

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

NOTHING NEW (ECCLESIASTES 1-2)

Memory Verse: "The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil." Ecclesiastes 12:13-14



1. Circle of Life: Endless

- Ecclesiastes 1:2
- Hebrew word for vanity is **hevel** (forty times) with full meaning of empty, vapor, breath: existing for a moment
 - Ecclesiastes 1:3-4
- The phrase **under the sun** occurs thirty times and shows the earthly perspective
 - Ecclesiastes 1:9
- Humanity invents new things, but their evil heart continues.

2. Knowledge and Pleasure cannot save or satisfy us

- Ecclesiastes 1:16-18
- Education can answer many questions, but it cannot answer why good people suffer or evil people prosper. Wisdom without God (knowledge) leads to futility and foolishness.
 - I Corinthians 1:21
 - Ecclesiastes 2:9-11
 - Solomon pursued pleasure in nine different areas; yet he was empty with vanity.
 - John D. Rockefeller was asked "How much money is enough?" and he answered "Just a little more."

3. Death is a Given, while Joy is a Gift: Long days do not equal full life!

- Ecclesiastes 2:16,18
- Death happens to everyone, and all your accomplishments are left to someone else. Without Christ, we all are working for the man, who is a slave to the devil!
 - Hebrews 9:27
 - Ecclesiastes 2:24-26
- Any joy comes from the hand of God, not our accomplishments or pursuits
 - James 1:17
 - Psalm 16:11

Baptism + Church-wide Cookout at Victory Mountain Camp on August 9th,
12:45-4PM, 3594 Youth Camp Rd, Sophia, NC

Questions:

1. Read Ecclesiastes 1:2; Psalm 39:4-6; James 4:13-17; Isaiah 40:6-8. Why is **hevel** an appropriate picture of life? What things have proven more temporary than you expected? How should life's brevity affect your priorities? Why does recognizing life's vapor-like nature increase rather than diminish our dependence on God? What temporary pursuits have distracted you from investing in eternal things?
2. Read Ecclesiastes 1:3,9; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 11:13-16; Philippians 3:20. What does the repeated phrase "under the sun" teach us about interpreting Ecclesiastes? How does earthly perspective differ from a heavenly one? Why does life seem frustrating when eternity is ignored? How does Christ transform our understanding of work, suffering, and success? What areas are you focusing "under the sun" rather than "above the sun"?
3. Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11; Luke 12:13-21; Mark 8:36; 1 Timothy 6:6-19. Why couldn't wisdom, pleasure, and possessions satisfy Solomon (Qoholeth)? Which modern substitutes for God resemble Solomon's experiment? Why do wealth and pleasure lose their power to satisfy? What is the difference between enjoying God's gifts and idolizing them? What achievement or possession are you tempted to believe will finally satisfy you?
4. Read Ecclesiastes 2:14-17; Psalm 90:12; Hebrews 9:27-28; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. How does the certainty of death reshape our priorities? Why does the resurrection change the Teacher's bleak observations? How should the certainty of death influence our daily decisions? What does it mean to abound in "the work of the LORD," knowing that our labor is vain (1 Corinthians 15:58)? If you truly believed that your days are numbered, what would you change in the way you spend your time, money, and relationships?
5. Read Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; Psalm 16:11; John 15:1-11; Philippians 4:11-13; James 1:17. Where does true joy come from? Why does Ecclesiastes present joy as a gift from God's hand rather than something we achieve? How does abiding in Christ deepen our enjoyment of ordinary blessings? In what ways can gratitude guard us from making good gifts into ultimate things? What gifts from God have you taken for granted? How can you cultivate a heart that receives daily joys with thanksgiving and worship?