

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. — Ecclesiastes 12:9-14 (NKJV)



THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

A king with a beard and a crown, wearing ornate robes, is kneeling in a grand, dimly lit hall. He holds a scepter in his right hand. The hall features high arches, columns, and a checkered floor. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows.

- ❁ Life is frequently **disappointing, unfair, oppressive, tragic, and seemingly without point or meaning.**
 - ❁ BUT, we should NOT take the message of Ecclesiastes to be predominately negative!
 - ❁ The wise man points us away from worthless things to the things in life that **REALLY MATTER!**
- ¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. — Ecclesiastes 12:9-14 (NKJV)**

A hand holding a Bible against a background of a bright sun, clouds, and the Earth from space. The sun is at the top center, casting rays across a blue sky filled with white clouds. Below the clouds, the curved horizon of the Earth is visible, showing blue oceans and green landmasses. The hand is holding the Bible open, with the text visible on the pages. The Bible is positioned in the lower center of the frame.

HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

LIMITED EARTHLY PERSPECTIVE

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

A king with a beard, wearing a crown and ornate robes, is kneeling on a patterned rug in a grand, dimly lit hall. He holds a scepter in his hands. The hall features high ceilings, large columns, and a distant archway where light is streaming in. The overall atmosphere is one of solemnity and grandeur.

- Restatement of the result of the Preacher's search for meaning (12:8)
- The value of wisdom, and a warning against the wrong kind of study (12:9- 12)
- The grand conclusion — The REAL PURPOSE for our existence (12:13-14).

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. — Ecclesiastes 12:9-14 (NKJV)

Ecclesiastes 12:9–14 (NKJV)

⁹ And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out *and* set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰ The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and *what was* written *was* upright—words of truth. ¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. ¹² And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* wearisome to the flesh. ¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. ¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

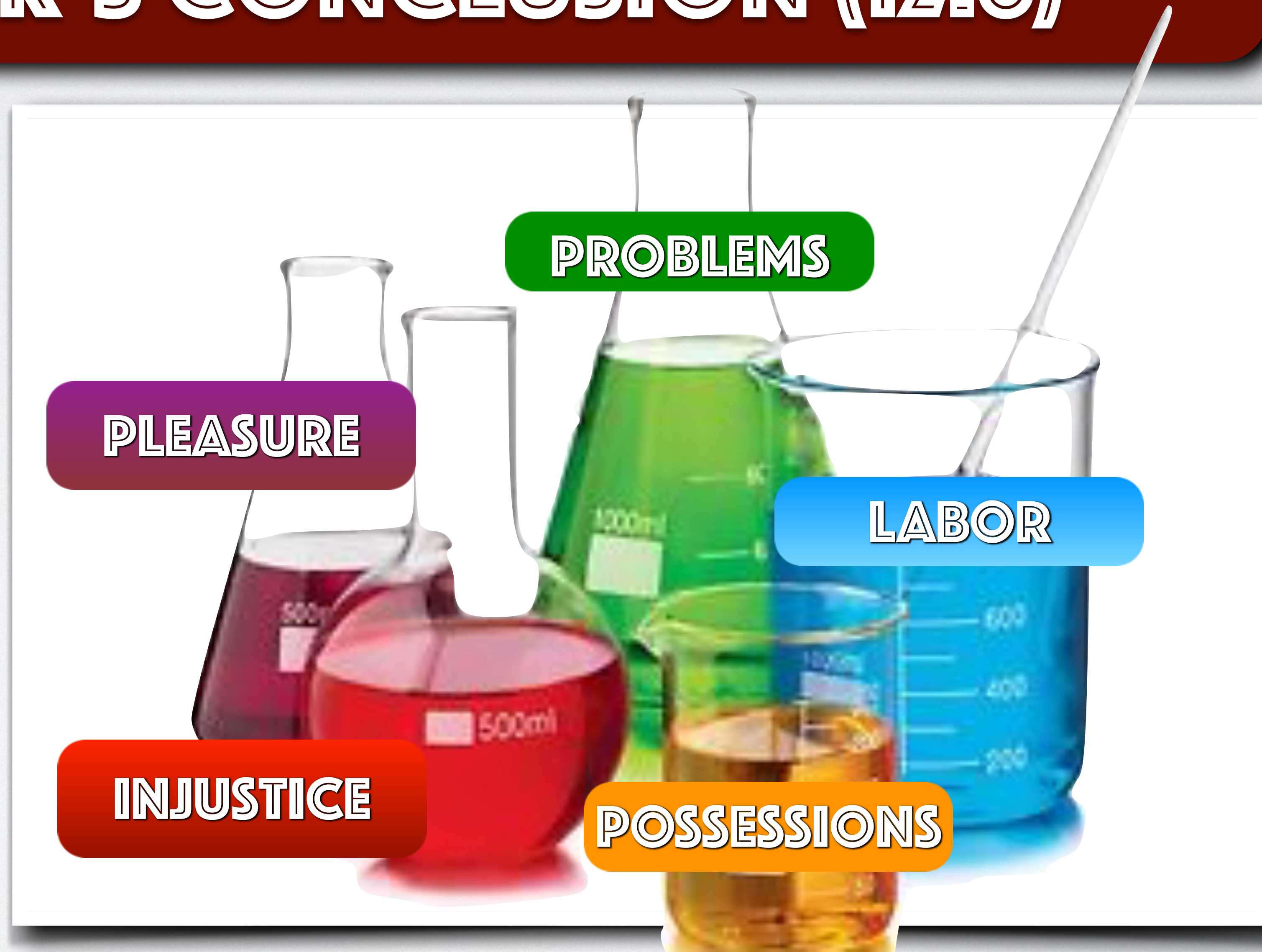
THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

THE PREACHER'S CONCLUSION (12:8)

Ecclesiastes 12:8 (NKJV)

8 “Vanity of
vanities,” says the
Preacher, “All is
vanity.”

(cf. 1:2, 14; 2:17; 4:4)



THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

THE PREACHER'S CONCLUSION (12:8)



■ **ALL IS VANITY** when life is viewed solely from an earthly perspective (1:2,3; 12:8)

- 👁 **Pleasure** - 2:1
- 👁 **Labor** - 2:11,22-23; 4:4
- 👁 **Wisdom** - 2:15
- 👁 **Difficulty in life** - 2:17
- 👁 **An inheritance** - 2:18-21
- 👁 **Riches** - 4:7-8
- 👁 **Loving wealth** - 5:10
- 👁 **Wandering desire** - 6:9
- 👁 **Foolish laughter** - 7:6
- 👁 **Injustice in life** - 8:14
- 👁 **Days of darkness** - 11:8
- 👁 **Childhood** - 11:10

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

THE PREACHER'S CONCLUSION (12:8)



Ecclesiastes 12:8 (NKJV)
8 “Vanity of vanities,” says
the Preacher, “All is vanity.”

- **ALL IS VANITY** when life is viewed solely from an earthly perspective (1:2,3; 12:8)
- ▶ IF LIFE UNDER THE SUN IS ALL THERE IS - THEN LIFE IS MEANINGLESS - WITHOUT PURPOSE - WITHOUT HOPE.
- ▶ BUT LIFE UNDER THE SUN IS NOT ALL THERE IS!

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

HIS CREDENTIALS TO SPEAK (12:9)



Ecclesiastes 12:9 (NKJV)

⁹ And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out *and* set in order many proverbs.

■ He claims the gift of wisdom (12:9)

- ▶ The term **wisdom** (chakham) implies that which is from God.
- ▶ He taught “**knowledge**” — he pondered (i.e., carefully weighed, examined) and searched, and set in order (i.e., carefully arranged) many proverbs (1 Pet. 1:10,11; 2 Pet. 1:21).

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

HIS CLAIMS ABOUT HIS BOOK (12:10–11)



■ He carefully sought to find: (12:10)

- ▶ Terms that were **acceptable**, **appropriate** and **accurate** to convey his message.
- ▶ Terms which best conveyed that which is “**upright**” (yosher), and “**words of truth**,” i.e., that which is objectively true (12:10).

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

HIS CLAIMS ABOUT HIS BOOK (12:10–11)



Ecclesiastes 12:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.

■ **Koheleth classifies his book with other wisdom books (12:11)**

- ▶ They are “**goads.**” — a rod with an iron spike, or sharpened at the end, used in driving oxen.
- ▶ Words of wisdom restrain from error and urge in the right direction. The pain truth inflicts is for our good and not for evil.

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HIS CLAIMS ABOUT HIS BOOK (12:10–11)



Ecclesiastes 12:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.

■ **Koheleth classifies his book with other wisdom books (12:11)**

- ▶ The words of the wise “**are like well-driven nails.**” — established, substantial, secure — Truth is NOT vacillating (Ps 19:7; Jn 10:33-38)
- ▶ The one shepherd is Yahweh — Solomon spoke the words of God (cf. Gen 48:15; Ps 23:1).

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

ADMONITION REGARDING STUDY (12:12)



Ecclesiastes 12:12 (NKJV)

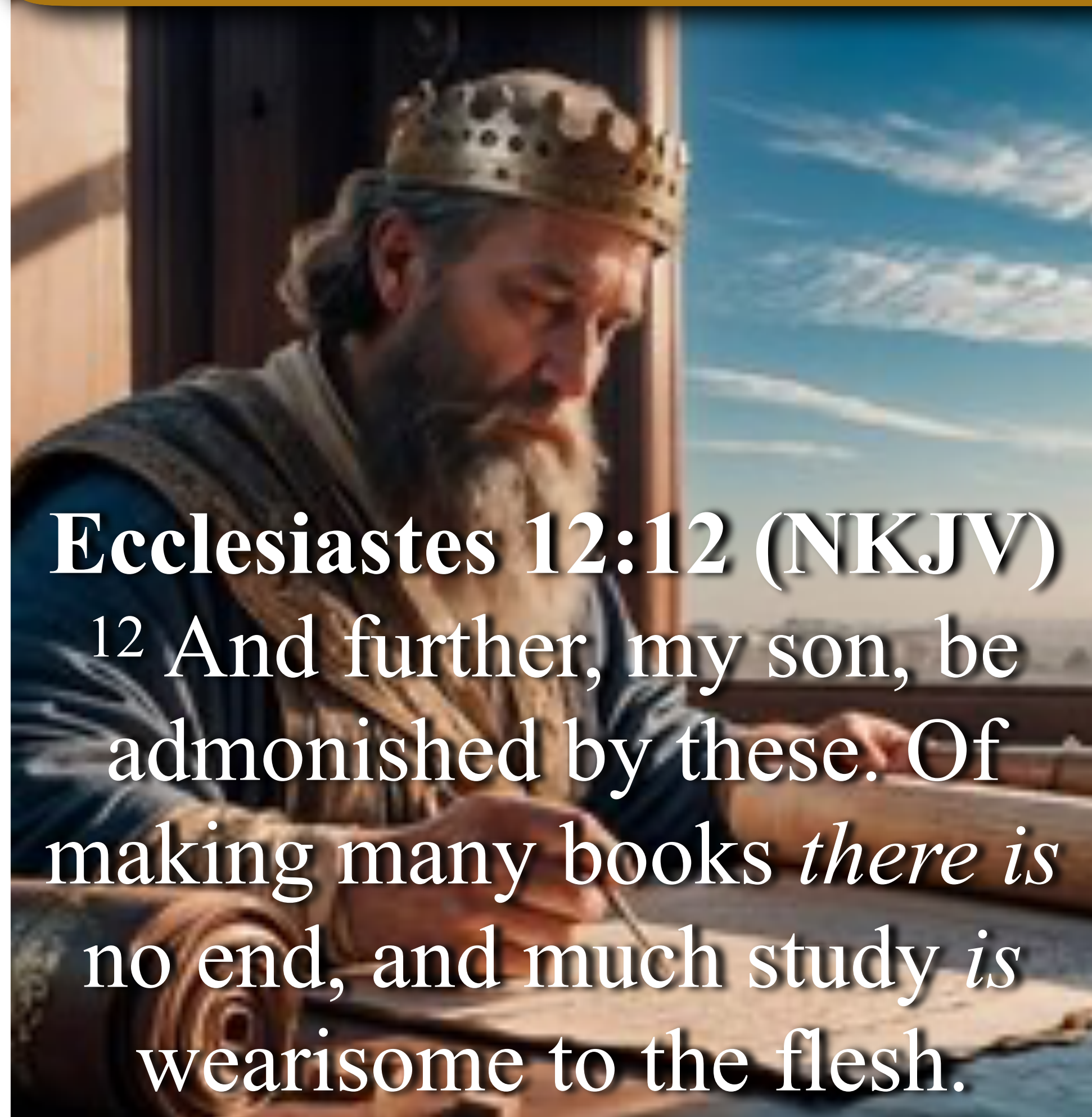
¹² And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* wearisome to the flesh.

■ NOT ALL KNOWLEDGE IS BENEFICIAL (12:12)

- ▶ “But beyond this, my son, be warned:” (NASB) —
- ▶ “My son, beware of anything beyond these.” (ESV)
- ▶ Solomon warns us not to seek answers beyond those given by God (1 Corinthians 4:6)

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ADMONITION REGARDING STUDY (12:12)



Ecclesiastes 12:12 (NKJV)

¹² And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* wearisome to the flesh.

■ NOT ALL KNOWLEDGE IS BENEFICIAL (12:12)

- ▶ “making many books *there is* no end” - The endless works of man are unprofitable, contradictory and unreliable.
- ▶ We should make the word of God our chief object of study.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

ADMONITION REGARDING STUDY (12:12)



Ecclesiastes 12:12 (NKJV)

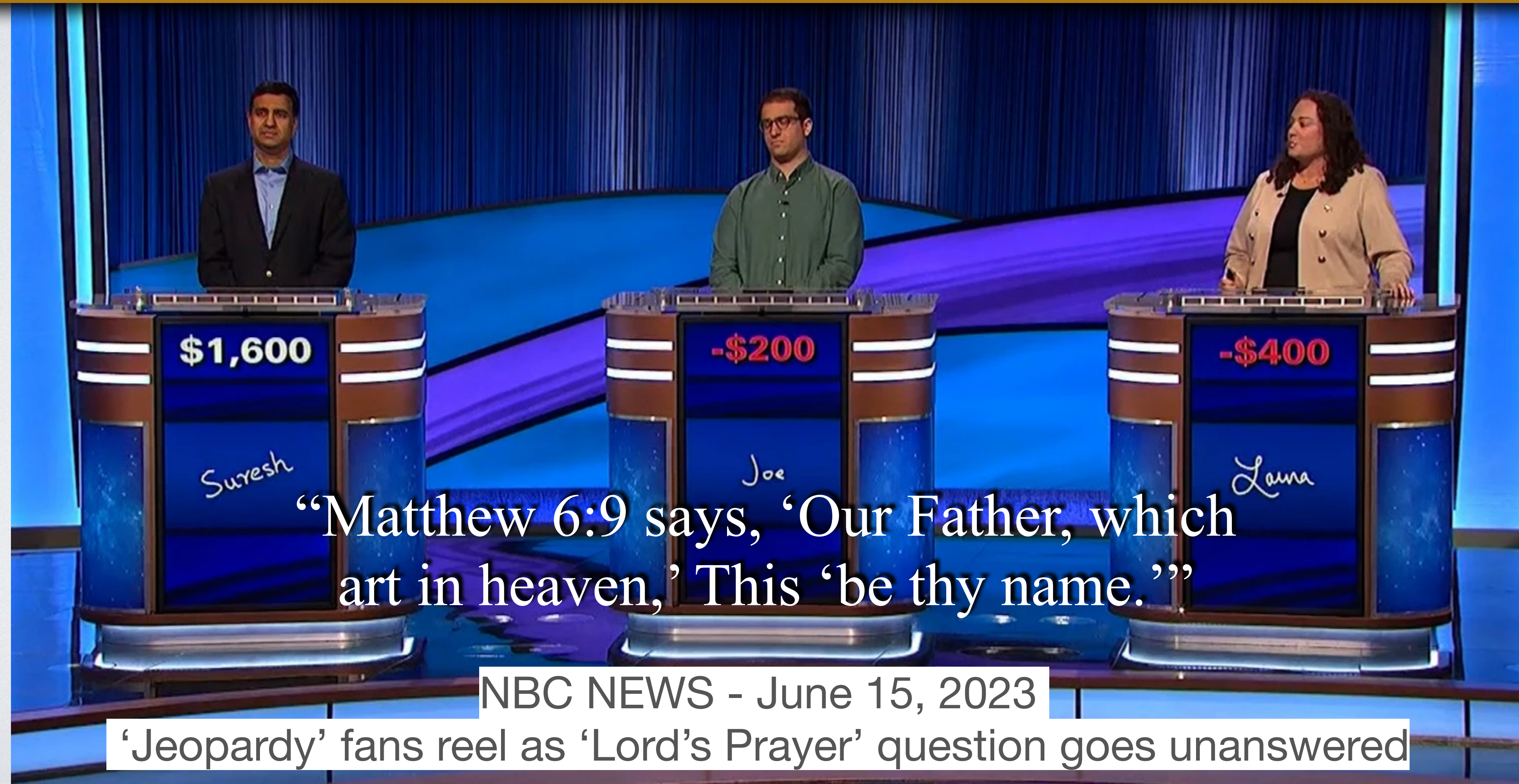
¹² And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and much study *is* wearisome to the flesh.

■ NOT ALL KNOWLEDGE IS BENEFICIAL (12:12)

- ▶ “Much study is a weariness of the flesh.”
- ▶ One may weary his brain by protracted study of the “many books,” but not gain any necessary insight into spiritual matters (12:12).

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

ADMONITION REGARDING STUDY (12:12)



THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. ¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:13 (NKJV)

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.

- **The teaching of the whole book of Ecclesiastes is now gathered up in two powerful sentences.**
- ▶ They guard against the possible misconceptions some may draw from the book.
- ▶ They put everything into its proper perspective.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.

■ The conclusion of the whole matter: (12:13)

- ▶ To "fear God" is, to revere God, to hold Him in awe, This is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Pro. 1:7; 9:10)
- ▶ Reverence grows out of faith in knowing WHO God is (Ezek. 1:26-28; Isa. 6:1-13)

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KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



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■ **The conclusion of the whole matter: (12:13)**

- ▶ This reverence will help keep us on the right track (Dt 6:2; 10:12; Prov. 10:27-29; 23:17,18; Mic. 6:8)
- ▶ OBEDIENCE is the REAL test of one's respect for God (Deut 13:4; 30:16 ; Jn 14:15 ; 1Jn 2:3-4; 5:3; Luke 6:46).

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KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.

■ The conclusion of the whole matter: (12:13)

- ▶ “fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to every person.*” (NASB)
- ▶ To reverently obey God, "walking in the fear of the Lord" (Ac 9:31), is the whole purpose of EVERY human.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

■ The Final Judgment (12:14)

- ▶ The whole purpose of man in “fearing God and keeping His commandments” is grounded upon the solemn fact of the future judgment (12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 2:5-11; 2 Pet 3:10-14; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; Acts 17:30).

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KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

■ The Final Judgment (12:14)

- ▶ The inequities of life will be resolved & remedied in the final judgment under the eye of the sovereign, omniscient and unerring God, (Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5; Heb. 4:13).

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KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

■ The Final Judgment (12:14)

Hebrews 4:11–13 (NKJV)

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword,

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KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

■ The Final Judgment (12:14)

Hebrews 4:11–13 (NKJV)

piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

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KOHELETH'S CONCLUSION (12:13,14)



Ecclesiastes 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

■ ON THAT DAY EVERY SECRET:

- ▶ Thing will be exposed (12:14).
- ▶ Work will be judged (Rom 2:16)
- ▶ Work of darkness will be exposed (1 Co. 4:5)
- ▶ Thing revealed, no hiding from our all knowing creator (Luke 12:1, 2.; Heb 4:13; 10:31)

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

FEAR GOD & KEEP HIS
COMMANDMENTS!

- Living life from an earthly perspective alone is truly vanity!
- By fearing God and keeping His commandments, one can endure the vanities and perplexities of life, and enjoy the good things in life, and the world to come!
- We will give an account to GOD!

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For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

**Ecclesiastes 12:13,14
(NKJV)**

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2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV)

² For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

HEAR / BELIEVE / REPENT / CONFESS / BE BAPTIZED / FOLLOW JESUS
Matthew 7:13,14

UNDER THE SUN

Joy, Sorrow, Vanity, and What Really Matters in Life

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. -Ecclesiastes 12:13

“The WHOLE DUTY of MAN”

(Ecclesiastes 12:9-14)

Charts by Don McClain

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Deuteronomy 10:12–17 (NKJV)

¹² “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good? ¹⁴ Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. ¹⁵ The Lord delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. ¹⁶ Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. ¹⁷ For the Lord your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.