

# Ecclesiastes 1-2 –13 July 2023

## “Futility Of Living Under The Sun”

### Introduction

#### Read Vs 1

1. Written by King Solomon (935 AD)
2. The title comes from the phrase ‘the words of the preacher or philosopher’ meaning ‘*one who convenes or speaks at an assembly*’

#### Read Vs 2-3

1. Vanity – empty or unsatisfying
2. Job vs Ecclesiastes
  - a. Book of Job shows the unsatisfying nature of a life of stress & trial
  - b. Eccl shows the SAME unsatisfying nature of Solomon’s splendid life
  - c. BOTH show the futility of life ‘under the sun’ – (or without God)
  - d. Sceptics use this book b/c it can contradict other Bible books b/c of its scope under sun

**\*Today we’ll see 4 ways that life is futile w/o God**

# **#1 – We see the futility of the creation cycles (Chap 1:4-11)**

Read Chap 1:4-7

1. Man, the sun, the atmosphere and the waters all continually cycle thru
  - a. Who misses last sunrise, when there's another?
  - b. Who misses last storm, when there's more rain?
  - c. Who misses the last wave, when there's another?
  - d. What does the last man matter, when there's another?
2. What "on earth" could possibly matter seeing as everything is always replaced by the next?

Read Vs 8

1. There's constant effort just to do the same old unsatisfying things everyone has always done

Read Vs 9-11

1. We just invent new ways to do the same old things but there're no new goals

## **#2 – We see the futility of human deeds (Chap 1:12-18)**

Read Chap 1:12-13a

1. Notice he wasn't searching for 'something to believe in', but was searching 'what is done'
2. King Solomon was in unique position to check
3. Solomon asks, 'Could there be fulfillment in learning all there is to know'?

Read Vs 13b-15

1. All of man's great deeds were still not satisfying
  - a. They're crooked (twisted, not right)
  - b. They have gaps (places can't be numbered)
2. "God" seldom mentioned & only in the generic

Read Vs 16

1. Solomon communed w/ his own heart regarding what he should go experience next
2. Problem: he didn't commune w/ God's heart

Read Vs 17

1. He thought in experiencing all the wonderful & indulgent issues of life he could be fulfilled, wrong

2. BOTH ends of the spectrum Solomon found to be vexation of spirit or ‘grasping at the wind’

Read Vs 18

1. The more we come to understand this sin-cursed world, the more we see its troubles

### **#3 – We see the futility of pleasure & wealth (Chap 2:1-11)**

Read Chap 2:1-3

1. Solomon sought pleasures that would satisfy
2. He literally set out to party & indulge the flesh
  - a. ‘If I could just laugh, THEN I’d be satisfied’
  - b. Read Rom 13:13-14 – Shows the emptiness of partying
  - c. Drinking in my 20s & I couldn’t have a good time b/c I knew of God & saw its vanity
  - d. Read Luke 21:34 – We can actually become so dull we’re not seeing signs of Christ’s return

Read Vs 4-6

1. Solomon also sought after literally building a kingdom – men still do this today

2. ‘If I could just create an environment of wonderful peace & joy, THEN I’d be satisfied’

Read Vs 7-9

1. Solomon also sought to surround himself w/ all great possessions
2. ‘If I could just have the latest & greatest toy or iPhone, THEN I’d be satisfied’
3. Notice, “his wisdom remained in [him]”
  - a. He was indulging intentionally as a test
  - b. He set out to intentionally find satisfaction

Read Vs 10-11

1. Solomon literally went after anything & everything looking for something to fulfill & profit
  - a. Profit is when you put something in & then get more back out
  - b. Read Mar 8:36 – This is the great value of a soul!
2. We’re all serving a passion, seeking a profit!

## **#4 – We see the futility of passing on wisdom (Chap 2:12-23)**

Read Chap 2:12-14

1. Solomon saw wisdom as better than folly or silliness, yet only difference between wise & fool is that the wise can see the emptiness of life!

Read Vs 15-17

1. Names of the vast majority of people who have every lived will never be spoken on earth again
  - a. Whether great people or vile – nothing they did changed the world
2. We spend great energies & emotion in tasks that just get torn down by the next generation

Read Vs 18-21

1. Working to create anything in wisdom is vain  
b/c it's just passed on to another that may be a fool

Read Vs 22-23

1. We put out very real effort t& labor yet receive nothing for it

## Conclusion under the sun – Find something you enjoy (Chap 2:24-26)

Read Vs 24-25

1. He advises how to make best of a bad situation
  - a. Just enjoy what you put your hand to
2. The expression “eat & drink” used 5 times
3. Under the sun we should find something to do that we can genuinely enjoy.
  - a. Key is, *we'll find everything unenjoyable, until we find eternal purpose in Jesus Christ*
  - b. Saving souls from eternal death to eternal life!
  - c. Growing relationships that will last forever!

Read Vs 26

1. So the opposite is true also, the foolish person's labor reward is turned over to the wise at his death
2. This constant redistribution of the world's resources is unsatisfying & empty

## Conclusion

So as Solomon examines life ‘under the sun’ or without God, he sees...

- 1. The futility of creation’s cycles**
- 2. The futility of human deeds**
- 3. The futility of material prosperity**
- 4. The futility of passing on wisdom**

...and then says ‘just find something you enjoy’!

What could that possibly be!?!?

\*Whatever it is, has to be eternal AND valuable

This could only be a life in communion w/ our God!!

\*Read II Pet 1:3-4 – Rejoice that God’s rescued us from this corrupt world

\* Read Eph 2:5-7 – Eternally come to enjoy God’s grace towards us!

\*Read I Tim 4:8 – Live w/ godlike-ness – become more like Him

*There is futility living under the “sun”*

*But there is fulfillment living in the “Son”!!!*