

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



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~ ECCLESIASTES ~

Solomon's Sermon



INTRODUCTION:

Ecclesiastes 1:2-3, "2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; **all is vanity.** 3 **What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"**

↳ It is like:

- a. The sun repeats its circuit every day – vs 5.
- b. Wind goeth in circles – vs. 6.
- c. Rivers roll to oceans, evaporates then rains again – vs 7.
- d. Eye wants to keep seeing – vs 8.
- e. Nothing new under the sun, vs 9-10.
- f. Ear wants to keep hearing – vs 8.
- g. One generation after another with no real genuine progress – vs 11.

↳ I ought to know – I was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

All is vanity is proven by:

- a. **Experiment**, "he tried" – vs 13.
- b. **Observation**, "he saw" – vs 14-15.
- c. **Common sense**, "he reasoned" – vs 16-18.

I. I TRIED – CHAPTER 2

A. **Things** – **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11** (wine, women, works, wealth, wisdom)

1. Mirth – vs 1-2
2. Pleasure – vs 1-2
3. Wine – vs 3
4. Architecture – vs 4
5. Gardening – vs 5-6
6. Wealth – vs 7
7. Cattle ranching – vs 7
8. Art collections – vs 8
9. Music – vs 8
10. Whatever my eye wanted – vs 9-10
11. All was vanity – vs 11

B. Wisdom

1. But wise can do nothing new – vs 12.
2. Both wise and foolish die – vs 13-15.
3. Wise no better remembered – vs 16-17.
4. Leave all my things wisdom got me is left to a fool – vs 18-21.
5. This makes you sleepless at night and vexed – vs 22-23.

C. **Eat, drink, and be merry** – vs 24-26 – it is vanity.

D. **Philosophies** (Life is barren, boring, bitter.)

1. Fatalism – **Ecclesiastes 3:1-22**
 - a. Time for everything – vs 1-13.
 - b. God doing it all – vs 14.
 - c. History repeats itself like nature – vs 15.
 - d. All die and it will start over again – vs 16-22.
2. Deism – **Ecclesiastes 4:1-16**
 - a. Problems galore but no comforter – vs 1.
 - b. Better off dead – vs 2.
 - c. Better off never born – vs 3.
 - d. Men work but envied – vs 4-6.
 - e. Childless or brother (heirless) – vs 7-8.
 - f. Little better off with a partner – vs 9-14.
 - g. Who will help and give advice? All men die – vs 15-16.
3. Ritualism
 - a. Make sacrifices good – vs 1.
 - b. Make vows good – vs 2-6.
 - c. Still vanity.
4. Conclusion of Experiment – **Ecclesiastes 5:8-17**.
 - a. On wisdom, philosophies, and wealth – all is vanity.
 - b. Obeying God is the answer.

II. I SAW – ECCLESIASTES 5:18

A. His first thoughts – vs 18-20.

B. What he saw.

1. Wealthy die before partaking – vs 2.
2. Old age is useless (miscarriage better) – vs 2-6.
3. Wisdom useless for all done beforehand will happen again – vs 7-12.
4. Reputation is vanity – **Ecclesiastes 7:1**.

5. Laughter is vanity – **Ecclesiastes 7:2-6.**
6. Wisdom useless – **Ecclesiastes 7:7-13.**
7. Even the just man perishes – **Ecclesiastes 7:14-16.**
8. But very wicked is vanity – **Ecclesiastes 7:17.**
9. Strength is no good without wisdom, but wisdom is also vanity – **Ecclesiastes 7:18-25.**
10. Woman vanity – **Ecclesiastes 7:26-29.**
11. Power is vanity – **Ecclesiastes 8:1-8.**
12. Following government is vanity – **Ecclesiastes 8:9.**

- C. Conclusion of what he saw – vs 14-17. Obeying God is the answer.

III. I REASONED – ECCLESIASTES 9:1

- A. Thoughts
1. All things come alike to all – vs 1-2.
 2. All die – vs 3.
 3. Living is little better off than dead – vs 4-6.
 4. Do what you will because tomorrow you die – vs 7-10.
 5. You don't know when you will die – vs 11-12.
 6. Wisdom will not give reputation – vs 13-18.
 7. Reputation easily ruined – **Ecclesiastes 10:1.**
 8. Do evil - you pay – 2-9.
 9. Wise talk is better than foolish, but wise men die too – vs 10-20.
 10. Don't know the ways of God – **Ecclesiastes 11:1-8.**
 11. Youth is vanity – vs 9-10.
- B. Conclusion of "I reasoned".
1. Remember the Creator in your youth while you have:
 - a. Two eyes.
 - b. Arms – keepers of the home.
 - c. Legs – strongmen bow themselves.
 - d. Teeth – grinders.
 - e. Mind – those that lookout window.
 - f. Ears – vs 4.
 - g. Silver hair – Almond tree.
 - h. Death is coming – vs 5.
 - i. Spinal cord – Silver cord.
 - j. Brain – Golden bowl.
 - k. Heart – Pitcher.
 - l. Circulatory System – Well.
 2. When death comes, the spirit returns unto God – vs 7.
 3. Though all is vanity (vs 8), the preacher still taught Proverbs (Proverbs should follow the book of Ecclesiastes) and made books. **Because the spirit returns to God, it is**

your duty to fear God and keep His commandments – vs 13-14.

IV. HE SEES THE FOLLY OF:

- A. A new leaf without new life – 3:12-17.
- B. Might without right – 4:1-3.
- C. Plenty without peace – 4:4-8.
- D. Prosperity without posterity – 4:9-12.
- E. Sovereignty without sagacity – 4:13-16.
- F. Religion without reality – 5:1-6.
- G. Wealth without health – 5:7-20.
- H. Treasure without pleasure – 6:1-6.
- I. Appetite without appeasement – 6:7-10.
- J. Life without length – 6:11-12.

V. HE SAW THESE FALLACIES

- A. Fiction of being great – 8:1-9.
- B. Folly of being godless – 8:10-13.
- C. Fantasy of being good – 8:14.
- D. Frivolity of being gay – 8:15.
- E. Fault of being gifted – 8:16-17.

VI. SOME COMMON MISUSES OF THIS BOOK

- A. Skeptics use it for proof that there is nothing after the grave.
 1. But remember that this is what the natural man thought.
 2. This was the author's skeptical thought, **NOT** a revealed truth.
- B. Soul sleeping has been urged from this book. But again, this is the natural man's assuming, **NOT** revelation.
- C. Pessimistic people take delight in the book for at first glance it appears very pessimistic.
 1. A careful reading shows that it is saying that "all these things" cannot satisfy man, for he is too big for this world.
 2. **He has an eternal heart – 3:11.**
 3. See Halley's Bible Handbook.
 4. In fact, if we obey God, we may enjoy the things of this life!
- D. Some use this book as evidence that the Bible is contradictory and uninspired. It is true that some of the statements in the book **of**

Ecclesiastes contradict other Bible principles, but keep in mind:

1. **The conclusion of the whole book does not.** Because the author has chosen to tell of his experiences, observations, and reasoning does not mean they can be used against the whole.
2. **Inspiration is progressive.**
3. **The nature of its inspiration is not to reveal just inspired truths, but the context or setting for a truth to be taught.** This was an excellent way to drive home his point – fearing God and keeping His commandments. He had tried, seen, reasoned that all else was vanity.

E. Another key is in Ecclesiastes 3:11.

1. The word “world” in the R.V. is translated, “eternity”.
2. God hath set eternity in their heart.
3. This same word is used 7 other times:
 - a. **Ecclesiastes 1:4**
 - b. **Ecclesiastes 1:10**
 - c. **Ecclesiastes 2:16**
 - d. **Ecclesiastes 3:11**
 - e. **Ecclesiastes 3:14**
 - f. **Ecclesiastes 9:6**
 - g. **Ecclesiastes 12:5**
4. It is translated, “forever”, “old”, “long”, “everlasting”.
5. Man has eternal thoughts in his heart. (See “*Halley’s Bible Handbook*” for this thought.)

This is why “all under the sun is vanity.”

F. Suggested readings:

1. “*Unger’s Bible Handbook*”, page 296.
2. The Book of Ecclesiastes in the “*New Analytical Bible*”, Outstanding Facts.

F. This book shows a man being strictly honest in saying that, “Apart from God, all is vanity.”

VIII. SIDELIGHTS

- A. God is mentioned 40 times as “**Elohim**” (the God nature presents, but not “Jehovah”, the God revealed in Scripture.) **God is considered in light of the natural man.**
- B. “Under the sun” appears 29 times.
- C. “Vanity” is mentioned 37 times.
- D. “Communed with my heart” appears 7 times.

We have included these outlines on Ecclesiastes and Job because they are overlooked books.

These outlines may help students grasp the purposes of these two books!

VII. LESSONS

- A. It is vanity and vexation of spirit if you look at only things under the sun.
- B. This book is man’s cry for an eternal home.
- C. This book teaches us the danger of lifting a text out of context lest it become a pretext.
- D. This book is the experiments, observations, and reasoning of a man without God’s revelation. It should not be used to prove or disprove a doctrine, except in the conclusions of each section. (See outline)
- E. It shows the vanity of materialism, science, philosophy, pleasure, arts, women, creativity, ritualistic religion, reputation, power, morality – for all is vanity.