

# **BIBLICAL**

A STUDY THROUGH THE SCROLLS OF SCRIPTURE

# **REVIEW**

**Ecclesiastes: The Meaning of Life Under the Sun/Son**



# Introduction

**Words of Wisdom from a Wise Professor...Sang Bok (David) Kim**

**I studied Philosophy in Bible college from Dr. Kim. He started the first class of the semester with a question:**

**“Why is the biblical world view the best world view?” and followed...**

**“Are you even convinced it is the best world view?”**

**Ecclesiastes, it could be argued, is the most philosophical book of the Bible.**

# Introduction

What is your “world view”? or said another way, “How have you answered life’s big questions?”

- Who am I? .....IDENTITY
- How did I get here? .....ORIGIN
- Why am I here? .....PURPOSE
- Do I, and does life matter? .....MEANING
- What is right or wrong? .....MORALITY
- How do I know what I know? .....BASIS OF INVESTIGATION  
[epistemology]
- What is real? .....NATURE OF BEING  
[metaphysics]
- What is worthwhile or beautiful? .....INVESTMENT OF SELF [axiology]

# Introduction

**The Theme of Ecclesiastes is often said to be “Life under the sun”**

**It is Life under the sun but with a lot of clouds of confusion and short-sightedness overhead. But fortunately rays of light break through the clouds every once and again.**

**Even though Solomon is likely the wisest of men the world has ever known, he goes about trying to answer life’s philosophical questions for most of the book as merely a man with only the resources of a man.**

**True, his resources of wisdom, and wealth, and experiences, and peaceful rule gave him more advantage than anyone else possibly in the history of the world, but still his point-by-point conclusions in his philosophical journey is “life is vanity.” ....But there are some insights to learn**

# Author:

Solomon – He is “Qoheleth”, “one who convokes or addresses an assembly; a Preacher”

- By Jewish Talmudic tradition.
- By internal evidence  
“the son of David, King in Jerusalem”  
his exploration of pleasure, 2:1-3; impressive accomplishments, 2:4-6;  
unparalleled wealth, 2:7-10
- The book was likely written late in his life as a reflection of the choices and outcomes of a life-long pursuit to answer life’s big questions.

## Theme:

- The book is “a report of a diligent quest for purpose, meaning, and satisfaction in human life. The Preacher poignantly sees the emptiness and futility of power, popularity, prestige, and pleasure apart from God.”  
-- *Talk Thru the Bible, Boa and Wilkinson*
- The word “vanity” occurs 37 times; and the phrase “under the sun” occurs 29 times.

## Key Verses:

**Ecc. 2:24**, “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This, also I saw, was from the hand of God.”

**Ecc. 12-13-14**, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: ‘Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or evil.’”

# A Snapshot Overview of the Psalms:

- A Philosophical Proposition
- Philosophical Pursuit by Experience, Empirical Observation, Rationalism, sometimes Divine wisdom
- God is not forgotten, just obscured
- Clarity of Conclusion at the end

		Thesis: "All Is Vanity"		Proof: "Life Is Vain"				Counsel: "Fear God"							
		1:1	1:11	1:12	6:12	7:1	12:14								
Divisions	Introduction of Vanity	1:1	1:3	1:4	1:11	1:12	2:26	3:1	6:12	7:1	9:18	10:1	12:8	12:9	12:14
	Illustration of Vanity														
Topics	Declaration of Vanity					Demonstration of Vanity				Deliverance from Vanity					
	Subject					Sermons				Summary					
Place	Universe ("Under the Sun")														
Time	c. 935 B.C.														



## The Thesis that “All is Vanity,” 1:1-11

- The cycles of nature and history just keep bringing us back to where we started –Life is futile and perplexing.

# The Proof that “All is Vanity, 1:12-6:12

- The Identity of the Preacher and the Resources available for his Pursuit:
- Wisdom
- Laughter, hedonism, and wine
- Works, women, and wealth
- God has appointed the times, seasons, and conditions of life for mankind, so we should fear Him.
- Rays of Sunshine: 2:24-26a; 3:12-13, 22;

# The Proof that “All is Vanity, 1:12-6:12

- Inequities in life: oppression, unrewarded work, fickle relationships.
- Emptiness of self-styled, performance-based religion.
- Emptiness in wealth
- Emptiness in the experiences of life—especially the hardships
- Rays of Sunshine: 5:18-20

## Wisdom for Living with Vanity, 7:1-12:14

- Wisdom shows us that not all things are equal; some things are preferred such as wisdom over foolishness. 7:1-14
- Wisdom protects us, provides for us, and gives us perspective...but we often miss these blessings. 7:15-29
- Wisdom calls us to respect authority but know they are limited and often wicked. Ch. 8
- Wisdom is for yourself and often rejected by others. Still choose wisdom, Ch. 9

## Wisdom for Living with Vanity, 7:1-12:14

- Many maxims and wise words from the Preacher on various topics. Ch. 10-11
- Rays of Sunshine: 8:12, 15; 9:7-9; Chapter 12

# Jesus in the Ecclesiastes:

- The One Shepherd...

Who places eternity in our heart  
(3:11)

Who leads us to a right view from  
God's vantage point.

Who gives us "gifts" of joy,  
meaning, and satisfaction as we  
"fear God and keep His command-  
ments."

Life Under the Sun	Life Under the <i>Son</i>
1:3 What advantage is work under the sun	He who has begun a good work in you will complete <i>it</i> until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6)
1:9 Nothing new under the sun	Therefore, if anyone <i>is</i> in Christ, <i>he is</i> a creation . . . all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17)
1:14 All deeds are vanity under the sun	Be steadfast, immovable . . . knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58)
2:18 The fruit of labor is hated under the sun	Being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10)
6:12 Man is mortal under the sun	Whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16)
8:15 Pleasure is temporary under the sun	For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for <i>His</i> good pleasure (Phil. 2:13)
8:17 Man cannot discover God's work under the sun	Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known (1 Cor. 13:12)
9:3 All men die under the sun	God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son (1 John 5:11)
9:11 Strength and speed under the sun	God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty (1 Cor. 1:27)
12:2 Life under the sun will cease	That you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13)

## Applications:

- Like our study in Job, so with Ecclesiastes, it is good to wrestle with what we believe and why we believe it. It is part of how God made us, and He can handle it when we wrestle with him.
- Wrestle with the full complement of resources. Yes, our experiences, our intellectual capabilities, and relationships can help us, but we need revelation from God to clarify our perspective.
- Be very cautious of making how we feel about something our ultimate measure of what is real. Those feelings are real to us in an introspective sense, but they are not the ultimate reality. “Set your minds on things above...”

# Applications:

- CAUTIONS TO US WHO LIVE IN AN INFORMATION AGE:
- There is a lot of information that is trash and corruption that amuses, confuses, distracts, and diminishes us from thinking about things deeply. Don't make tweets, reels, memes, vlogs, and social media your primary diet for heart and soul.
- There is good stuff out on the internet. Don't settle till you find it, because you will have to search for it. Start with your Bible—start by asking God for it. James 1:5