

Bad days, Glad days, and Wisdom for the New Year
Ecclesiastes 1:12-18

Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 (NIV)

I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men! I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted. I thought to myself, "Look, I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind. For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.

I. The Dependability of Difficult Days

Ecclesiastes 1:12-13 (NIV)

I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men!

Ecclesiastes 1:2-3

"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless." What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?

Psalms 34:19 (ESV)

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

1 Peter 4:12 (NIV)

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.

Psalms 112:1-8 (NIV)

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. ...Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever. He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 (NIV)

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them"

II. The Joy God gives for every Journey

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 (ESV)

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, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy...

James 1:17 (ESV)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

James 1:17 (The Message)

Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle.

III. The Faith that Insures a Confident Future

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (NIV)

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.