

# What to Consider in 2012

Ecclesiastes 7:13-14

# Outline for Today

- Consider God and His Providence, v 13
- Consider God and His Prosperity, v 14a
- Consider God and His Affliction, v 14b
- Consider God and Trust, v 14c

# Some Footnotes

- His Purpose is established and being accomplished
  - (Isaiah 46:10-11) Declaring the end from the beginning  
And from ancient times things which have not been done,  
Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will  
accomplish all My good pleasure';<sup>11</sup> Calling a bird of prey  
from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country.  
Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have  
planned *it, surely I will do it.*

# Some Footnotes

- His Purpose is established and being accomplished  
– (Isaiah 14:26-27) "This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. <sup>27</sup> "For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate *it*? And as for His *stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?*"

# Some Footnotes

- It's not just the big issues for believers!
  - (Ephesians 1:11) also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
- This includes good works
  - (Ephesians 2:10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

# Some Footnotes

- This includes trials (Using Christ as an example)
  - (Acts 2:23) *“this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”*

# The Context of Ecclesiastes 7

- Overall happy times generally teach us less than hard times
- In verses 1-4, Solomon portrays the positive benefits of the greatest adversity, death; if considered wisely
- In verses 11-12, he portrays the benefits of prosperity if wisely used
- In verses 5-10, he warns that both adversity and prosperity offer many temptations to abandon a wise lifestyle and live like a fool.

# Consider God and His Providence, v 13

- Stop and Think (Consider)
  - **Consider** = means to include, to regard, perceive, feel, understand, learn. It is used of the bare act of intellectual perception of the message.
- Work of God
  - Work is to make or fashion (TWOT), see Genesis 8:6
    - Emphasis is that you need to understand that God is fashioning you into the image of Christ. This year God will be attempting to bring you closer to Christ-likeness.

# Consider God and His Providence, v 13

- Work of God
  - Work is to make or fashion (TWOT), see Genesis 8:6
    - Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.
    - If needs be, this year will have a big fish to get a hold of you. But remember, Warren Wiersbe noted that when God permits his children to go through the furnace, he keeps his eye on the clock and his hand on the thermostat. He is mindful that we are but dust.

# Consider God and His Providence, v 13

- The Sovereignty of God, v 13b
  - You can't Thwart God, as Nebuchadnezzar a heathen king discovered.
    - Daniel 4:35 "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?'"

# Consider God and His Providence, v 13

- The Sovereignty of God, v 13b
  - You can't Thwart God
    - “Learn to cooperate with the inevitable!” the meaning of this verse. The Living Bible paraphrases it, “See the way God does things and fall into line. Don't fight the facts of nature.”
  - This is not a summons to slavish fatalism; it is a sensible invitation to a **life yielded to the will of God.**

# Consider God and His Prosperity, v 14a

- In God's Days of Prosperity be Happy
  - Prosperity: variety of meanings
  - Happy: delightful, glad, joyful, blissful.
  - Don't take it for granted, don't be apathetic. It won't be prosperous and straight forever. All is in transition. Don't miss the good times.

# Consider God and His Prosperity, v 14a

- Hardships will Come
  - **R.C. Sproul** states, God balances our lives by giving us enough blessings to keep us happy and enough burdens to keep us humble. If all we had were blessings in our hands, we would fall right over, so the Lord balances the blessings in our hands with burdens on our backs. That helps to keep us steady, and as we yield to Him, He can even turn the burdens into blessings.

# Consider God and His Affliction, v 14b

- God Uses Adversity: Some Scripture
  - **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
  - **Genesis 50:20** "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

# Consider God and His Affliction, v 14b

- **God Uses Adversity: Some Scripture**
  - **James 1:2** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup> And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
  - **Romans 5:3-4** And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

# Consider God and Trust, v 14c

- God Has a Purpose
  - If we could predict the future, we wouldn't need faith
    - Billy Graham states: God has balanced prosperity with adversity according to His providence so that man may be totally dependent upon Him. This trust in divine providence is the only sufficient protection against the evil which inevitably comes. God brings both prosperity and adversity into our lives for His sovereign purposes, without revealing the key to His plan. He expects us to trust Him.

# Consider God and Trust, v 14c

- God Has a Purpose

- God is interested in making us people of faith. Hebrews 11:6  
And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

# Conclusion

- Stop and Think
  - Enjoy the straight path and when the end comes, realize it is for your benefit. God wants faith...Habakkuk 2:4
- How did Habakkuk respond to God:
  - (Habakkuk 3:17-19) Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, *Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls,*<sup>18</sup> *Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.*<sup>19</sup> *The Lord GOD is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places.*