

Vanity: A Life without God



"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher... Ecclesiastes 1:2

The Key of the Book ⁽¹⁾

- The book invites us to take a realistic tour of life.
- The Teacher's message seems particularly aimed at those who seek to find life's meaning outside of a practical faith in God.



The Key of the Book ⁽²⁾

- With despairing perception, the author explores a grim reality he calls “life under the sun”—life outside of God’s control and goodness.
- Ecclesiastes reminds us that God is bigger, and our life in this world more unpredictable, than we might think.



The Key of the Book ⁽³⁾

- He addresses some of life's most sensitive questions:

Where can we find satisfaction?

Who is really in control?

What does it take to be content?

How do we live wisely?

- The key question:

What profit has a man from all his labor in which he toils under the sun?



The Key of the Book ⁽⁴⁾

- Much of the time God is left out of the discussion. But when He is introduced, everything changes. “Life under the sun” becomes “life from the hand of God.”
- This exploration of life’s meaninglessness outside of knowing God thus becomes an invitation to know Him.

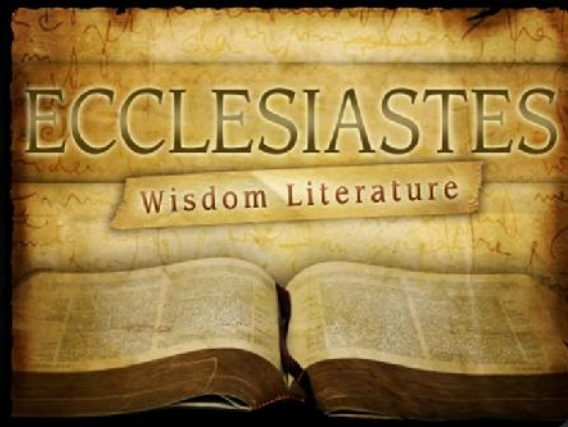


The Key of the Book ⁽⁵⁾

- In its own unique way, Ecclesiastes is ultimately an introduction to the One who came that we might have life abundantly, the Lord Christ Himself.
- It highlights the dilemma voiced by Peter but faced by all of us: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” *John 6:68*.



Ecclesiastes Overview



Chapter 1: Why is it meaningless? ⁽¹⁾

1. *The shortness of life on earth*: “One generation passes away, and another generation comes; But the earth abides forever” 1:4
2. *Nothing satisfies*:
“The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor the ear filled with hearing” 1:8
3. *Nothing is new*:
“That which is done is what will be done,
And there is nothing new under the sun” 1:9



Chapter 1: Why is it meaningless? ⁽²⁾

4. *Everything will be forgotten:*

“There is no remembrance of former things,
Nor will there be any remembrance
of things that are to come by those who will
come after” 1:11



5. *Nothing can be corrected:*

“What is crooked cannot be made straight,
And what is lacking cannot be numbered” 1:15

Chapter 2: Where can we find fulfillment? ⁽¹⁾

1. *The failing of worldly pleasures:*

“Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure...Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun” 2:11



Chapter 2: Where can we find fulfillment? ⁽²⁾

2. *The end of the wise:*

“Then I turned myself to consider wisdom and
madness and folly” 2:12

“For there is no more remembrance of the wise
than of the fool forever, Since all that
now is will be forgotten in the days to come.

And how does a wise man die? As the fool!”

2:16



Chapter 2: Where can we find fulfillment? ⁽³⁾

3. *The loss of man's labor:*

- "For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it." 2:21
- "For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity" 2:22-23



Chapter 3: Everything has its time ⁽¹⁾

- *Everything is temporary:*

“To everything there is a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven: A time
to be born, And a time to die” 3:1-2

- *We live in a corrupt world:*

“Moreover I saw under the sun: In the place of
judgment, Wickedness was there; And in the
place of righteousness, Iniquity was there” 3:16



Chapter 3: Everything has its time ⁽²⁾

- *The necessity of the eternity:*

“He has made everything beautiful in its time.

Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end” 3:11



Chapter 4: No comfort! ⁽¹⁾

- *The tears of the oppressed and the power of the oppressor:*

“Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter—On the side of their oppressors there is power, But they have no comforter” 4:1



Chapter 4: No comfort! ⁽²⁾

- *The folly of the slack:*

“Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. The fool folds his hands And consumes his own flesh” 4:4-5



Chapter 4: No comfort! ⁽³⁾

- *The vanity of selfishness:*

“There is one alone, without companion:
He has neither son nor brother. Yet there
is no end to all his labors, Nor is his eye
satisfied with riches. But he never asks,
‘For whom do I toil and deprive myself of
good?’ This also is vanity and a grave
misfortune.” 4:8



Chapter 5: Wisdom in Worship ⁽¹⁾

- *Walk prudently with God:*
 - "...draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil" 5:1
 - "Do not be rash with your mouth,
And let not your heart utter anything
hastily before God" 5:2



Chapter 5: Wisdom in Worship ⁽²⁾

- *Trust in His justice:*

“If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them” 5:8

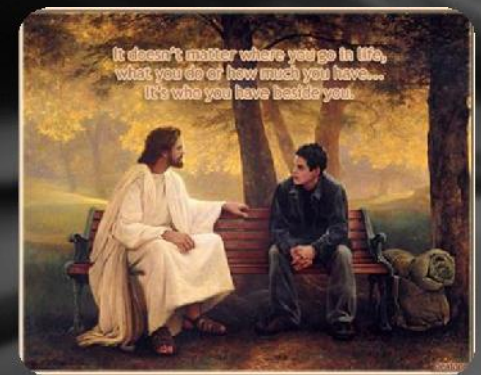


Chapter 5: Wisdom in Worship ⁽³⁾

- *Learn to be content:*

“Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; for it is his heritage”

5:18



Chapter 6: Lack of Satisfaction ⁽¹⁾

- *A fortune ruined by lack of power:*

"A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it." 6:1



Chapter 6: Lack of Satisfaction ⁽²⁾

- *A blessing not felt because of lack of contentment:*

“If a man begets a hundred *children* and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he”

6:3



Chapter 7: The wise preparation for eternity ⁽¹⁾

- *The better day:*

“And the day of death than the day of one’s birth; Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting” 7:1

- *Wisdom gives life:*

“For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, But the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it” 7:12



Chapter 7: The wise preparation for eternity ⁽²⁾

- *Walk modestly:*

“Do not be overly righteous,
Nor be overly wise: Why should you
destroy yourself?” 7:16



Chapter 8: The Wise Understands ⁽¹⁾

- *Wisdom helps our change:*

“Who is like a wise man?

And who knows the interpretation of a thing?

A man’s wisdom makes his face shine, And
the sternness of his face is changed” 8:1

- *The wise submits to authority:*

“Where the word of a king *is, there is* power;

And who may say to him, ‘What are you
doing?’ He who keeps his command will
experience nothing harmful” 8:4-5



Chapter 8: The Wise Understands ⁽²⁾

- *Why do men practice evil?:*

“Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”

8:11

- *The reward of the righteous:*

“Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him” 8:12



Chapter 9: The Limitation of Man's Wisdom ⁽¹⁾

- *Limited in discerning:*

"People know neither love nor hatred by anything they see before them. All things come alike to all" 9:1

- *Limited in knowledge:*

"For the living know that they will die;
But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten" 9:5



Chapter 9: The Limitation of Man's Wisdom (2)

- *Limited without God's help:*

"I returned and saw under the sun that, The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill" 9:11



- *Limited in expecting the time:*

"For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare" 9:12

Chapter 10: Beware of “Little Follies”! ⁽¹⁾

- *Little folly can ruin man's life:*

“Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment, And cause it to give off a foul odor; So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor” 10:1

- *Man is taken by his deeds:*

“He who digs a pit will fall into it,
And whoever breaks through a wall will be
bitten by a serpent” 10:8



Chapter 10: Beware of “Little Follies”! ⁽²⁾

- *Warning from immaturity:*

“Woe to you, O land, when your king *is* a child, And your princes feast in the morning!” 10:16

- *Warning from laziness:*

“Because of laziness the building decays, And through idleness of hands the house leaks” 10:18



Chapter 10: Beware of “Little Follies”! ⁽³⁾

- *Do not curse:*

“Do not curse the king, even in your thought; Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; For a bird of the air may carry your voice, And a bird in flight may tell the matter” 10:20



Chapter 11: Invitation To Work ⁽¹⁾

- *Even with no reward:*

“Cast your bread upon the waters,
For you will find it after many days” 11:1

- *Without fear or hesitation:*

“He who observes the wind will not sow,
And he who regards the clouds will not
reap” 11:4

- *When young or old:*

“In the morning sow your seed, And in the
evening do not withhold your hand” 11:6



Chapter 12: The Conclusion ⁽¹⁾

- *Remember your Creator from the beginning:*

“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’” 12:1



- *The return:*

“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it” 12:7

Chapter 12: The Conclusion ⁽²⁾

- *The conclusion of the whole matter:*
“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.” 12:13-14

