

A New You Ministry

Website: <http://www.anym.org>

Email: inquiries@anym.org

Post: 18 Hennessey's Place
Conception Bay South, NL
Canada, A1X 6Z3



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SOLOMON LEARNS FROM SUFFERING

O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in..... Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, That I may discern between good and bad.

1 Kings 3: 7-9

The discipline of David's early experience was lacking in that of Solomon. In circumstances, in character, and in life, he seemed favored above all others. Noble in youth, noble in manhood, the beloved of his God, Solomon entered on a reign at the knowledge and insight of prosperity and honor. Nations marveled at the knowledge and insight of the man to whom God had given wisdom. But the pride of prosperity brought separation from God. From the joy of divine communion Solomon turned to find satisfaction in the pleasures of sense. Of this experience he says: "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards I got me servants and maidens I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasures of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem.....And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour.....

Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? Even that which hath been already done"(Eccl. 2: 4-12).

"I hated life.....Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun" (verses 17, 18).

By his own bitter experience, Solomon learned the emptiness of a life that seeks in earthly things its highest good.....

In his later years, turning wearied and thirsting from earth's broken cisterns, Solomon returned to drink at the fountain of life. The history of his wasted years, with their lessons of warning, led by the Spirit of inspiration recorded for after generations. And thus, although the seed of his sowing was repeated by his people in harvests of evil, the lifework of Solomon was not wholly lost. For him at last the discipline of suffering accomplished its work.

But with such a dawning, how glorious might have been his life's day, had Solomon in his youth learned the lesson that suffering had taught in other lives!