

There are three impactful questions about life that are answered in the Scriptures:

- (1) Where did I come from?
- (2) Where am I going?
- (3) What am I supposed to do?

Background to Ecclesiastes

1. The Title: Ecclesiastes (from Hebrew Qohelet) means teacher or preacher ("The words of the preacher...") 1:1

The Septuagint called it "Ekklesiastes from ekklesias (assembly) - which lends the thought that this was a sermon

2. The author is assumed to be Solomon
 - "son of David" (1:1) king over Israel in Jerusalem (1:12)
 - incredible wisdom (1:16) and wealth (1 Kg 10:1-8, 14-27)
 - (a) is this autobiographical
 - (b) is this written generically
 - (c) when does it fit in his life (Neh 13:26)

What do we know about Solomon?

Describe the homelife of Solomon:

- How was it different from David's?

How did Solomon become king?

What accomplishments did Solomon achieve?

3. The purpose of the book: WHAT'S THE POINT??

The proposition: "What advantage does man have in all his work which he does under the sun" (1:3) repeated in: 2:11; 3:9; 5:11, 16; 6:8, 11)

- the book is painfully honest
 - his approach is materialistic and often leaves him depressed and confused
- His conclusions are based upon his observations and what he attempts
From his observations he learns perspectives (2:17; 4:2-3; 5:18; 9:9)

What are the problems with the Observational approach that Solomon took?

Key Words:

Vanity—37x

Life under the sun—28x

Wisdom— 26x

I have seen—15x

The repeated expression, "vanity of vanities" (1:2; 12:8) means what?

- What other examples in the Bible of repeated expressions?
- Life under the sun indicates what perspective?

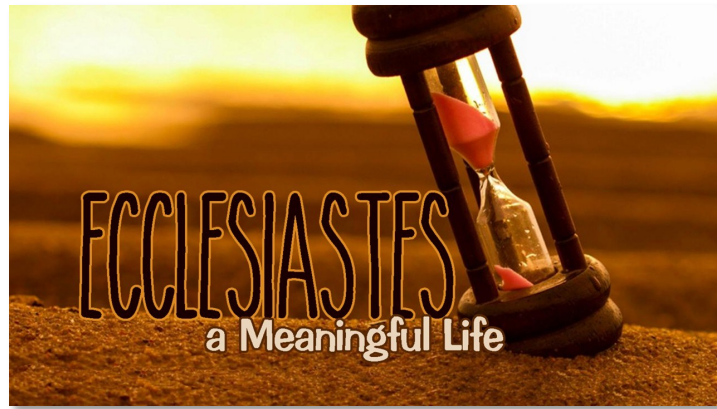
It is commonly thought that Solomon chases life from a secular standpoint. It is not until the very end that he realizes that fearing God is what life is all about. This is not an accurate assessment of the book (12:13).

3:14 ...that men should fear Him

5:7 Rather, fear God

7:18 ...for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them

8:12 ...still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly



For Next Time:

1. Read Ecclesiastes 1
2. Starting with Ecc 1:13-2:17 count the number of "I" that you find. _____
What do you make of that?
3. As Solomon moves through the cycles of life (1:4-11) three conclusions surface:
 - (a) 1:4-7 Nothing _____
 - (b) 1:8 Nothing _____
 - (c) 1:9-11 Nothing _____
4. What does "striving after the wind" mean (1:17)?
5. Why does increasing wisdom and knowledge bring more pain and grief?(1:18)
6. What is the "grievous task" God has given to man (1:13)?
7. Why is it grievous?