

ECCLESIASTES

- Definitions:

- *Vanity* – The root word is Vain

- worthless; futile; useless; empty;

- of no lasting value; temporary

- *Vexation of spirit* – grasping for the
- wind; reaching for
- that which has no
- substance



Definition: “All”

- whole quantity, aspect or extent of a particular group or thing

The all Solomon declares to be vanity is everything created in the beginning that is discerned with man’s senses.

A general overview of the book:

- Chapters 1 – 3 Vanity of human pursuits and a time for every purpose and work
- Chapters 4 – 7 Oppressions and unfairness of life
- Chapters 8 – 11 Finality of life and what is good
- Chapter 12 The flow of mans existence and Grand Conclusion

- Q. To whom is the Preacher speaking, who's his audience?
- Ans. Mankind
- Q. What is the purpose for the Preacher writing this book?

- Ans. To determine what it was that man should do
- all the days of his life.

- Vs 3 “What profit hath a man of all his labor which he
- taketh under the sun?”
- Vs 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.”

- When he says “all things”
 - Q. What were some of the things to be investigated?
 - What does man seek after for fulfillment?
-
- * power; * popularity; * prestige
 - * pleasure; * wealth; * property
 - * collectibles

Vanity of vanities saith

- The Preacher
-

- Vanity Of Vanities
 - All Is Vanity
- And Vexation of the spirit

Q. What would you say is the tenor of the book?

Vs 14 “I have seen all the works that are done under the

- sun; and behold, all is *vanity and vexation of spirit.*”
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- “Therefore I hated life...” vs 2:17
- “Yea, I hated all my labor...” 2:18
- “Therefore I went about to cause my heart to *despair*
- of all the labor which I took under the sun” 2:20

- The preacher demonstrates growth and understanding as
 - he continues on his quest. So what may be viewed as a very
 - negative and depressing view at the start of the book will
-
- evolve into a realistic understanding by the end of the book.

- Is there a happy ending to the story?
- No but there is HOPE and contentment for those who
- **“Fear God”**

- **Rev. 21:4 “And God shall wipe away all tears from their**
- **eyes; and there shall be no more death,**
- **neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there**

- **be any more pain: for the former things have**
- **all passed away.”**

Chapter 1

- Key points:
1. all things are full of labor and
 2. there is no remembrance of things that

are, with those that shall come after
 3. that which is crooked cannot be made
straight
 4. getting wisdom and knowledge only brings
grief and sorrow

- All things are full of labor!
 -
 - The same labor is repeated over and over, round and
-
- around {the Lion King's Circle of Life} there doesn't come a time when one can say ok,
 - *IT'S DONE; It's Finished*

- Vs 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.”

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

- After the Preacher has considered wisdom and knowledge,
 - what was his informed opinion?
-

- **“I perceived that this to is vexation of spirit.”**

- And anyone who gives himself over to perusing wisdom
- and knowledge will find only grief and sorrow.

- **Chapter 2.**

- **Key Points: 1. The futility of ones labor**

- **2. The evil disease**

- **3. Eat, drink, and be merry**

- Vs. 1 “I said in my heart, **Go to now, I will prove thee**
 - **with mirth,** (that which amuses or causes one to laugh) **therefore**
 - **enjoy pleasure: and behold, this also is vanity.”**
-

- Did the preacher say not to go and have fun?
- Phil. 4:4 “**Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say,**
- **Rejoice.”**
- Rm. 12:12 “**Rejoice in hope;....”**

- Vs. 2 “I said of laughter, It is madness: and of mirth,
- **What does it accomplish?”**
- As men so often do, when they give themselves to pleasure,

- they turn to beer, wine, drugs. Why do you suppose they
- call it “recreational drugs”?
- “After a hard week, I just need to go out and enjoy life and
- unwind. I’m not an alcoholic, I can hold my beer!”

- Vs. 3 “I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine,
 - yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and
 - to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that
-
- good for the sons of men, which they should do
 - all the days of their life.

- What is Solomon trying to get his hands around? What is the
- real question?

- The preachers turns his pursuits in another direction to see
 - what is good for man to do all his life; the following are things
 - that many people pursue in an attempt to find fulfillment.
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- **Vs. 4-9 “I made me great works;**
- **I built me houses;**
- **I planted me vineyards;**
- **I made me gardens and orchards,**
- **with trees in them of all kinds of fruit;**
- **I made me pools of water;**
-

- I got me servants and maidens, and had servants
- born in my house;
- I had great possessions of great and small

- cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:
- I gathered me also silver and gold, and peculiar
- treasures of kings and of the provinces:
- I got me men singers and women singers, and
- the delights of men, musical instruments, and
- that of all sorts.

- - **Q.** Do you see anything significant in these last verses?
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- I built
- I planted
- I got
- I, I, I, I, etc. etc. etc..
- Dan. 4:30 “....Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for
- the house of the kingdom by the might of my
- power, and for my majesty”

Jesus said, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consist not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.” Lk. 12:15

- Col.3:5 “Mortify therefore your members, which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which if idolatry.”
-
-
-

- Matt. 19:21-22 “Jesus said unto him, If you will be
- perfect, go and sell all that you have, and
- give it to the poor, and you will have

- treasure in heaven: and come follow me.
- But when the young man heard this, he
- went away sorrowful: for he had great
- possessions.”

For man to seek fulfillment and purpose in life from “things”
is truly grasping for the wind.

To make sure no one could say he didn't have all the facts to

- make his decision, he repeats what he has already stated in 1:16.

- Vs. 10 “And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not
- from them, I withheld not my heart from any
- joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this

- was my portion of all my labor.”
- Q. What was the preacher’s conclusion?

- Vs 11 “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had
- wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do:
- and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit,

- and *there was* no profit under the sun.”

- 1 Pet. 3: 10-11 “*For he that will love life, and see good*
- *days, let him refrain his tongue from evil,*
- *and his lips that they speak no guile:*
- *Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him*
- *seek peace, and ensue it.*”

- **How** does a man get started on such a futile path?
 - Who's to blame?
 - When does this path start?
-

- What do parents stress?
- **Matt. 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there your heart**
- **will be also.”**

- Vs. 12 “And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and
 - madness, and folly: for what can the man do that
 - comes after the king? even that which has been
-
- already done.” (1: 9)

Vs. 13 “Then I saw that wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness.”

- The preacher will have much to say about the wise man
- verses the fool as we proceed farther.

- Q. Is it better to be a wise man rather than a unwise man?

- Vs. 14 “The wise man’s eyes are in his head; but the

- fool walks in darkness:

- (*Eph. 5:15* “*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.*”)

- and I myself perceived also that one event happens to them all.”

- Solomon comes to the heart of the problem,
 - **death is the great equalizer of men.**
 - So what is the point?
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- Vs. 15 “Then said I in my heart, As it happens to the
- fool so it happens even to me; and why then
- was I more wise? Then I said in my heart, that

- this also is vanity.”
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- The preacher begins on a theme that he focuses on and
 - laments about a number of times. 2:16; 2:21; 3:19,20;
 - 5:15,16; 8:8; 9:2-6; 9:10; and 12:7
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- **Gen. 3:19 “In the sweat of thy face shall you eat bread, till**
- **you return unto the ground; for out of it you**
- **were taken: for dust you are, and unto dust**
- **shall you return.”**

- **Rm.5:12b “....and so death passed upon all men, for all**
- **have sinned:”**
-

- Vs 16 “For there is no remembrance of the wise man
- more than the fool for ever;....”

- Q. What seems to bother the preacher?

- Q. Do men worry about these things today?

- So what was the preacher’s response to the situation?

- Vs 17 “Therefore I hated life; because the work that is
 - wrought under the sun is grievous unto me; for
 - all is vanity and vexation of the spirit.”
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- Vs 18 “Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken
- under the sun: (what was his problem)
- because I should leave it unto the man that shall
- be after me.

- Do we ever think how important we are to our world?
 - Are we really? Consider Marshall Read; was he an important man? Was he important at his job? Was what he had important?
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- What was Solomon's problem; what if the man after him were a fool, **yet shall he have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored and wherein I had showed myself wise under the sun. Vs 19b**

- Vs 21 “For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom
 - and in knowledge, and in skill, yet to a man
 - that hath not labored therein shall he leave it
-
- for his portion.

- Q. How did Solomon feel about this?

- **“This also is vanity and a great evil.”**

- Q. What is really the problem?

- Ans: Lack of control

- What was the original question?
 - What profit was there for a man from all his labor that he did under the sun all the days of his life? Paraphrase vs. 22
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- **Vs 23 “For all his days are futility, and his travail grief; yea his heart takes not rest in the night: This is also vanity.”**

- **Job 5:7 “Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward”**

- **Job 14:1 “Man that is born of woman is a few days, and full of trouble”**

- Since this is true, what does the preacher conclude?

Vs 24 “*There is nothing better* for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor; This I saw, that it was from the hand of God”

The Preacher makes a preliminary conclusion about the state of man’s existence. Is the Preacher right?

- **Lk. 12:19-20** “And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou has
 - much goods laid up for many years; take
 - thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.
-

- **But God said unto him, Thou fool, this**
- **night thy soul shall be required of you:**
- **then whose shall those things be, which**
- **you have provided?”**

- Vs 25 “For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment
- more than I”
- Vs 26 “For God gives to a man that is good in his sight

- wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner
- He gives travail, to gather and to heap up, that
- He may give to him that is good before God.
- This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

- Up to this point, Solomon has been investigating and striving
 - to find answers to the question “What is good for man to
 - do all the days of their lives?”
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- All he has seen and done has not given him any satisfaction or
- any real answers to the question.

- Once we get into Chapter 3, we will see a glimmer of true
- understanding rear it’s head.