

Wind Chasers Beware

Ecclesiastes 1



Wisdom Literature

- While other civilizations shared in wisdom literature, the major difference is the Hebrew wisdom writings acknowledged one God, denying materialism and [the worship of many gods.]
- 2 Types of Wisdom Literature: Didactic (Practical/Teaching) and Philosophical/Pessimistic (Critical/Reflective/Questioning).
- The goal of wisdom is a proper relationship with **YAHWEH.**

Wisdom Focus

- Didactic wisdom literature advocates the development of prudential habits, skills, and virtues. The aim is to develop moral character, personal success and happiness, safety, and well-being. Proverbs is an example of this type.
- Philosophical/Pessimistic wisdom literature delves deeper into issues facing mankind. It portrays the emptiness and folly of the search for insight and understanding apart from God. Job and Ecclesiastes are examples of this type.

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

Ecclesiastes 1:1

Consider the Source

- Advice is only as good as the one giving it. Only 2 ways of learning something: Personal experience or 2nd hand.
- Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. (See 1 Kings 3:11-14)
- Solomon saw one of Israel's wealthier periods.



Check
the
Source!

Ecclesiastes 1:2-6

“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”

What advantage does man have in all his work which he does under the sun? A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; and hastening to its place it rises there again. Blowing toward the south, then turning toward the north, the wind continues swirling along; and on its circular courses the wind returns.

Ecclesiastes 1:7-11

All the rivers flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again. All things are wearisome; man is not able to tell it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing. That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new"? Already it has existed for ages which were before us. There is no remembrance of earlier things; and also of the later things which will occur, there will be for them no remembrance among those who will come later still.

Life's Revolving Door

- Everything is a futile attempt to impress.
- Nothing changes: Same stuff, different day!
- All will be forgotten.
- In short: Life stinks and then you die!



I, the Preacher, have been king
over Israel in Jerusalem.

Ecclesiastes 1:12

Consider the Source

- The king was the one reporting on his findings not a regular Israelite.
- Advice is only as good as the one giving it. Only 2 ways of learning something: Personal experience or 2nd hand.
- Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. (See 1 Kings 3:11-14)



Check
the
Source!

Ecclesiastes 1:13-15

And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with. I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind. What is crooked cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted.

Ecclesiastes 1:16-18

I said to myself, “Behold, I have magnified and increased wisdom more than all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has observed a wealth of wisdom and knowledge.” And I set my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly; I realized that this also is striving after wind. Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.

I Want to Understand

- Understanding the ins and outs of the world is complex, frustrating, and difficult.
- Everything we do is ultimately as pointless as trying to tame the wind!
- Progress and change is really a myth.



Check the Source

- Not all wisdom is actually wisdom.
- Wisdom is only as good as the source.
- Solomon was looking for wisdom and meaning from a wrong source.



Check
the
Source!

Forgotten Wisdom

- While other civilizations shared in wisdom literature, the major difference is the Hebrew wisdom writings acknowledged one God, denying materialism and [the worship of many gods.]
- "The fear of the Lord" distinguished Israel from other nations because they viewed wisdom and knowledge as coming from God. Thus knowledge of God had implications for [every aspect of Israel's life.]
- Solomon seems to have forgotten the true source for wisdom.

True Wisdom

- Basically the very practical art of being prudent, sensible, and skillfully insightful in order to have good success in life. The ability to discern and achieve order in order to steer through life earning favor and a good name with God and man is the goal. (Hill and Walton, 320)
- Only 2 paths of life in Bible, way of the righteous or the way of the wicked. (See Psalm 1 and Matthew 7:13-14)
- The goal of wisdom was a proper relationship with YAHWEH.



The Realization of Meaning

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.