



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Quest For Life's Meaning (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

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*Capitol Commission seeks to put a full time pastor/minister in each State Capitol. In Kansas, we host a weekly Bible study discussion, distribute copies of the notes, pray for and encourage those serving in government leadership (1Timothy 2:1-4). Our 2017 study is on wisdom, revealed in the Book of Ecclesiastes.*

### INTRODUCTION

The writer opens by introducing himself and listing his credentials: ***“Solomon, son of David, king in Jerusalem”***. The Book of Chronicles gives a summary of his accomplishments: ***“King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings were seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart. They brought articles of silver and gold, garments, weapons, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year”*** (2Chronicles 9:22-24). ***“The king made silver as common as stones in Jerusalem....”*** (Ecc. 9:27). **Why would a highly successful leader question the purpose or the meaning of life?**

### THE FUTILITY OF LIFE

***Ecclesiastes 1:2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”***

Solomon makes a harsh observation, calling life itself the ultimate vanity. We are merely a vapor (James 4:14). We came from dust and return to dust (Genesis 3:19). Naked we came and naked we depart (Job 1:21). Solomon employs a rhetorical phrase “under the sun” to contrast our transitory life with the much longer existence of earth (Ecc. 1:4). **Is your life fleeting?**

### SCIENCE: THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

Writing in 900BC, Solomon cites building blocks of scientific laws developed centuries later. These include the accuracy of sunrise/sunset, the water/evaporation cycle, and the trade winds/theory of storms which make weather forecasting possible (Ecc. 1:5-7). Perhaps he foresaw the coming of the information age (Ecc. 1:8)? **Are you finding peace through your much knowledge and growing wisdom?**

### PHILOSOPHY: THE QUEST TO UNDERSTAND

***“I, the Teacher, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. I applied my mind to seek and explore through wisdom all that is done under heaven. God has given people this miserable task to keep them occupied”*** (Ecc. 1:12-13). Note that Solomon shifted to first person to emphasize the results of his lifetime of searching. Have you also noticed that those who study philosophy tend to have a pessimistic view of life? They develop theories of life which are rejected by the next thinkers. The searches are on dead-end streets! Solomon concludes such effort is ***“vanity and chasing after the wind”*** (vv. 14, 17). **Do you know of some who were detached observers of life through much study and education?**

### LIFE ON COURSE

***Ecclesiastes 1:15 What is crooked cannot be straightened and what is lacking cannot be counted.***

A common definition of wisdom is the ability to solve the issues of life! Knowledge does not appear to limit strife, conflict, and wars. What is in the heart impacts a person's actions. What is needed is a new Spiritual nature (John 3:6). **Have you coached someone in starting over rather than patching up a damaged life?**

### SOLOMON'S CONCLUSIONS FOR LIFE

1. There is nothing innately good in man.
2. We cannot appreciate the elementary things in life, even eating and drinking without a personal relationship with the living God.
3. Only God, not things or even wisdom is able to give lasting satisfaction and joy.
4. God also gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please Him. <sup>1</sup>

### A PRAYER

Father God: Please draw me close as I grow in knowledge and wisdom. With my increased understanding, help me to be a faithful follower rather than a wise fool, filled with sorrow and grief. (Ecc. 1:16-18). I pray in Jesus' Name. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Walter Kaiser, Every Man's Bible Commentary. Unpublished