"…true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth,
for the Father is seeking such people to worship him." *(John 4:23)*

Mike McKinley

"This is the heart of the problem:
we can take ourselves too seriously and fail to take God seriously enough….
For many, says Solomon, religion is an accessory in an overcrowded life.
What they practice, they do by pretense.
They go through time-honored routines of attendance, service, and verbal sacrifice.
Yet in the end, more is said than done.
The things of God are not trivial pursuits…
Thinking rightly about God is the foundation issue of our life search."

5:18-20

"Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting
is to eat and drink and find enjoyment
in all the toil with which one toils under the sun
the few days of his life that God has given him,
for this is his lot.
Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions
and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—
this is the gift of God.
For he will not much remember the days of his life
because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart."

Bobby Jamieson

"What can bear the full weight of our ceaseless yearning?
Only God. Only God is all-satisfying.
Accordingly, all created goods are to be treated as signs pointing to God….
You can *enjoy* created goods most when you enjoy God infinitely more.
You can *love* limited goods safely when you love the unlimited one supremely."

George Mueller

"The most important point to be attended to is this:
above all things see to it that your souls are happy in the Lord.
Other things may press upon you,
the Lord's work may even have urgent claims upon your attention,
but I deliberately repeat,
it is of supreme and paramount importance that you should seek above all things to have your souls truly happy in God Himself!
Day by day seek to make this the most important business of your life."

6:1-2

"There is an evil that I have seen under the sun,
and it lies heavy on mankind;
a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor,
so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires,
yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them.
This is vanity; it is a grievous evil."

7:13-14

"Consider the work of God:
who can make straight what he has made crooked?
In the day of prosperity be joyful,
and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other,
so that man may not find out anything that will be after him."

Ecc. 8:17

"Then I saw all the work of God,
that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun.
However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out.
Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out."

"I am God, and there is no other….
'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose'….
I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it." *(Isaiah 46:9-12)*

"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he [God] **does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"** *(Daniel 4:35)*

"No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the Lord." *(Proverbs 21:30)*

Margaret Clarkson

"The sovereignty of God is the one impregnable rock
to which the suffering human heart must cling.
The circumstances surrounding our lives are no accident;
they may be the work of evil,
but that evil is held firmly within the mighty hand of sovereign God."

Max Lucado

"According to the Bible, the problem is not the strength or kindness of God.
The problem is the agenda of the human race.
We pursue the wrong priority.
We want good health, a good income, a good night's rest, and a good retirement.
Our priority is We. God's priority, however, is God.
God unfurls his own flag. He flexes his own muscles."

7:26

"And I find something more bitter than death:
the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are fetters.
He who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her."

7:29

"See, this alone I found, that God made man upright,
but they have sought out many schemes."

8:2

"I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him."

"…fear the Lord and the king,
and do not join with those who do otherwise." *(Proverbs 24:21)*

9:1

"But all this I laid to heart, examining it all,
how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God.
Whether it is love or hate, man does not know;
both are before him."

9:7

"Go, eat your bread with joy,
and drink your wine with a merry heart,
for God has already approved what you do."

Agneiszka Tennant

"There are no ordinary pleasures.
Every good thing, no matter how trivial, can elicit delight.
And delight is potent.
Something of little significance provokes glee, and the spirit leaps.
If you pay attention—and if you count all good things as coming from God—
then the mundane can help you glimpse the maker of all delight….
When you experience enjoyment within the constraint of loving God,
it can only be good."

12:1

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth…"

12:7

"the dust returns to the earth as it was,
and the spirit returns to God who gave it."

12:11

"The words of the wise are like goads,
and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings;
they are given by one Shepherd."

"He himself [the Shepherd who wrote Ecclesiastes

AND came to earth as the Lamb of God on our behalf]
bore our sins in his body on the tree,
that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.
By his wounds you have been healed.
For you were straying like sheep,
but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." *(1 Peter 2:24-25)*

12:13 **"The end of the matter; all has been heard.**
Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.
3:14 **"I perceived that whatever God does endures forever;**
nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it.
God has done it, so that people fear before him."
5:7 **"For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity;**
but God is the one you must fear."
7:18 **"It is good that you should take hold of this,**
and from that withhold not your hand,
for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them." *(7:18)*
8:12-13 **"Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life,**
yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him.
But it will not be well with the wicked,
neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God."

Michael Eaton

"The fear of God "is not only the beginning of wisdom;
it is also the beginning of joy, of contentment and of an energetic and purposeful life.
The Preacher wishes to deliver us from a rosy-colored, self-confident, godless life…
from trusting in wisdom, pleasure, wealth….
He wishes to drive us to see that God is there,
that He is good and generous,
and that only such an outlook makes life coherent and fulfilling."

1 Peter 1:18-21

"If you call on him [God] **as Father**
who judges impartially according to each one's deeds,
conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,
knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers,
not with perishable things such as silver or gold,
but with the precious blood of Christ,
like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.
He was foreknown before the foundation of the world
but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you
who through him are believers in God,
who raised him from the dead and gave him glory,
so that your faith and hope are in God."

Thinking about all of Ecclesiastes…

How might Ecclesiastes grow us as a whole church body to better behold our God?

How has God used Ecclesiastes to teach you more about Himself? His "non-human" ways?

Ecclesiastes especially emphasizes to man (mere mortals):

FEAR God
ENJOY Him (and His gifts) more—daily
Live more by His **WISDOM** (not your own or the world's)
OBEY Him more

As **the word of God** feeds/grows our **awareness** and **knowledge** of God…
it grows/intensifies:

our **FEAR** of the Lord
our **FAITH** in Him
our **ENJOYMENT** of Him
His **WISDOM** in us
our **OBEDIENCE** to Him

so our lives more and more **"adorn the doctrine of God"**

Benediction *Romans 11:33-36*

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!
'For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been his counselor?'
'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?'
For from him
and through him
and to him are all things.
To him be glory forever. Amen."