

Ecclesiastes 01 - "Is Life Worth Living?"; Vanity or Victory; The Cycles of Life

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Ecclesiastes 1

I. Prologue (Eccl 1:1-11)

(1) Author (1:1)

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

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1 The words of the Teacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

(2) Thesis: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (1:2)

2 "Futility of futilities," says the Preacher, "Futility of futilities! All is futility."

2 "Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity."

2 "Utterly pointless," says the Teacher. "Absolutely pointless; everything is pointless."

2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

(3) Vanity illustrated in daily life (1:3-11)

(A) Impersonal, natural, trans-generational cycles (1:3-7)

3 What advantage does a person have in all his work Which he does under the sun?

3 What advantage does man have in all his work Which he does under the sun?

3 What does a man gain from all of the work that he undertakes on earth?

3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

4 A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever.

4 A generation goes and a generation comes, But the earth remains forever.

4 A generation goes, a generation comes, but the earth remains forever.

4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

5 Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; And hurrying to its place it rises there *again*.

5 Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; And hastening to its place it rises there *again*.

5 The sun rises, the sun sets, then rushes back to where it arose.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

6 Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns.

6 Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns.

6 The wind blows southward, then northward, constantly circulating, and the wind comes back again in its courses.

6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

7 All the rivers flow into the sea, Yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, There they flow again.

7 All the rivers flow into the sea, Yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, There they flow again.

7 All the rivers flow toward the sea, but the sea is never full; then rivers return to the headwaters where they began.

7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

(B) Nothing is new to man's experience (1:8-11)

8 All things are wearisome; No one can tell *it*. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing.

8 All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell *it*. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing.

8 Everything is wearisome, more than man is able to express. The eye is never satisfied by seeing, nor the ear by hearing.

8 All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 What has been, it is what will be, And what has been done, it is what will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.

9 That which has been is that which will be, And that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.

9 Whatever has happened, will happen again; whatever has been done, will be done again. There is nothing new on earth.

9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

10 Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new"? It has already existed for ages Which were before us.

10 Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new"? Already it has existed for ages Which were before us.

10 Does anything exist about which someone might say, "Look at this! Is this new?" It happened ages ago; it existed before we did.

10 Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

11 There is no remembrance of the earlier things, And of the later things as well, which will occur, There will be no remembrance of them Among those who will come later *still*.

11 There is no remembrance of earlier things; And also of the later things which will occur, There will be for them no remembrance Among those who will come later *still*.

11 No one remembers those in the past, nor will they be remembered by those who come after them.

11 There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

II. Solomon's search for meaning in wisdom, hedonism, prudent living, and labor (Eccl 1:12—2:26)

(1) Pursuit of wisdom (1:12-18)

(A) Search for wisdom in worldly activities (1:12-13a)

12 I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

12 I, the Preacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

12 I, the Teacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

12 I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

(B) Futility of worldly activities (1:13b-14)

13 And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom about everything that has been done under heaven. *It* is a sorry task with which God has given the sons of mankind to be troubled.

13 And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. *It* is a grievous task *which* God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with.

13 I dedicated myself to using wisdom for study and discovery of everything that is done under heaven. God uses terrible things so human beings will struggle with life.

13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

14 I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is futility and striving after wind.

14 I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.

14 I observed every activity done on earth. My conclusion: all of it is pointless—like chasing after the wind.

14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

(C) Paradoxes cause the futility of worldly activities (1:15)

15 What is crooked cannot be straightened, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

15 What is crooked cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted.

15 What is crooked cannot be made straight; what is not there cannot be counted.

15 That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

(D) Futility of Solomon's search for wisdom (1:16-18)

16 I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge."

16 I said to myself, "Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge."

16 I told myself, "I have become greater and wiser than anyone who ruled before me in Jerusalem—yes, I have acquired a great deal of wisdom and knowledge."

16 I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

17 And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know insanity and foolishness; I realized that this also is striving after wind.

17 And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind.

17 So I dedicated myself to learn about wisdom and knowledge, and about insanity and foolishness. And I discovered that this is also like chasing after the wind.

17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief; and increasing knowledge *results in* increasing pain.

18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge *results in* increasing pain.

18 For with much wisdom there is much sorrow; the more someone adds to knowledge, the more someone adds to grief.

18 For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.