

‘What would it be like,’ asks the Preacher, ‘if things were utterly different from what you thought? What if this world is not the ultimate one? What if God exists and is a rewarder of those who seek him? What if one of his supreme characteristics is his utter, incredible generosity, his willingness to give and give and give again, his utter acceptance of us just as we are? Could it be,’ asks this provocative and seemingly negative Preacher, ‘that the barrenness and hideous purposelessness of life stems only from the fact that you will not believe in such a God?’

We leave the Preacher there. His message is not complete, for he lived before the full light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He saw ‘afar off’, and still leaves us with some questions. How *can* God accept us in such a way? What is the explanation of the hideous mess of this world? On what grounds can he feel confident that some future judgment will put it all right? Is there not a missing link in all this? The missing link is Jesus Christ the Son of God. It is in Christ, the Saviour and sin-bearer, that God says to us: ‘God is reconciled to you...You be reconciled to God’ (2 Cor. 5:18ff.). He has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man whom he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

‘Some...sneered...Others said, “We want to hear you again.”...A few...believed.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Eaton, 178-80.

<b>Book:</b>	<i>Ecclesiastes</i>
<b>Series:</b>	<i>Two Ways to Live: Under the Sun or In the Fear of God</i>
<b>Lesson 16:</b>	<i>The Conclusion</i>
<b>Text:</b>	Ecclesiastes 12:9-14
<b>Date:</b>	Sunday, May 26, 2013
<b>Next Lesson:</b>	Combined ABF in Auditorium (summer kick-off)

## INTRODUCTION

“In conclusion...” Those are words that every listener loves to hear. We have followed Solomon on quite the exhaustive and exhausting journey, and now we come to the end. We learned what we already knew—that life merely lived “under the sun” is futile; but we also discovered the alternative—to live life “in the fear of God.” In the Teacher’s final paragraph, he provides a fitting synopsis to the entire book, which is summarized in one propositional statement, “***Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.***” In order to drive that home, Solomon rehearses his authority, his purpose, and his message.

## THE TEACHER’S AUTHORITY (vv. 9-10)

1. *His* \_\_\_\_\_ (*v. 9a*)

### *Application:*

2. *His* \_\_\_\_\_ (*vv. 9b-10*)

### *Application:*

## THE TEACHER'S PURPOSE (v. 11)

1. To \_\_\_\_\_

*Application:*

2. To \_\_\_\_\_

*Application:*

3. To \_\_\_\_\_

*Application:*

## THE TEACHER'S MESSAGE (vv. 12-14)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 12)

*Application:*

2. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 13)

*Application:*

3. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 14)

*Application:*

## CONCLUSION

"Twentieth-century man...is supremely troubled about being 'thrown into existence' and asks why is there something rather than nothing. Probably the twentieth century, at least in the Western world, is the most bored epoch the world has yet seen. 'Stop the world, I want to get off' is a popular cliché....

"To such a world Ecclesiastes has something to say. He does not come as a formal philosopher; it is a word from God he has to share, despite his reflective low-key approach. He does not present half-a-dozen arguments for the existence of God. Instead he picks up our own questions. 'Can you cope with life without having any idea where you are going? You don't have all the answers to life's enigmas, do you? Your neo-pagan view of life doesn't give you any hope of achieving very much, does it? Nature will not answer your questions, and you are bored by it anyway. History baffles your attempts to understand it. You don't like to think about your own death; yet it is the most certain fact about your existence.'