

# Ecclesiastes: A Study in Living with Purpose

## *All is Vanity (Ecclesiastes 1 & 2)*

### What is Ecclesiastes? (1:1-2)

- A book of deep wisdom based on the personal experience of its author
  - The Preacher: One who speaks to the assembly
    - Hebrew: *Qobeleth*
    - Greek: *Ecclesiastes*
  - Son of David, king in Jerusalem: Solomon
- It is a book that is best understood when one knows the end from the beginning (Ecc 12:13)
- The book's theme: Life apart from God is unsatisfying
  - Vanity (*hebel*): “vapor” or “breath”; fleeting
    - Lacking in lasting effect

### The Monotony of Life (1:3-11)

- Despite all our efforts and how important we think we are, the world will keep spinning without us
- There is a seemingly never-ending pattern of life
  - Both for humanity & Creation (see Rom. 8:19-21)
- This thought ought to humble us but not depress us

### Solomon's Wisdom & Experience (1:12-2:23)

- Solomon shares where he gets his wisdom from:
  - Study (1:12-18)
  - Reflection on his life experiences (2:1-26)
    - The pursuit of pleasure (2:1-11)
    - The pursuit of wisdom (2:12-17)
- God had promised Solomon wisdom (2 Chron 1:8-12)
  - But that wisdom was gained through life experience and reflection
  - The gifts of wealth & power were means by which God taught Solomon wisdom of their insignificance
  - “Chasing after the wind”

### Solomon's Conclusions (2:24-26)

- Solomon concludes that enjoying the fruit of one's labor is wisdom (v. 24-25)
  - A true gift from God
- Thus, pleasing God is what produces lasting joy (v. 26)

### So What?

- Do we find our meaning in our relationship with God?
- Or are we pursuing fleeting things that leave us empty?

*Meditation Verse:* Ecclesiastes 12:13

*Scripture Reading Challenge:* Ecclesiastes 2 & 2 Chronicles 1:14-17