

Ecclesiastes 1-2 Study Guide

TITLE: *What is Meaningless?* (Taken from Ecclesiastes 1 & 2)

- *Everything is Meaningless - Nature, Wisdom and Wealth* (Chapter 1)
 - The teacher lived in a time that was full of frustration and ‘vanity’. (1:1-3)
 - As a result, there is a search for truth and stability in history & nature. (1:4-11)
 - The teacher realizes:
 - That humans live completely with existential experiences and really are not able to find any meaning in those experiences. (1:12-13)
 - That he is not able to see God’s full plan. (1:14-15)
 - Frustration because the teachers thinking is earthbound. (1:16-18)
- *On Pleasures or Unlimited Wealth* (2:1-11)
 - The teacher concerns himself with materialism and sensual pleasures. (2:1-3)
 - The teacher planted fruit trees, gardens and builds buildings. (2:4-8)
 - The teacher is really in a position to buy everything he wants. (2:9-11)
- *On Wisdom and Folly* (2:12-16)
 - Wisdom is more valuable than folly. (2:13-14)
 - Both the wise man and foolish man will be forgotten in the future. (2:15-16)
- *On Toiling & Wealth* (2:17-26)
 - The teacher found no reason and purpose in his labor. (2:17-23)
 - Faith and right thinking – Seek more pleasure in life. (2:24-26)
 - Life day in and day needs to be enjoyed in pleasing god. (2:24-26)

Key Verses:

Ecc. 1:3 *“This verse explains the consequences of earthly futility for mankind himself...If the earthly realm is subject to vanity, there is no hope of finding ultimate gain or satisfaction from its resources alone.”* [Eaton 1983, 57]

Ecc. 1:12-18 *“The failure of wisdom to satisfy secular life.”* [Eaton 1983, 61]
“The wisdom of which the teacher writes is human, secular wisdom...everything we can observe in this world is pointless in itself. It goes nowhere.” [Pitkin and Ricker 1983, 30]

Ecc. 2:26 *“The preacher shows how the enjoyment of v. 24 comes about: by living so as to please God and by receiving his gifts. Three are itemized.”* [Eaton 1983, 75]
They are wisdom, knowledge and happiness.

Key Verses that Deal with Vanity or Meaningless Things:

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 14; 2:1, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 26