

## **Ecclesiastes: Finding Purpose (1)**

Jesse Berthold / January 10, 2024

Ecclesiastes: Finding Purpose

### **Finding Purpose**

**Ecclesiastes 1:1–18 (NLT)** <sup>1</sup> These are the words of the Teacher, King David’s son, who ruled in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> “Everything is meaningless,” says the Teacher, “completely meaningless!” <sup>3</sup> What do people get for all their hard work under the sun? <sup>4</sup> Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes. <sup>5</sup> The sun rises and the sun sets, then hurries around to rise again. <sup>6</sup> The wind blows south, and then turns north. Around and around it goes, blowing in circles. <sup>7</sup> Rivers run into the sea, but the sea is never full. Then the water returns again to the rivers and flows out again to the sea. <sup>8</sup> Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content. <sup>9</sup> History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. <sup>10</sup> Sometimes people say, “Here is something new!” But actually it is old; nothing is ever truly new. <sup>11</sup> We don’t remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now. <sup>12</sup> I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race. <sup>14</sup> I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind. <sup>15</sup> What is wrong cannot be made right. What is missing cannot be recovered. <sup>16</sup> I said to myself, “Look, I am wiser than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. I have greater wisdom and knowledge than any of them.” <sup>17</sup> So I set out to learn everything from wisdom to madness and folly. But I learned firsthand that pursuing all this is like chasing the wind. <sup>18</sup> The greater my wisdom, the greater my grief. To increase knowledge only increases sorrow.

**2 Chronicles 1:7–12 (NLT)** <sup>7</sup> That night God appeared to Solomon and said, “What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!” <sup>8</sup> Solomon replied to God, “You showed great and faithful love to David, my father, and now you have made me king in his place. <sup>9</sup> O LORD God, please continue to keep your promise to David my father, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth! <sup>10</sup> Give me the wisdom and knowledge to lead them properly, for who could possibly govern this great people of yours?” <sup>11</sup> God said to Solomon, “Because your greatest desire is to help your people, and you did not ask for wealth, riches, fame, or even the death of your enemies or a long life, but rather you asked for wisdom and knowledge to properly govern my people—<sup>12</sup> I will certainly give you the wisdom and knowledge you

requested. But I will also give you wealth, riches, and fame such as no other king has had before you or will ever have in the future!”

**1 Kings 11:6 (NLT)** In this way, Solomon did what was evil in the LORD’s sight; he refused to follow the LORD completely, as his father, David, had done.

**Verse 1-2 =** These are the words of the Teacher, King David’s son, who ruled in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> “Everything is meaningless,” says the Teacher, “completely meaningless!”

**Verse 2...** “Everything is meaningless,” says the Teacher, “completely meaningless!”

**Ecclesiastes 1:17 (NLT)** So I set out to learn everything from wisdom to madness and folly. But I learned firsthand that pursuing all this is like chasing the wind.

**Ecclesiastes 2:1 (NLT)** I said to myself, “Come on, let’s try pleasure. Let’s look for the ‘good things’ in life.” But I found that this, too, was meaningless.

**1 Kings 11:1–8 (NLT)** Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh’s daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. <sup>2</sup> The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, ‘You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods.’ Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway. <sup>3</sup> He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD. <sup>4</sup> In Solomon’s old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods instead of being completely faithful to the LORD his God, as his father, David, had been. <sup>5</sup> Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup> In this way, Solomon did what was evil in the LORD’s sight; he refused to follow the LORD completely, as his father, David, had done. <sup>7</sup> On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, he even built a pagan shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and another for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. <sup>8</sup> Solomon built such shrines for all his foreign wives to use for burning incense and sacrificing to their gods.

**LIFE LESSON: ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT THE WORLD CAN OFFER IS LIKE VANITY IN COMPARISON TO THE BLESSINGS OF GOD!**

**Verse 3** = What do people get for all their hard work under the sun?

**1 Kings 11:9–13 (NLT)** The LORD was very angry with Solomon, for his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. <sup>10</sup> He had warned Solomon specifically about worshiping other gods, but Solomon did not listen to the LORD's command. <sup>11</sup> So now the LORD said to him, "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants. <sup>12</sup> But for the sake of your father, David, I will not do this while you are still alive. I will take the kingdom away from your son. <sup>13</sup> And even so, I will not take away the entire kingdom; I will let him be king of one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, my chosen city."

**Verse 4** = Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NLT)** Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your **whole spirit** and **soul** and **body** be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

**James 2:26 (NKJV)** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

**Genesis 35:18 (NKJV)** And so it was, as her **soul was departing (for she died)**, that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

**1 Kings 17:22 (NKJV)** Then the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the **soul of the child** came back to him, and he revived.

**Revelation 6:9 (NLT)** When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony.

**Verse 4** = Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes.

**Verse 5** = The sun rises and the sun sets, then hurries around to rise again.

**Verse 6** = The wind blows south, and then turns north. Around and around it goes, blowing in circles.

**Verse 7** = Rivers run into the sea, but the sea is never full. Then the water returns again to the rivers and flows out again to the sea.

**Verse 8** = Everything is wearisome beyond description. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content.