

# A BIBLE STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Theme: Solomon and Jesus,  
Both Sons of David, say:

**“Fear God and keep his commandments,  
For this is the whole duty of man!”**

Trinity Lutheran Church  
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Pastor David Nehrenz Date: 12-20-15 Lesson: 12c



## A. TEXT (Chapter 12)

(1) Remember also **your Creator** in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

(2) before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, (3) in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed,

(4) and the doors on the street are shut--when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—

(5) they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—

(6) before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, (7) and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to **God** who gave it.

(8) Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity. (9) Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. (10) The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote **words of truth**.

(11) The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by **One Shepherd**.

(12) My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

(13) The end of the matter; all has been heard: **Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.** (14) For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

## **STUDY NOTES:**

1. To remember your Creator in the days of your youth is essential, since it shapes the whole rest of your life (v. 1) (**Rom 1:25; Col 3:10; 1Pet 4:19; 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:1-8; 1 Jn 2:13,14**)
2. The allegory for aging here in (vv. 1b – 8) pictures the human body and spirit as it is worn out from a long life so that the eyes, ears, teeth, limbs and whole body moves slower and becomes feeble. Even sleep can be easily disturbed. The hair becomes white like the pale blossoms of the almond tree, and the body moves slowly like a grasshopper in cold weather. Life becomes fragile and when a silver chain has one link break, the golden hanging lamp and bowl will come crashing to the ground. This the life under the curse (**Gen. 3**).
3. Man goes to his eternal home when he dies (v. 5) (**John 14:1-6,23; 2 Cor 5:1-7**)
4. “The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (v. 7)  
We are created with a body and a soul. When we die, the body is buried and returns to dust and the soul goes to be with Christ in heaven. When Christ returns on the Last Day, the body is raised and reunited with the soul to dwell in Paradise forever.  
(**Gen 2:7; 3:19; Ps 103:14; 104:29; Lk 23:43; 1 Cor 15:42-58; Phil 1:21-26**)
5. In the midst of the vanity of life in a world without God, the wise have wisdom and knowledge to be studied carefully (vv. 8-10) so they can find delight in the words of truth (**Rom 7:16-25**)
6. “The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by One Shepherd” (v. 11)  
(**Ps 23:1; 28:9; Is 40:11; Ezek 34:15; Mt 7:14; Jn 10:11-16; Heb 13:20,21; 1 Pet 2:25; Rev 7:17**)
7. “My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” (v. 12) We have the written Word of God. There are millions of books written throughout all history and trying to read them all will wear you out. Spend most of your time reading and re-reading the Bible and you will know the wisdom from on high, come down from God Almighty.
8. *The end of the matter; all has been heard:*  
Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man.” (v. 13)  
This is where true fulfillment is to be found, to revere and stand in awe of God and his Word  
(**Ps. 111; Prov 1:7; 9:10; Job 28:28; 2 Cor 5:6-11; 7:1; 1 Pet 2:17; Rev 14:7; 19:5-9**)
9. “For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.” (v. 14)  
(**Mt 12:36; Ac 17:31; Rom 2:16; 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:12-15; 4:5; 2 Cor 5:9-10; Heb 4:12,13**)

## **Luther’s Works on ch. 12**

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments. That is, this is the summary of it all: Fear and worship God and keep Him in view; thus you will observe everything that I have set forth in this book. For unless someone fears God, he will not be able to observe any of these things. He has cited examples of men who lived wisely and excellently, without fear, but who, when evil times came, were nevertheless not used to it and brought affliction upon themselves.

But those who fear God are able to despise and make fun of every evil and adversity when it comes, and to give thanks if it does not come. *For this is the duty of all men.* That is, this applies to all men and is useful to them all. In other ways of life it is gain that is sought for, but in this one it is godliness.”

## **LIFE APPLICATION:**

1. “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth”  
Why is this vitally important for young people to know NOW before they get old?
2. “Man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets”  
How is this played out each and every time someone dies and then people go to his/her funeral?
3. “The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it”  
What does this teach us about the corruption of this world and also the immortality of the soul?
4. “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man”  
Who enables us to know God and his commandments so that we can keep them?
5. “For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.”  
When a person knows and realizes this, it will affect every moment of one’s life. Give examples.