

VANITY, VANITY, ALL IS VANITY - OR IS IT?
(Solomon’s Guide to Enjoy Life & Stay Off the Dead-End Streets)

I. SOLOMON’S INTRODUCTION (1:1-11)

A. The BACKGROUND. (1:1-3)

1. The *TITLE* is _____ which means the _____.
2. The *DATE* of this book is approximately _____ because Solomon likely wrote this book shortly before his death.
3. The *GENRE* of this book is that it is considered _____ literature along with Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Song of Solomon.
4. The *WRITER* is _____ who was the ____ king of Israel. (1:1,12) This was probably written ____ in his life, explaining a spiritual mid-life crisis he experienced earlier when he departed from fellowship with the Lord to worship other gods and do his own will with great negative repercussions. Can you relate personally or with your children?

***** The SCOOP on SOLOMON *****

- 1) Solomon {Jedidiah - 2 Sam. 2:25} was the birth child of _____ and _____. (2 Sam. 12:24)
 - 2) Solomon began to reign united Israel at the age of 18 and ruled for ____ years. (1 Kings 11:42, 970-930 BC)
 - 3) Solomon came to know and trust the Lord at a young age and was probably taught the WOG by his such greats as his father, David, and the prophet, Nathan. In doing so, Solomon eventually wrote the Song of Solomon in his _____, Proverbs in _____, and Ecclesiastes when he was _____.
 - 4) Solomon began his reign with _____, asking God for _____ to discern and do God’s will as a king, and God gave him wisdom, riches, and honor as an able administrator, builder, inventor, etc. (1 Kings 3)
 - 5) Solomon’s various downfalls occurred when he walked in _____, disobeyed the WOG, and trusted in his horses, riches, own wisdom, etc. (Deut. 17:14-20; 1 Kings 10:21-28; 11:1-8)
 - 6) Solomon’s greatest achievement was the building of the 1st _____. (1 Kings 6-8)
 - 7) Solomon’s birth line would eventually be the birth line of _____. (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Matt. 1:6,16)
- Principles to remember: Your potential and success in life is not ultimately due to your _____, _____, or _____, but your _____ as expressed in your teachability and dependence upon the Lord. (1 Samuel 2:30; James 4:6) In addition, a good start does not guarantee a good finish and vice-versa. (1 Cor. 15:58)

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5. The *MISUNDERSTANDINGS* of this book are many such as ...

- a. it promotes HEDONISM, where pleasure through self-indulgence is the highest goal. This is refuted by _____.
- b. it promotes ASCETICISM, where a life of self-deprivation is encouraged. This is refuted by _____.

- c. it promotes a **PESSIMISTIC** view of life with much self-disillusionment. This is refuted by _____. Actually, Ecclesiastes advocates a life of _____ and _____ in life but is only found with a right relationship with God from a biblical viewpoint. (John 10:10)
- d. it shouldn't have been included in the _____ of Scripture. Yet it was embraced by the Jews as Scripture, read at the Feast of Jubilee, and included in the OT Canon. (2 Tim. 3:16; Ecc. 12:11)
6. The **MESSAGE** of Ecclesiastes is that while God designed life to glorify Him and be enjoyed in relationship with Him, **APART FROM A _____, VERTICAL, _____ RELATIONSHIP WITH _____, MAN IS _____ AND LIFE IS _____**. Walt Kaiser writes, "Life, in and of itself, even in God's good world with all its good, God-given gifts, is unable to deliver meaning and joy when it is appropriated in a piecemeal fashion and apart from knowing and believing God. Life, in and of itself, is unable to supply the key to the questions of identity, meaning, purpose, value, enjoyment, and destiny. Only in coming to know God can one find the answers to these questions." (Coping With Change, pg. 26)
7. The **AUDIENCE** was designed to be the **WHOLE WORLD**, not just the Jews, but especially the Gentiles, which explains why the names of **YAHWEH**, the **LAW**, and **ABRAHAM** are missing from the text. (Ecc.11:9, 12:1) What can we learn to apply to our Romans 1 culture?
8. The **KEY WORDS** of Ecclesiastes are:
- _____ (1:2) - empty; without real purpose or meaning
 - _____ (1:3) - benefit; value; lasting advantage
 - _____ (1:3) - toilsome hard work
 - _____ (1:3) – a horizontal and human perspective of life
 - _____ (1:14, 17) – frustration; without satisfaction
9. The **KEY VERSES** are: _____, _____, _____, and _____.
10. The **MEANS** of fulfilling his purpose in writing Ecclesiastes is to use words like _____ (reflections that stick you about the meaningless of life without God) and _____ (tent stakes of biblical truths that give you a divine viewpoint perspective on life) – 12:11
11. The **OUTLINE** of Ecclesiastes { adapted from Jim Berg }
- The **PROLOGUE** (1:1-3)
 - The **DISCOURSES** (1:4-12:12)
 - The Secret of Pleasure in Life (1:4-2:26)
 - The Secret of Providence in Life (3:1-5:20)
 - The Secret of Prosperity in Life (6:1-8:15)
 - The Secret of Perseverance in Life (8:16-12:12)
 - The **EPILOGUE** (12:13-14)
12. The **CONCLUDING THOUGHT**: Ecclesiastes will teach us that life, in and of itself, is unable to supply the key to the questions of identity, meaning, purpose, value, enjoyment, and destiny. Only in coming to know and trust in the true God through Jesus Christ can one begin to find answers to these questions.