



The Sun Also Ariseth



Ecclesiastes 1:1 – 5

~ Our Spiritual Safari will begin our examination of another new path in the Old Testament in this report; a book that is totally different from any other book of the Bible. We lingered with Paul in a Roman Mamertine prison as long as we could stay in Philippians; but we had to say good-bye in our last report. Paul was pressing towards the mark and the high-calling of God; and we must press forward now, too. We left many things unsaid in Philippians; mainly because I recognize my utter incompetence and inability to fully extract and teach the truths that are contained in that epistle — but also because a personal relationship with the Lord isn't defined by man's words alone – certainly not by my words. Well, we're going to continue to search for Christ on every page of Scripture as we begin in Ecclesiastes.

Life without God is meaningless, friends. We saw that truth in Philippians, but we're going to see it again here from an altogether different perspective. I attempted to keep our feet on the ground in Philippians, but it was impossible not to end up with our heads in the clouds, spiritually speaking. Either way, this writing collection of King Solomon will sure bring us down to earth with a resounding *THUD*; I promise you that. God has a timely and very specific message for mankind in this section of Scripture — and it is utterly contrary to the thinking of this world.

I see Ecclesiastes quoted profusely in religious circles; but it's always misused — cited without so much as an inkling of awareness of what it all really means. Understanding the purpose of any book of the Bible is important to obtaining the correct interpretation of it; and that is no more evident anywhere else in Scripture than here. Human philosophy, apart from God, must inevitably reach the conclusions that Solomon reaches in Ecclesiastes; therefore, there are many statements here which will seem to contradict the remainder of Scripture — and it is so easy to twist Ecclesiastes out of shape and into meaninglessness by handling it



improperly, too. So, we must be super-duper careful when presenting this book. Further, most cults use Ecclesiastes entirely out of context to build false doctrines. It should further frighten us to know that Ecclesiastes has long been the favorite Bible book of atheists, such as Volney and Voltaire, who quoted from it profusely in history – although not so much today with philosophers — because there aren't any. Even so, all of that makes this a potentially extremely dangerous book of the Bible.

Man's knowledge is increasing rapidly in our technological age; but our ability to comprehend said information is diminishing *more* rapidly. That explains why the modern-day atheist generally hangs around Deuteronomy and Numbers while laughingly, puerilely, and ignorantly accusing God of slavery, killing and raping, and all manner of absurd foolishness. They're simply not interested in the truth of any matter. The atheist doesn't even seem to have the intellectual capacity anymore for a discourse in *denying* truth; frankly, their exhaustively defeated arguments are no longer worthy of thoughtful consideration.

Either way, man has tried and failed to live and be happy without God throughout the ages, and this book shows the absurdity of that attempt. Solomon, the wisest of men, tried every field of endeavor and pleasure known to man; his conclusion is, "*all is vanity.*" Vanity means empty, worthless and futile; it also encompasses self-love, self-admiration, self-absorption, self-regard, egotism, narcissism — conceit. All of those things precisely describe the natural man in the world today.

On the one hand, God showed Job, a righteous man, that he was a sinner in God's sight. In Ecclesiastes, on the other hand, God shows Solomon, the wisest man, that he was a fool in God's sight. There are a whole bunch of doctors, lawyers, judges, pastors and Bible teachers — and other worldly educated people — who could learn many things that they do not know or understand in this study. So many people are trying to feign intellectual ability and desperately desire to appear highly educated; when in the sight of God, the natural man is a straight up fool. That's not easy to accept. Ecclesiastes is the writing of a man who has everything materially imaginable — but who has now discovered his life is empty and

meaningless. Many people today have wealth, and all of the things anyone could want in this life – yet they’re bored to tears – many times to suicide – and they are never content. They run around like lost puppies doing absolutely nothing. You and I are going to see ourselves in this book of the Bible, friends; make no mistake about that. And, when we do, I can assure you that you are not going to like what you see.

In Ecclesiastes, as Solomon is trying to derive satisfaction from the things of this world, we learn that a life without Christ can never be satisfied; even if we possess the whole world — and everyone and everything in it — the heart is simply too large for such a small collection. In the Song of Solomon, we learn that if we turn from the world and set our affections on Christ, we cannot fathom the infinite preciousness of His love — there, the Object is infinitely too large for the heart! Ironically, the physical universe is way too large for little man. Interestingly, Ecclesiastes means “*preacher*” or “*philosopher*,” but this book is the dramatic autobiography of King Solomon at a time when he was as far away from God as he could possibly be. A right relationship with God, in any age, in the way He commands, brings the only abiding satisfaction of life. What a difference between the man “*under the sun*” and the man “*in Christ*” — seated in the Heavenlies — far above all suns.

Solomon pursued every avenue, experience, and interest known to man in this life in an attempt to find satisfaction and fulfillment: science and nature; wisdom and philosophy; pleasure; materialism; living in the moment; fatalism; religion; wealth and morality – we’re going to thoroughly exhaust those topics in Ecclesiastes. Solomon, as king, tried it all and he had full freedom to carry on his experiments. Naturally, he was not hindered by financial or political limitations. He could — and did — go the limit in every direction — away from God. The result was “*vanity*” — pure, abject emptiness. Frustration met him in every area of life; and Solomon was dissatisfied with the things he was discovering. The conclusions in Ecclesiastes are human — apart from a few specifically stated divine revelations — and are made by the “*man under the sun*.” Ecclesiastes teaches the ultimate end of man’s efforts apart from God.

At this point, let's define "*inspiration of Scriptures*" — and clarify what we mean when we say the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Inspiration guarantees the accuracy of the words of Scripture — but not always the thought expressed. The context should be considered and attention paid to the person who made the statement, and under what circumstances. For example, in the betrayal of Christ by Judas, the record of the event is inspired, but the act of Judas was *not* God-inspired — no, it was definitely satanic. Keep in mind that the conclusions to each experiment of Ecclesiastes are fully human — they are not God's inspired truth. This is the "*man under the sun*" who hath "*said in his heart*" — a man that is entirely separated from the "*Sun of righteousness*" — the Lord Jesus Christ — the Son of God.

There is a danger in pressing the words of the Bible into a self-serving announcement of scientific fact. It is curious that Solomon should use language entirely consistent with discoveries such as evaporation and storm currents. Some have said that Redfield's theory of storms is explicitly stated in Ecclesiastes. Without taking such ground, we ask, who taught Solomon to use terms that readily accommodate facts? Who taught him that the movement of the winds, which seem to be so lawless and uncertain, is ruled by laws as positive as those which rule the growth of a plant; and that by evaporation, the waters that fall on the earth are continually rising again, so that the sea never overflows?

Ecclesiastes chapter twelve verse six is a striking poetic description of death. The '*silver cord*' describes the spine, the '*golden bowl*' the basin which holds the brain, the '*pitcher*' the lungs, and the '*wheel*' the heart. Without claiming Solomon was inspired to foretell the circulation of the blood, twenty-six centuries elapsed before Harvey announced it. For a simple mind such as mine, it is a remarkable fact that the language Solomon uses exactly suits the facts — a wheel pumping up through a pipe to discharge through another. Let us pray for wisdom, judgment and discernment now....

1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

~ Most people think Solomon was given wisdom in terms of spiritual insight – but I don't think so. The wisdom Solomon was given was that of political economy and governmental rule to reign over the nation Israel. I'm sure King Solomon did an outstanding job in that capacity; but he had no idea how to rule himself or his household. Israel saw an era of peace that they had never known before under Solomon's rule; and the nations of the world came to study under Solomon's wise teaching. Solomon gave a testimony with the temple he had built and the altars throughout the land where sacrifices were made for sinners. That was all new to the nations round about Israel. Unfortunately, the way I read the record, Solomon was all but devoid of spiritual understanding.

Vanity also speaks of wasting one's life with no purpose or goals. Many people exist day-to-day like animals, or a bird in a self-kept cage. If you know anything about the "jet set" crowd, you know they're the most miserable, unhappy group of people roaming to and fro on the earth. And they roam a lot of it. They have it all, but they have nothing, either. Nothing is permanent doctrine with them. Their lives are like broken records that play the same tired songs; and, then one day, they realize it has been played one time too many. Their entire already mundane existence becomes aimless and hopeless. That's what King Solomon discovered as he looked down from his magnificent throne onto the nation he ruled. It suddenly looked like an expensive and fancy bag full of nothing.

When we were in the Book of Proverbs, Solomon gave us gems of beauty and wisdom. Here, in Ecclesiastes, he hands us globules of filthy perverted foolishness! Proverbs gave us a green light to live by; now, the red light is up, the cross-guard is down, and there are bells and whistles going off everywhere. We need to be guarded in prayer as we proceed through Ecclesiastes. Next, in the Song of Solomon, we'll discover true love. So, Solomon brings us wisdom, foolishness, and love – all three in a row – and he was an undeniable expert in each area. Interestingly, no man has ever

played the fool more thoroughly than the wisest man that ever lived, King Solomon. Solomon is the riddle of Revelation, the paradox of Scripture, the wisest man and the biggest fool – all at once! Well, I caution you not to come down too hard on Solomon until you hear what God has to say about you and me in this book of Ecclesiastes....

4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

~ Ecclesiastes is the “*Alice in Wonderland*” of the Bible; a Disneyland where Solomon rode all the rides until they either made him sick, or bored him to tears. Solomon is now the man we see today walking and talking under the sun about worldly things and earthy interests. Everyone is trying to get something or another out of life. Everyone is seeking something special within their group of commoners. The world puts on a huge production — a dazzling show with a feast befitting kings — and they call it a good time — until it’s over, and they have to do it all again on an even larger scale. Well, Solomon tried it all, friends; and the dregs we have lingering in his writings about those experiences from the cup of life is a note of dissatisfaction and bitterness.

I would remind you that Ecclesiastes records that which takes place under the sun. This is not over the moon, and it sure isn’t in the Heavenlies. Men in the scientific community have spent entire lifetimes studying the laws of nature; yet this book brought us most of those natural laws a *LONG* time ago. Well, the earth is permanent, and it has stability – but *Y-O-U* are as temporary as a December rose! Naturally, the continuity of mankind is maintained only through births of humans. None of us were here one hundred fifty years ago; and none of us will be here one hundred fifty years from today, either. Some of us may not be here tomorrow! Man is wholly transitory. If you view this world in terms of this life only, then man is the most colossal failure in God’s universe. We’re really nothing but temporary grave keepers. The world is just a huge graveyard — and it can never get

enough dead. The laws of nature are as fixed as the material universe itself is, too, by the way.

So, our Spiritual Safari leaves off in this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with a solid introduction to the Book of Ecclesiastes. The study of this book is definitely going to add a dimension and dynamic to our understanding of man and of a life that is, overall, disappointing and discouraging. Man just doesn't happen to be all he thinks he is. The sun goes down and the sun also rises; and many people find that ridiculously monotonous. People are traveling the world today as they never have before; because they are simultaneously searching for something new, while running away from the boredom of a meaningless life. Man apart from God is the ugliest picture that can possibly be painted; and that picture is what Solomon is going to present in Ecclesiastes — in all of its gory and lurid detail ~

]]]]]]]]