



# Ecclesiastes

Under the Sun

# The Books of Wisdom

# The Books of Wisdom

1 – 5 The Pentateuch, Law or Torah

6 – 17 The Historical Books

18. Job Suffering Well

19. Psalms Prayer & Worship

20. Proverbs Mainly Wisdom

21. Ecclesiastes **Under the Sun**

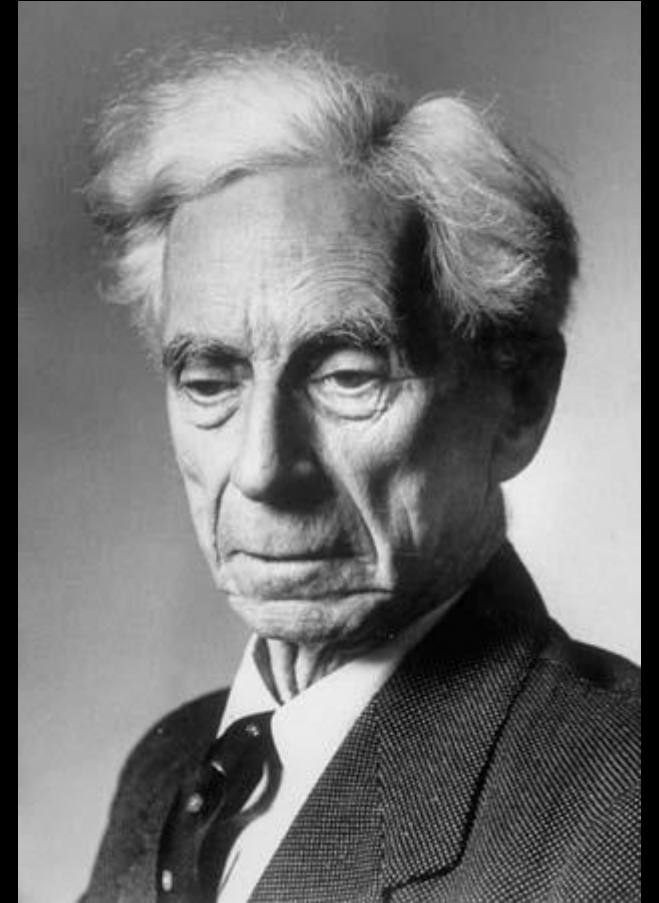
22. Song of Songs

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

*That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his ... hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; ... that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system ...*

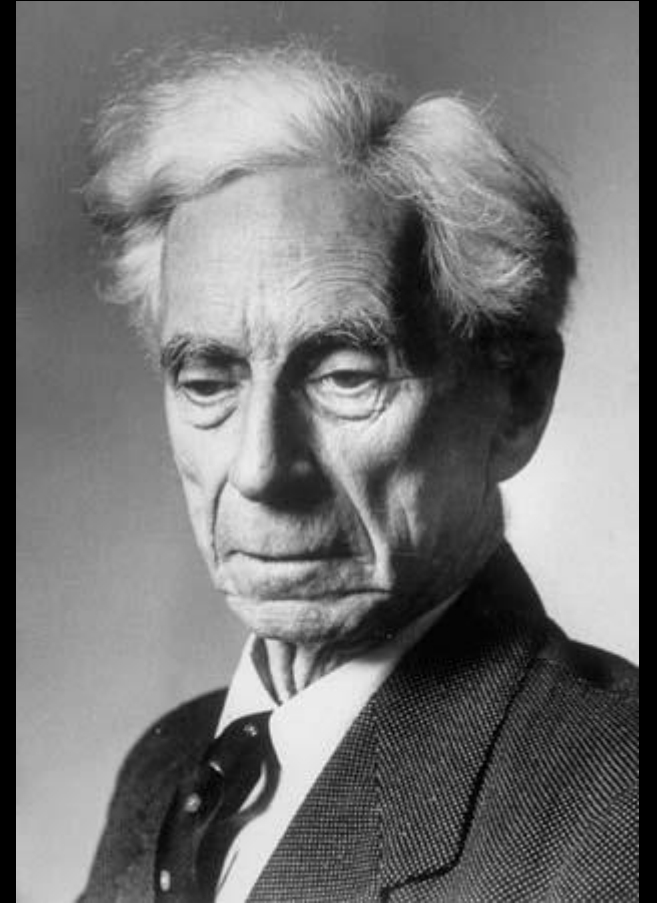
*– Bertrand Russell,  
British philosopher, logician,  
mathematician, historian, and social critic*



# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

*... and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins ... Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.*

*– Bertrand Russell,  
British philosopher, logician,  
mathematician, historian, and social critic*



# Ecclesiastes

# Under the Sun



*As we understand the world better, the idea that it has a transcendent purpose seems increasingly untenable. The old picture has been replaced by a wondrous new one ... It is a view in which the world stubbornly refuses to give us any direct answers about the bigger questions of purpose and meaning.*

*– Sean Carroll,  
theoretical physicist, Caltech*

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

- The term **Ecclesiastes** means “preacher” or “teacher” – one who addresses a gathering of people.
- Perhaps, late in life King Solomon brought his people together and read these words aloud to the assembly.



# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

- **Ecclesiastes** is the cry of a believer who has lost his way.
- Solomon is desperately searching for meaning in a life without God.
- Nowhere in this book does the Teacher use the personal name of God “Yahweh” revealed to the Jewish people.

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

## 1 Kings 11:4-6 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. <sup>5</sup> For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. <sup>6</sup> So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done.

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

- **Ecclesiastes** is in the Bible to show the pointlessness of all worldly pursuits.
- It shows that our happiness does not lie in any natural wisdom or knowledge, nor wealth, nor honor, nor power, nor pleasure, nor even in the external trappings of religion.

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

- The **key word** in the book is:

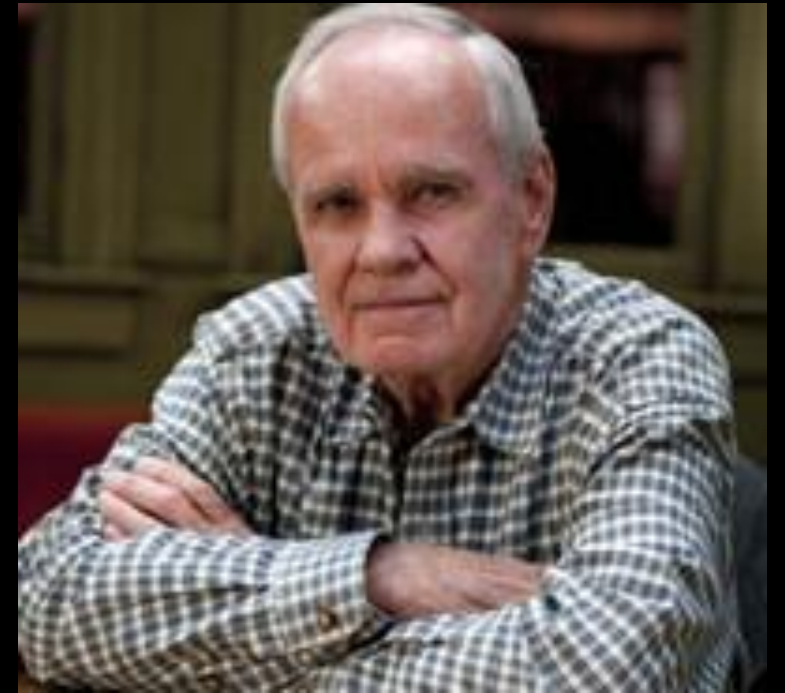
**Vanity – used 37 times**

Pointlessness, meaninglessness, uselessness, waste,  
nonsense

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

*The point is there ain't no point.*

– *Cormac McCarthy, American novelist,  
in No Country for Old Men*



# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

- The **key phrases** in the book are:

“under the sun” – 29 times

“on”, “upon”, or “to the earth” – 8 times

“under heaven” – 3 times

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

A Sample of **Ecclesiastes**:

- **Chapter 1** All Is Vanity
- **Chapter 2** Still More Vanity
- **Chapter 12** The End of the Matter

# Ecclesiastes Under the Sun

- Living for any one aspect of life is not sufficient, because every single aspect of life has been distorted by sin.
- It is only as we let Christ address every part of our lives that those parts attain their true meaning.



Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

# Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

- A life lived in service to the Lord gives meaning to other things – all these other aspects of our lives.

# Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

- A life lived in service to the Lord gives meaning to other things – all these other aspects of our lives.
- We do our work to glorify God as a calling from Him.
- Our wealth and resources are at His disposal.
- Our families are a ministry from Him.

# Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

- A life lived in service to the Lord gives meaning to other things – all these other aspects of our lives.
- We do our work to glorify God as a calling from Him.
- Our wealth and resources are at His disposal.
- Our families are a ministry from Him.
- Without Him, they all turn out to be meaningless in the end.

# Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

*You do not have to go outside the Bible to find the merely human philosophy of life. God has given us the book of Ecclesiastes, the record of all that human thinking and natural religion has ever been able to discover concerning the meaning and goal of life.*

*– Henrietta Mears,  
Christian Educator, instrumental in the  
development of Sunday Schools*



# Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

- And the Preacher's conclusion is that “under the sun” life has no meaning whatsoever.

# Ecclesiastes

# Conclusions



*The Teacher encourages everyone to consider the meaning of their life ... His answers address the questions that have kept every human awake some nights ... when dissatisfaction with the state of affairs seizes the soul. Ecclesiastes speaks into that emptiness but ... the Teacher points to God as the one who can bring meaning out of the darkness.*

*– K. B. Georgekutty,  
Faith Theological Seminary, India*

# Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

- Trying to give our own lives meaning is ultimately meaningless.
- It is really making gods out of ourselves.
- This works only until we have to admit that we are not gods, that we are finite, mortal beings.



# Ecclesiastes    Conclusions

- **Ecclesiastes** illustrates Christ's words in **John 4:13-14**,  
<sup>13</sup> ... Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.