




**ONE STORY | ONE SAVIOR - UNIT 3 | LESSON 04****WISDOM LITERATURE – The Promise Pictured Through Israel’s Struggle****God is a PROMISE Caring God**

Through Israel’s journey, God pictures 1) His **DESIGN** and **DESIRE** to 2) **RESCUE** His people from sin and death through a future 2) **KING** who will 4) **RESTORE** them to Himself in the **LAND** 5) for their **JOY**.

**“Fear God and Keep His Commandments”****An Overview of Ecclesiastes****Eccl. 12:13, 14**

<sup>13</sup> The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

<sup>14</sup> For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

	THE HEAD – To know God so that you then keep His commandments Q – Do you know God? Is He your loving Father?
	THE HEART – To “Fear God”. Remember this does not mean “to be afraid” but rather to “show reverence”. Q – Do you fear God?
	THE HAND – To keep His commandments? Do you fear God? Then you will keep His commandments.

**EMPHASIS****FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS (12:13, 14)**

The statement is really one. To fear God is to keep His commandments. The vertical **causes** the horizontal **consequence**. When we fear God, we keep His commandments. This dynamic cannot be changed or avoided.

**LITERARY CONTEXT**

The Book of Ecclesiastes is strongly autobiographical. The author speaks of his story and God’s Song.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Written by King Solomon. To put it in context:

- Song of Solomon - a young man's love
- Proverbs - a middle-aged man's wisdom
- Ecclesiastes - an old man's sorrow [1,000 "wives" (1 Kings 11:1-13)]

# BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Eccl 7:20 "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins." Quoted in Romans 3:10.

# STRUCTURE

- I. The Basic Thesis – "Fear God and Keep His commandments"
- II. The Proof – "All is Vanity" (1:12-6:9)
  - 8 sections (1:12-14; 15-17; 18-2:11; 12-17; 18-26; 3:1-4:6; 7-16; 5:1-6:9) each ending with a phrase such as "meaningless, a chasing after the wind."
- III. The Counsel for living (6:10-11:6)
  - A. The first section (6:10-8:17) is further divided into four subsections (6:10-7:14; 15-24; 25-29; 8:1-17), each ending with a phrase such as "man cannot discover anything" or "this only have I found [Hebrew: **matsa'**, translated "discover" elsewhere].
  - B. The second section is also divided into four subsections (9:1-12; 13-10:15; 16-11:2; 3-6), each ending with "no man knows" or a similar phrase.
- IV. The Way of wisdom (11:7-12:8)
- V. Epilogue (12:9-14)

# THE MESSAGE

The Bible sings a single SONG and the melody of that SONG is . . .

FEAR  
GOD AND  
KEEP  
HIS COMMANDMENTS  
(12:13, 14)

- FEAR / KEEP

The statement is really one. To fear God is to keep His commandments. The vertical causes the horizontal consequence. When we fear God, we keep His commandments. This dynamic cannot be changed or avoided.

## JESUS IN THE TEXT

Think of our Lord's response when asked what is the greatest commandment?

Matt. 22:36-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37

<sup>34</sup> "But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. <sup>35</sup> One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, <sup>36</sup> 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' <sup>37</sup> And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' <sup>38</sup> This is the great and foremost commandment. <sup>39</sup> "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments **depend** the whole Law and the Prophets'" (Matt. 26:34-40).

<sup>28</sup> "One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'What commandment is the foremost of all?' <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; <sup>30</sup> AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' <sup>31</sup> The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' **There is no other commandment greater than these**' <sup>32</sup> The scribe said to Him, 'Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; <sup>33</sup> AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.' <sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions" (Mark 12:28-34).

<sup>25</sup> "And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' <sup>26</sup> And He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?' <sup>27</sup> And he answered, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' <sup>28</sup> And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE'" (Luke 10:25-28).

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. He takes two passages and combines them into one response.

Jesus says in Matthew 22:40 that the entire Law and Prophets depend on these two commandments. The word depend is "to hang." It is used of Jesus hanging on the cross (Acts 5:30; 10:39; Gal. 3:13) and of a snake hanging from the arm of the apostle Paul (Acts 28:4). In the absence of these two commandments, the entire Law has nothing to support it.

In Mark's Gospel, the Scribe knew Jesus answered correctly (Mark 12:32). Verses 28 and 32 use the same word "well, right." Mark says, "Jesus saw that the Scribe had answered intelligently, discreetly, with insight." For those who had ears to hear, they understood the spirit behind the letter.

In Luke's account, Jesus asks a Lawyer how he understands the Law and he gives Deuteronomy 6:5 as his answer. Jesus says, "You have answered correctly." (v. 28). The word "correctly," is our English word **orthos**. We use the word with orthotics, orthodoxy, orthopedic. It means "plain, right, straight." The Lawyer took all of the Law and said, "Here is what cuts straight across the entire landscape of the LAW, love God.

When the author of Ecclesiastes says, "Fear God and Keep His Commandments," this is what those who had ears to hear would have heard. They would not have drilled down into the minutia. To burrow down into the minutia of the Law is to be buried under its weight.

If one loves God, he will then love his neighbor and in so doing the entire Law would be kept.

Is this right?

Think of John's response in 1 John 3:19-24.

- <sup>19</sup> "We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him <sup>20</sup> in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; <sup>22</sup> and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because **we keep His commandments [plural]** and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. <sup>23</sup> **This is His commandment [singular]**, that **we believe** in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and **love one another**, just as He commanded us. <sup>24</sup> The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us" (1 John 3:19-24).

Obedience is a practical matter. It is singular. Fear God and keep His commandments. Do this one thing and the trail will be clearly marked.

The song God sings is singular. Your experiences, your life are the harmony to God's melody. Apart from His melody, your life comes up as shadow without substance.

"Our search for eternal life, rest, joy, and justice moves us beyond the creation's subjection to futility (the frequent subject of Ecclesiastes) to Christ."<sup>1</sup>

## APPLICATION

The theme of Ecclesiastes is the necessity of fearing God in this fallen, confusing world. Each human being wants to understand all the ways God is acting in the world, but he cannot, because he is not God. And yet the faithful do not despair but cling to God, even when they cannot see what God is doing. The

Lord deserves his people's trust. They can leave everything to him while they seek to understand what it means to "fear God and keep his commandments" (12:13). This is true wisdom.

Will you trust Him? Will you believe in JESUS? Will you have faith in the person and work of Jesus regardless as to what everything and everyone else might be telling you?

## VISUALS

## MEMORY VERSE

Eccl. 12:13

<sup>13</sup>The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God and keep his commandments**, for this is the whole duty of man.

## RESOURCES

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.crossway.org/articles/the-gospel-in-ecclesiastes/>