

Ecclesiastes 12: What's the Point?

Despite containing the lyric for the Seekers 1967 popular hit 'Turn, turn, turn', Ecclesiastes makes for serious reading. Someone has called it a book of 'inspired cynicism'. An older King Solomon reflects on his life, his achievements and pleasures and concludes they're all pretty pointless if that's all there is. What lasting good is there to enjoy, if our times 'under the sun' must end in death?

After the shrewd, pithy Proverbs and the royal wedding celebration of Song of Songs (which actually works as an uncanny allegorical preview of Christ, heaven's king coming disguised as a humble shepherd 'in the likeness of sinful man' to win our love) Ecclesiastes deals a stark 'bottom line'.

A modern skeptic might just shrug their shoulders and say, 'Whatever', but Solomon is wise enough to humbly admit the limits of his knowledge and allow for a higher power and an existence beyond what we can now see.

Ch. 12 is a sombre caution to young people to make sure God is in the equation from the beginning: 'Remember your Creator while you're still young...' he says. He then speaks of old age and gives a sombre, poetic description of death, urging everyone to live wisely, following the 'Manufacturer's Instructions', for one day God will assess - and reward accordingly, the choices we make.