

ECCLESIASTES 1

- Ecclesiastes 1 is the introduction to the whole book, the words of the Preacher, his sermon, and right away the Preacher makes it clear what we need to wrestle with as people living in this world: everything is meaningless

- That word, “vanity” is used more than 30 times throughout the book, and it literally means “breath,” or “vapor”
- We have to remember that this refers to life “under the sun” (3), that is, life in this created world

- By telling us that everything is meaningless, God tells us something that is full of meaning
- When the Preacher says, “all is vanity,” he states a truth that is not in vain, so we will discover something essential about life under the sun
- God tells us what is meaningless ultimately so that we will discover what isn't

- The idea of gain is much deeper than money or wealth
- We don't only work for money, food, and clothes, we work to find a reason, a purpose, a point to our lives with what we do and who we are

- Yet, as v. 4 tells us, a generation goes and comes and only the earth remains forever
- A generation is the cycle of people being born and people dying, and our life cycles are just short breathes in the grand scheme of things

- Even creation itself is discontent with the monotony of its existence
- As v. 7 tells us, all the streams keep running into the sea, but it never gets full

- And none of this is new, as vv. 9-10 tell us, there is nothing new under the sun

- In the last part of the introduction, the Preacher relates his own personal experience
- The Preacher is most likely King Solomon, King David's son, who was the last king to rule over a united Israel
- Solomon, near the end of his life, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes down what he has learned for our benefit

- If we honestly examine this life there are only two options: either there is a God who created us, who put this desire for meaning and purpose within our hearts, and meets it, or there is no God and nothing matters

- The frustration of this world should drive us to one who can actually make a difference
- Ecclesiastes 1 does not call for that response yet, that happens in ch. 12

- The reality of this life should crush us and then drive us to Christ
- By repenting of all the false ways we seek salvation we are made new creations in Christ
- We will still have to live life under the sun, but now we do so with God's approval and his help

- Jesus goes further than Solomon can or ever could
- Jesus stands under the sun with us, looks us in the eye, and says “take heart, for I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)