

**The Wisdom Literature:
Ecclesiastes- Ecclesiastes 1:1-12:14**

"Vanity of vanities....all is vanity" sets the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes. The key words gives us insight into the book also. In the book **"man"** is used forty seven times, **"labour"** thirty-six, **"vanity"** thirty seven times. The key phrase is **"under the sun"** which occurs thirty times.

The writer of this book called himself, **"the Preacher" 1:1,2** and is understood to be Solomon. He said he was the son of David and King in Jerusalem.

This is a book that records Solomon's search for the meaning of life apart from God. He withheld nothing from himself this world has to offer. He came to the conclusion that meaning apart from God does not exist.

Ecclesiastes is a book of philosophy about life. Most of us do not have the resources to conduct the search that Solomon conducted. If we did however we would come to the same conclusion about life if we were honest in our interpretation.

I- The Search:

We must remember this man had all the fame in the world. (see **1 Kings 10:6-7**) Many of us think that if we could be famous this would satisfy us. Solomon had this and it did not add meaning to his life. You will also recall that he had 700 wives and 300 concubines and found that sensual pleasure could not give meaning to life. The world makes this mistake today.

Lets look at some verses to see all the things of the world that the Preacher found did not add value to life.

1- His own wisdom. 1:16-17

2- Entertainment. 2:2

3- Alcohol. 2:3

4- Houses. 2:4

5- Gardens and vineyards. 2:4-5

6- Servants and maids. 2:7

7- Wealth. 2:7-8

8- Farming. 2:7

9- Music. 2:8

How many of these have not only the world but also Christians though would satisfy if only they had them. Most of us also will not believe in our heart what Solomon found is true unless we experience it for ourselves.

II- His Conclusions:

4:1-3 says he returned and considered life. He concluded that life is full of sorrow and without purpose without God. **9:11-12** seems to give the mood of the book as one of disappointment and discouragement in the first ten chapters. He concluded that life is uncertain. He also sees that life is also very unjust as seen in **7:15; 8:14, 10:6-7.**

III- Life's Purpose Discovered:

After finding there is no purpose that last and gives meaning in the things of the world he gave us a purpose of life that carries great weight because of all he considered. The purpose of life was found to be two fold by Solomon.

First, it is to find God early in life. **11:9-10; 12:1-2.** Many men have testified about a wasted life not serving God for many years after their conversion. Serving God adds meaning to life.

Second, it is to fear God and keep His commandments throughout life. **12:13-14.** These verses sum up the entire purpose of life upon this earth. The purposes that God created man for

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were to worship, serve and to have fellowship with Him. When we do these it fulfills our lives. While life with God is no easy task life without him is void of its true meaning.

Application to Life's Steps:

- 1- There is nothing new that we can try that has not been tried before.
- 2- Most of the things we place importance on in life are really futile and vanity.
- 3- We are deceived by our own lust of the flesh into thinking that things can satisfy.
- 4- Life is full of sorrow and unjust.
- 5- The true purpose of life is to serve God. This is where the meaning of life is found.

Retracing our Steps:

- 1- The author of Ecclesiastes?

- 2- What are the key words in the book? _____

3- What is the key phrase? _____

4- What all did Solomon try attempting to find meaning? _____

5- What is the purposes of life he discovered? _____

**The Wisdom Literature:
Song of Solomon- Song of Solomon 1:1-8:14**

The book we call the Song of Solomon is one that was not to be read by the young men of Israel because it was so graphic. The interpretations of this book are two-fold. First it is a book that expresses the pure marital love that God has ordained between a man and woman in the confines of marriage. Second, the spiritualized meaning is the love of Christ for His bride the church.

The primary characters in this story are the Shepherd stranger who was the King himself. The other character is a Shulamite girl.

Solomon owned a vineyard in the hill country of Ephraim. (8:11) The vineyard was rented to a family of

sharecroppers with a mother two sons and two daughters. The oldest girl was the Shulamite girl who possessed great beauty. Here brothers worked her hard so she had little time for personal grooming (1:6). She was baked brown from the sun as she worked.

Solomon disguised as a lowly shepherd came to the vineyard and wins the heart of the girl. He promised he would someday return to her.

During his absence she dreamed of him two times. In 3:2-4 she dreamt they are married and she awakes to find him gone from their bed. She goes searching for him.

In **5:4-5** she dreamt that he came to her door but when she opened it he is gone. She goes searching for him and was mistreated by the guards of the city and the watchman who tore her veil. She pleaded with the women of Jerusalem to help her find him so she could tell him of her love for him. She discovered his location recorded in **6:2-3**.

I- The King Come to Town:

One day the little village got the news that King Solomon was coming to town. The lovesick maid was not interested in his coming because she is looking for her shepherd. King Solomon however sent word that he wanted to see her.

In **6:8** she was told of the number of other women that Solomon had but that she is his choice one. The one that he loved. He promised to take care of her sister. (**8:8-9**) The Shulamite girl rode to the palace of Solomon to live.

II- The Bride According to the Bridegroom:

The thing that makes this book so lovely and also misunderstood is the description that the bride and groom have for each other. I remind us all God said the marriage bed is undefiled and pure. It is the world that has taken the pure love of a man and a woman and made it into something ugly.

Solomon described the bride in very graphic terms. She is the most beautiful woman in the world (**1:8**). Se is like a bouquet of flowers in a garden (**1:14**) with eyes as soft as doves (**1:15**). She was a lily among thorns (**2:2**) with teeth as white as a sheep's wool (**4:2**). Her lips were made of honey (**4:11**) and her breast like twin gazelles feeding among the lilies (**4:5**). He describes her as a fountain of water (**4:15**).

III-The Bridegroom According to the Bride:

She described Solomon in much the same ways. He was as a swift young gazelle leaping and bounding over the hills (**2:9**).

5:10-15 is the description of him from her point of view. He was the fairest of ten thousand (**5:10**) with wavy hair on a head as pure gold (**5:11**).

His eyes were as doves (**5:12**) and his cheeks sweet as spice (**5:13**). His arms were bars of gold with topaz and his body as bright ivory with jewels. His legs were like pillars of marble.

Application to Life's Steps

- 1- God created the love of a man and woman to be pure and undefiled.
- 2- Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.
- 3- Inner beauty runs deepest, outer beauty is only skin deep and temporary.

Retracing our Steps

- 1- The shepherd of the Song of Solomon was? _____

- 2- What were the dreams the Shulamite girl had of her shepherd while he was gone? _____

- 3- How did the bride describe the bridegroom? _____

- 4- How did the bridegroom describe the bride? _____

