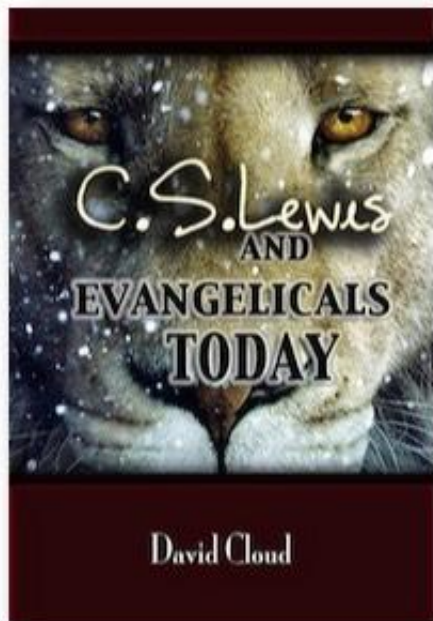


Spiritual & Prophetic Discernment Series - Issue #188

Leon E. Good

Oct. 19, 2026

[The Popularity and Heresies of C.S. Lewis](#) - Enlarged October 8, 2026 (first published April 9, 2024) - David Cloud, Way of Life Literature



The late British author C.S. (Clive Staples) Lewis (1898-1963), who was known as Jack, is extremely popular with evangelicals today. In fact, Lewis is loved with an equal fervor by “conservative evangelicals,” hell-denying emergents, Roman Catholics, Mormons, a growing number of fundamentalists, and even some atheists, a fact that speaks volumes to those who have ears to hear.

Mark Tauber, senior vice president of HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins which owns the rights to Lewis’s estate, says, “Lewis reaches kids whose parents are reading [*Narnia*] to them at seven [years-old] or earlier, then people **in evangelical or Catholic settings and in Mormon churches** are using his adult nonfiction in their teachings. **He reaches across** age groups and **different faith traditions**” (“Exploring C.S. Lewis’s Lasting

Popularity,” *Publishers Weekly*, Oct. 14, 2015).

Though Lewis died in 1963, sales of his books rose to two million a year by 1977 and totaled over 200 million in 2026, with no end in sight. No other “evangelical” author comes close to this. (Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* has sold 50 million copies.)

Robert Hosack, executive editor of Brazos Press says, “C.S. Lewis has become a veritable cottage industry in religious publishing circles” (“Exploring C.S. Lewis’s Lasting Popularity,” *Publishers Weekly*, Oct. 14, 2015).

The December 2005 edition of *Christianity Today* was devoted to “C.S. Lewis Superstar.” In an article commemorating the 100th anniversary of Lewis’ birth, J.I. Packer called him “our patron saint” and said that Lewis “has come to be the Aquinas, the Augustine, and the Aesop of contemporary Evangelicalism” (“Still Surprised by Lewis,” *Christianity Today*, Sept. 7, 1998).

A *Christianity Today* reader’s poll that year rated Lewis the most influential evangelical writer. In light of the wretched spiritual-doctrinal-moral condition of “evangelicalism”

today, that is a very telling statistic.

In its April 23, 2001, issue, *Christianity Today* again praised C.S. Lewis in an article titled “Myth Matters.” Lewis, called “the 20th century’s greatest Christian apologist,” wrote several mythical works, such as *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which *Christianity Today* recommends in the most glowing terms, claiming that “Christ came not to put an end to myth but to take all that is most essential in the myth up into himself and make it real.” I don’t know what to say to this except that it is complete nonsense. In his *Chronicles*, Lewis depicts Jesus Christ as a lion named Aslan who is slain on a stone table. *Christianity Today* says, “In Aslan, Christ is made tangible, knowable, real.” As if we can know Jesus Christ best through a fable that is vaguely and inaccurately based on biblical themes and intermingled with paganism.

Lewis is praised on all spectrums of evangelicalism and beyond. He is credited by John Piper as a father of his doctrine of “Christian Hedonism,” and he is praised by Rob Bell in his hell-denying, universalistic book *Love Wins*. Under the Acknowledgements section, Bell writes, “... to my parents, Rob and Helen, for suggesting when I was in high school that I read C.S. Lewis.” I would imagine that Bell’s parents regret that recommendation today, since he has rejected and reinterpreted the biblical Christian faith.

LEWIS’S “DAMNABLE HERESIES”

Even *Christianity Today* admits, “Clive Staples Lewis was anything but a classic evangelical, socially or theologically. He smoked cigarettes and a pipe, and he regularly visited pubs to drink beer with friends. Though he shared basic Christian beliefs with evangelicals, he didn’t subscribe to biblical inerrancy or penal substitution. He believed in purgatory and baptismal regeneration” (“C.S. Lewis Superstar,” *Christianity Today*, Dec. 2005).

Following are some of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible that Lewis rejected:

- The inerrant inspiration of Scripture
- The historicity of the Bible
- The necessity of supernatural conversion through repentance and personal faith in Christ
- The “Penal Substitutionary Atonement”
- Salvation by grace without works and sacraments
- The sole Mediatorship of Jesus Christ
- The existence of heaven and hell
- The literal six-day creation
- The doctrine of an eternal, fiery hell
- The doctrine of the finality of one’s destiny at death
- Salvation exclusively through the name of Christ

For documentation of these points, see the free eBook [*C.S. Lewis and Evangelicals Today*](#) at the Books section of wayoflife.org.

WHY IS LEWIS SO POPULAR WITH EVANGELICALS TODAY?

In light of his lack of a scriptural salvation testimony, his heresies, his worldliness, and the massive pagan influences in his work, why are evangelicals today so enamored with C.S. Lewis? I believe the following are some of the chief reasons:

First, evangelicals love C.S. Lewis because of his intellectualism.

Second, evangelicals love C.S. Lewis because of his ecumenical thinking and his refusal to practice biblical separation.

Third, evangelicals love C.S. Lewis because of their shared fascination with and sympathy with Rome.

For documentation of these points, see the free eBook [*C.S. Lewis and Evangelicals Today*](#) at the Books section of wayoflife.org.

[When Unbelievers Take over the Church: A Case Study](#) - 3 John 9-10 – Pastor Dean Good - 10/18/26 – Message begins at the 33 min. mark.

Excerpt: Transcript

Well, if you would turn in your Bibles to Third John. And I know we're studying Second Peter. I'll explain myself as you're turning there. I want to read from Third John this morning. Again we've been studying second Peter as you know and the theme of second Peter is standing fast to the end and particularly in the face of false teachers in chapter 2 which we just finished looking at.

Chapter 2 is a chapter that is maybe one of the greatest, most complete statements, descriptions of false teachers in scripture. These men will be in the church.

They will be leaders in the church. They will be teaching in the church. And sometimes they take over the church.

[THE CHOSEN WRAPS UP FILMING AFTER EIGHT YEARS](#) - Friday Church News Notes – Way of Life - October 9, 2026 - Volume 27, Issue 41

Complete Article: *The Chosen* has wrapped up filming after eight years. Season 6 is scheduled to launch in November and Season 7 (the final) is scheduled to debut in the spring of 2028. The wildly popular series, which has been watched by more than 280 million people worldwide and translated into 125 languages, has been treated like a biblical Christian series by most of the popular press, but it is a dangerous mixture of truth and error. It is yet another example of evangelicalism's apostasy. Dallas Jenkins, co-writer and director, is the son of Jerry B. Jenkins, who co-authored the *Left Behind* series with Tim LaHaye and was closely associated with Moody Bible Institute. Yet "the Mormon influence on *The Chosen* is considerable: the executive producer is Mormon, the distributor is Mormon, certain episodes were shot on a special Mormon set in Utah, and the crowdfunding and media expertise is provided by Mormons. ... **Dallas Jenkins told one interviewer that '95% of the content [of *The Chosen*] isn't from the Bible.'** This means that *The Chosen* is almost completely man's word--not God's Word. ... For example, Mary Magdalene backsliding is not in the Bible; Matthew portrayed as autistic--not in the Bible; Jesus rehearsing His sermon on the mount--not in the Bible (John 12:49-50; John 17:8). ... the apostle Peter had a gambling debt that pressured him to fish overtime on the Sabbath to pay back what he owed [not in the Bible]... Jonathan Roumie, the actor who plays Jesus in *The Chosen*, is a fervent Catholic with a strong affinity toward the New Age. ... he claims to have had 'personal interactions' with a deceased Catholic 'saint.' ... Roumie's recommended reading list on Amazon includes *The Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything* by Jesuit priest and New Age sympathizer, James Martin. The book openly teaches the panentheistic New Age doctrine of God 'in' everyone and everything as the following quotes from that book illustrate: 'God can be found in everything. And everyone too'; 'We'll look at how to find God in everything and everything in God'" (*The Chosen Series - 10 Critical Concerns*, *Lighthouse Trails.com*). Mormonism is false Christianity with a false gospel of works and a false Christ who is not eternal, is the spirit brother of Lucifer, and earned his way to godhood.

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Beyond a Reasonable Doubt – Jonathan Brentner – Oct. 9, 2026

Complete Article:

It's been three years since Hamas' barbaric attack that claimed the lives of twelve hundred people in Israel. The terrorists took another 250 Jews as hostages to live underground in tunnels in abominable conditions. Those who survived captivity endured starvation and savage beatings.

Jewish author and speaker Olivier Melnick, in a recent [article](#) on the *Harbinger's Daily* website, wrote the following in remembrance of the brutal assault on October 7, 2023:

Yet, beyond the necessary remembrance, we must understand that October 7 was a symptom as well as a tragedy. It was a symptom of a world turning exponentially against Israel, as Zechariah 12 prophetically predicted. It is a sign that Satan is running on fumes and that we are living on borrowed time. Yes, if, like me, you are a pre-Tribulational, pre-Millennial Dispensationalist believer, you understand that time is of the essence. The irrational and satanic component in the new antisemitism is more obvious than ever before, and it truly is a symptom of the final hours of mankind.

The rampant antisemitism that continues to rapidly grow despite the demonic murder of the Jewish people most definitely points to the nearness of the coming Tribulation period, and thus to the Rapture. In my yet-to-be-published book, *Irrevocable: The Case for Israel - Why Scripture Leaves No Reasonable Doubt about Israel's Future*, I compile considerable biblical evidence confirming Israel's place in Bible prophecy.



Refuting Antisemitism

Olivier Melnick is correct, of course; today's hatred for all things Jewish emanates from the father of lies. Satan is the root cause.

It's also true that false teaching down through the centuries of church history has contributed to the antisemitism found in the outside world. The teaching that God rejected Israel and replaced the nation with the Church originated, in part, because of hatred toward the Jews. Unfortunately, this false view of Bible

prophecy found its way outside the walls of many churches, where it has morphed into antisemitism more times than not.

I am under no illusion that my book will counter the world's demonic anti-Israel fury that has spilled over into streets of cities across the world. Instead, I wrote it to give Bible-believing Christians irrefutable evidence that leaves no reasonable doubt about the Lord's promise to restore a kingdom *to* Israel. It's also my prayer that it will embolden pastors to defend Israel against the world's onslaught of hatred.

For far too long, the fog of amillennialism has weakened the church's witness of hope to the world and turned the hearts of the saints away from the "blessed hope" of anticipating Jesus' appearing to take us home to glory. Defending Israel's place in Bible prophecy not only combats antisemitism in the church, but it also leads to a greater assurance of our future as believers.



Far More Than Theology

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of writing this book was how it deepened my understanding of God's mercy toward us who believe.

Our beliefs regarding the future of the Jewish state are far more than simply matters of theology. ***So much more.*** They increase our understanding of God's steadfast love toward us and, in doing so, they deepen our grasp of the gospel.

Ever since I can remember, I have believed in eternal security. Yet exploring the depths of God's relationship with Israel throughout the Old Testament deepened my appreciation of it. Paul didn't pen Romans chapters 9-11 as a rabbit trail after stating our absolute security as justified saints in Romans 8:31-39. No, his assertion that God has not rejected Israel flowed directly from his proclamation of the Lord's unfailing love toward us as New Testament saints.

In many ways, the story of Israel is also that of the redeemed. Those who negate God's promises to Israel not only detract from what Scripture says about Israel's future glory, but also from what it reveals about *our* future glory.

The splendor of the coming kingdom belongs to us as its heirs, to Israel, who will enjoy a prominent place in it, and to Jesus, who will return to the world victorious and receive all the honor due to Him.



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Awana Then and Now - October 15, 2026 - David Cloud, Way of Life Literature

Complete Article:

Awana is a children's evangelistic/discipleship program that is usually operated during the Wednesday evening prayer/Bible study meetings. It stands for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed (from [2 Timothy 2:15](#)) and has six levels: Puggles (ages 2 to 3), Cubbies (preschool), Sparks (early elementary), and Truth & Training (upper elementary), Trek (middle school), and Journey (high school). The program consists of Bible memorization, Bible lessons, Bible stories, and games.

Today Awana claims to be used in 61,000 churches representing over five million children in 134 countries.

Awana was founded in 1941 in the North Side Gospel Center in Chicago by the pastor, Lance Latham, and the youth pastor, Art Rorheim. It branched out to other churches in the early 1950s.

Awana's gospel has always been a weak "just believe" with no hint of repentance and no emphasis on the new birth with evidence of a changed life.

Awana has always supported the use of multiple Bible versions.

Originally a fundamentalist organization, Awana's statement of faith had warnings about false doctrine and required that churches using the Awana program be separate from charismatic and liberal organizations.

This was weakened in the 1990s and discarded by the 2000s. The following is from *Calvary Contender*, May 1, 2001:

"In a recent long discourse with an Awana official, a Kansas pastor wrote the following: 'My problem is with the deceit of chartering American Baptist Churches despite the clear statements prohibiting it, and now the removing of key parts of the doctrinal statement that clearly speak against false doctrine and trends such as the charismatic movement. Its statement formerly said churches who used Awana were not to be 'affiliated with' the National Council of Churches/World Council of Churches at all. Then they weakened it to 'not be supportive of.'" Now this more recent change is to drop the policy on this completely, and opens the door for charismatic/Pentecostal and liberal churches to be affiliated with Awana. The Awana official, in an e-mail to the Kansas pastor, noted specifically that the Assemblies of God and all American Baptist Churches now would be free to use Awana. The Kansas pastor adds: 'In this latest change, Awana has dropped its policy of selecting churches completely. all you have to do now is say you agree to teach the materials as they are given.' He said Awana's philosophy, and that of many other organizations and churches that formerly stood for the truth, is to downplay doctrine so that more people can be reached for the gospel. The Bible clearly condemns that philosophy ['end justifies the means']."

Twenty years later, Awana is moving into ever more dangerous waters. The following is excerpted from "Awana," [thirtypiecesofsilver.org](#), Nov. 2, 2022:

"AWANA ... since 2021 has increasingly featured and been dominated by social

justice/woke, LGBTQ inclusion activist evangelical speakers. ... Clearly Third Way politics and activist / inclusion/ BLM [Black Lives Matter]/ CRT [Critical Race Theory] narratives are flooding Awana. ... Note about the speakers at Awana's Child Discipleship Forum, Sept. 2022: SAM ALLBERRY is an activist same-sex attracted/homosexual priest from the Church of England and co-founder of 'Living Out' a controversial LGBTQ inclusion movement which has sought to 'Audit Churches for LGBTQ Inclusion.' ANDY CROUCH is a former editor of left-swerving *Christianity Today* who used his position there to promote the LGBTQ activist 'Revoice' movement and now serves on Revoice Board/Council. REBECCA MCLAUGHLIN is in the TGC [The Gospel Coalition] speaker promoting the APA/SOGI [American Psychological Association's Sexual Orientation Gender Identity] based same-sex attraction narrative. ... Awana's 2023 Child Discipleship Forum promises a racially woke rapper and more. SHAI LINNE is a racial activist using vintage critical race theory narratives ... Linne's own words advocating Black Lives Matter (BLM) reflect his Critical Race Theory worldview in his reflections on the death of George Floyd which launched the BLM riots and Marxist-styled protest of 2020. ... Mark Markins [new CEO of Awana] appears to be desperately eager to turn Awana from the tried and true and treasure focus of teaching Bible verses to our children and grandchildren, which is viewed by him and others inside Awana as 'looking back to the ways of the past and the methods of the good ole days.' Markins warns churches and parents that this 'looking back' is wrong and is failing their children and [we should rather be] 'looking ahead and charting a course to the future.' Clearly by 'Charting a New Course,' Markins and Awana leadership mean your children need LGBTQ Church Inclusion ... BLM advocate rap with Critical Race Theory driven narratives on race by Shai Linne which are loose with the facts and heavy on systemic racism worldview."

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Why Is Israel Called 'God's Chosen People'? – Israel My Glory - **November/December 2026 - David M. Levy**

Complete Article: In Deuteronomy 7, Moses reminded the Israelites of their position before God as they prepared to enter the Promised Land, providing several important points concerning their status as His Chosen People:

- 1. Israel was set apart to be a holy people unto God. The Israelites were to be separated from the Gentile nations so they would not become polluted by pagan unrighteousness (vv. 1–5).**
- 2. God selected Israel “to be a people for Himself” (v. 6). Israel’s election was a sovereign act of God’s grace, totally unmerited by the nation.**
- 3. Israel was God’s “special treasure above all the peoples” on Earth (v. 6; cf. [Ps. 135:4](#)). Its value is rooted in God’s election of Israel, His covenant relationship with Abraham, and the rescue of His people from Egyptian captivity.**

4. Israel's size had no bearing on God's choosing ([Dt. 7:7](#)). In fact, Israel had fewer people than many nations in that day.

5. God loves Israel (v. 7). His affection for the nation is a divine mystery because it is not motivated by any virtue, righteousness, morality, or integrity found within the nation ([Rom. 3:10–18](#)). God's love for Israel is unconditional ([Dt. 7:7](#)), unfailing ([Isa. 63:9](#)), and unending ([Jer. 31:3](#)).

6. God swore an oath to Israel's forefather, Abraham. He repeatedly affirmed He would keep His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ([Dt. 7:8](#); cf. [1:35](#); [4:31](#)). These assurances included choosing Israel to be the nation through which the Messiah, the Savior of the world, would come. This promise was fulfilled through a Jewish virgin who gave birth to the Redeemer of mankind (cf. [Isa. 7:14](#); [Lk. 1:26–38](#)).

Israel was God's Servant, chosen to be a light to the Gentile world ([Isa. 49:6](#)). But how can this be, considering the nation rejected Jesus as its Messiah? Even though Israel rejected Jesus, many Jewish people have received Him as their personal Savior ([Rom. 11:1–7](#)) and taken the light of salvation to the Gentiles. Israel's rejection is temporary and only in part, not total. One day, all Israel will receive Jesus as the Messiah (vv. 25–27).

The apostle Paul aptly summarized God's choosing of Israel: "Concerning the election they [Israel] are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable [unalterable]" (vv. 28–29).

God's election of Israel is eternal. His gifts (covenant promises) and calling (Israel's national election) are unconditional and unchangeable forever.

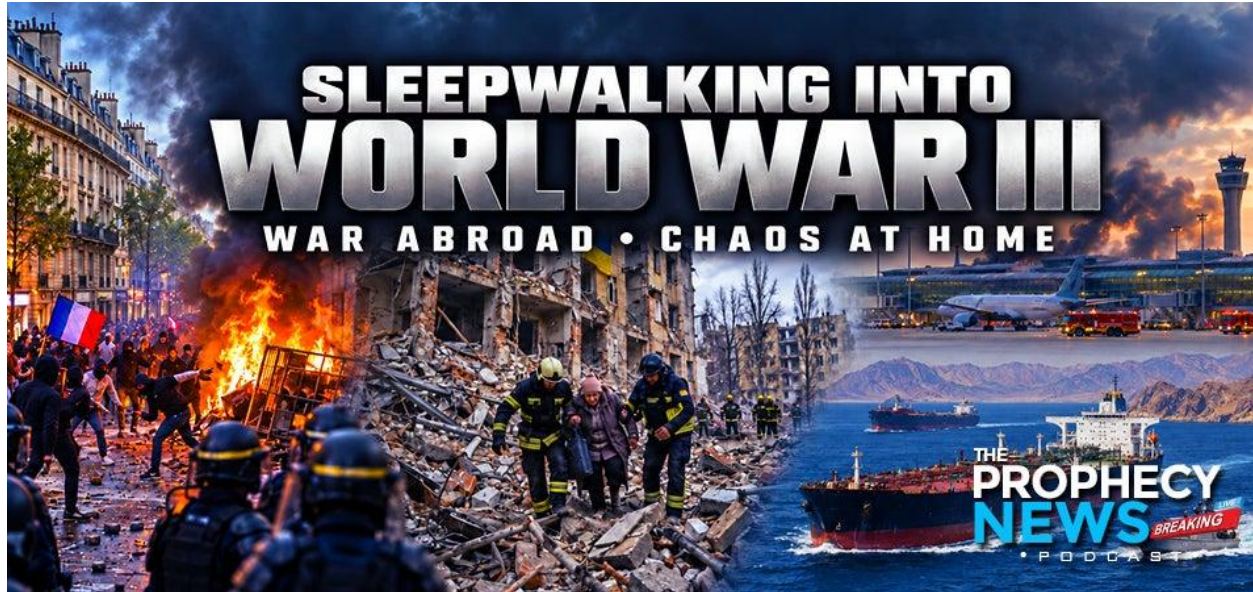


David M. Levy is a Bible teacher, author, former pastor, and the retired director of International Ministries for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry

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Our Entire World Seems To Be Sleepwalking Into WWII As Global Flashpoints Are Now Starting To Connect – Now The End Begins -

October 19, 2026 - By Geoffrey Grider



Sleepwalking Into World War III: From Israel And Iran To Ukraine And The Strait Of Hormuz, Regional Conflicts Are Pushing The World Toward A Dangerous Breaking Point

The world is becoming accustomed to things that should be shaking it wide awake. Israel has raised its military readiness as violence continues in Gaza and the West Bank, while the confrontation with Hezbollah remains unresolved beneath Lebanon's fragile ceasefire. Saudi Arabia is struggling to defend its airports and infrastructure against Houthi missiles and drones. Today, a Houthi missile attack reportedly killed at least 20 government troops in Yemen. Meanwhile, the confrontation in the Strait of Hormuz continues threatening the movement of oil through one of the world's most important shipping routes. These conflicts reach far beyond the people directly under fire: disrupted supplies and higher prices carry their consequences into households thousands of miles away.

"And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Matthew 24:6-8 (KJB)

The pressure extends across Europe, Asia and Africa. Russia continues striking Ukraine's energy infrastructure, while attacks on commercial ships in the Black Sea raise dangerous questions about how close this war can come to NATO territory before provoking a wider response. China's recent live-fire exercises and maritime confrontations keep Taiwan and the Philippines watching closely; North Korea is threatening additional weapons deployments along its border with the South. Sudan and Myanmar remain engulfed in devastating wars that receive a fraction of the attention given to the major powers. And in France, the government explicitly connects its fuel-price crisis to overseas fighting and disrupted energy supplies. That economic strain adds pressure to a country already struggling with domestic grievances and violent unrest. The distance between a foreign battlefield and your own neighborhood is much shorter than people imagine. People exhausted by war, struggling to afford necessities and afraid to walk their own streets can become extraordinarily receptive to some charismatic political figure promising order. The danger is that desperation makes sweeping demands for obedience begin to sound reasonable. It is at this point in the road that we leave the headlines of politics to land squarely within the pages of Bible prophecy and the prophets.

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Getting Everything You Want Is Not Enough

Corbin City Baptist Church - Complete FB Post - Pastor Randy Hooper – Oct. 5, 2026

From the Pastor's Pen:

Solomon wrote: “All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 2:10–11)

If you read carefully, you will see two movements in those verses. First, Solomon got what he wanted. Then he looked at what he had gotten. The first movement explains why we keep chasing. The second explains why the chase never ends.

Solomon is not describing a weekend binge. He is describing a life. In the verses just before this text he lists houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, pools, slaves, herds, silver, gold, singers, and the pleasures of men. Then he sums it up: “All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them.” That is a startling sentence. Most of us refuse our eyes because

we have to. The budget will not stretch. The body will not cooperate. The door will not open. Solomon's problem was the opposite. He had the means, the power, and the freedom to say yes. And he said yes.

Notice what he did not do. He did not withhold his heart from any pleasure. He did not live as a grim stoic who gathered things but refused to enjoy them. He let his heart in on the project. "My heart was pleased because of all my labor," he says, "and this was my reward for all my labor." The work itself gave him something. There was a lift in the building, a satisfaction in the collecting, a sweetness in the moment when the thing he wanted finally sat in his hands.

That matters. If Solomon had said, "I never enjoyed any of it," we could dismiss him as a sour man. He did enjoy it. The text will not let us pretend otherwise. The meal tasted good. The house looked splendid. The music was beautiful. The labor paid a wage, and the wage was pleasure.

We know that wage. You finish the degree. You close the sale. You walk through the door of the house you saved for. For a while the heart is pleased. That is not imaginary. It is one of the gifts of being human under the sun. God has not made the world so barren that nothing ever delights us. Solomon is honest enough to admit the delight.

The hinge of the passage is a small word: "Thus." After the pleasure, comes the appraisal. "Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted." He stepped back from the doing and looked at the done. That is a dangerous moment. As long as we are still reaching, we can live on anticipation. When we finally hold the thing, we have to ask what we are holding.

Solomon looked, and the text says, "behold." That word is a raised hand. Look at this. Do not hurry past it. "All was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun."

Three phrases, stacked on one another, because one would not be enough.

Vanity is the preacher's great word, Hebel~ vapor, breath, a mist that looks like something until you close your hand. The achievement was real. The pleasure was real. The meaning he expected to find inside them was not.

Striving after wind is the picture of a man chasing what he cannot keep. You can feel the breeze. You cannot pocket it. You cannot live on it. You cannot hand it to your children and say, "Here is what I spent my life to give you."

No profit under the sun is the accountant's line. Profit is what is left when the costs are paid. Solomon had paid in years, energy, attention, and desire. When he totaled

the books from the ground up ~ life measured only by what can be seen, grasped, and enjoyed between birth and death ~ the column was empty. There was a reward in the labor but There was no lasting gain from the labor.

That is the shock of the text. The problem was not that Solomon failed. The problem was that he succeeded. Failure would have left him with an excuse: If only I had gotten more, then I would have been full. Success stripped the excuse away. He got what his eyes desired, and the heart was still hungry.

We confuse two things Solomon learned to separate. Pleasure is not the same as profit. A thing can please you and still leave you poor in the only sense that finally matters.

Solomon's phrase "under the sun" is the fence around the experiment. He is asking what a life yields if you measure it only by what happens between the sky and the dirt. Inside that fence, even magnificent work ends in vapor. Death takes the worker. Time takes the work. Someone else inherits what you built and may waste it. Memory fades. The wind keeps blowing, and your hands are empty again.

That is why the modern promise sounds so much like Solomon's old sentence. We still tell ourselves that peace will come when we finally have the relationship, the house, the body, the income, the opportunity, or the life we have imagined. Solomon's gift to us is not that he was more spiritual than we are. His gift is that he was more thorough. He did not refuse his eyes. Therefore he is qualified to tell us what the eyes cannot deliver.

The passage does not say, "Stop working." It does not say, "Despise pleasure." Later in the book the preacher will tell us to eat, drink, and enjoy the good in our labor as a gift from God. The issue here is not the gift. The issue is the weight we put on the gift.

If you treat the reward of your labor as the profit of your life, you will keep moving the finish line. The house will need continuous repair. The income will need another digit. The body will need another year. You will not refuse your eyes, and your heart will be pleased for a while, and then you will consider what your hands have done~ and the old verdict will wait for you.

The honest question the text puts to us is simple: What are you asking your achievements to do for you? If you are asking them to make you finally at rest, they will fail you the way they failed a king who had more of them than you will ever have. That is not a cruel word. It is a kind one. It saves you from spending your one life trying to squeeze eternity out of things that were only meant to be temporary mercies.

Ecclesiastes does not leave us in the vapor. The book that says there is no profit under the sun also says that God is in heaven and you are on the earth, and that the end of the matter is to fear God and keep His commandments. The hunger in the heart is not a design flaw. It is a sign that the heart was made for more than what the eyes can gather. The things under the sun can please us. They cannot save us. They cannot tell us who we are. They cannot hold us when the wind starts to blow through everything we built.

So the teaching of these two verses is as sharp as it is short. You may receive what your eyes desire. You may even find that your heart is pleased because of all your labor. That pleasure is a real reward. It is not the profit. Look at all your hands have done, and do not lie to yourself about what you see. Apart from God, the sum of a successful life is still vapor, still a chasing of the wind, still no gain that lasts.

The peace we keep postponing until the next thing we get or achieve will not be waiting for us in heaven. It never was. The heart remains hungry until it learns to stop asking the world to be its god, and begins to receive both its labor and its longing from the God who made the heart in the first place.

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