

Ecclesiastes

**One Story that
Leads to Jesus**



Smoke and Vapor

*“Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities!
All things are vanity.” (Ecc 1:2)*

- The Hebrew word underlying “vanity” is "*hēbēl*" which has two meanings: vapor or smoke
- “Vanity of vanities” = meaninglessness emptiness, futility, uselessness, i.e., what is of no use on the basis of being futile and lacking in content
- The expression “vanity of vanities” is thus a Hebrew superlative expressing the supreme degree of futility and emptiness.
- A little different in understanding from the manner in which modern English uses “vanity.”

Less than Encouraging

“What profit have we from all the toil which we toil at under the sun?” (v.3)

- Not an encouraging start.
- Makes you wonder why it is in the Bible at all.
- Many books in the Bible have a positive function of teaching us things that we couldn't know anywhere else, revealing us God's character, God's heart for the world, what He's up to and so on.
- Not Ecclesiastes

Myth of Religious Fulfillment

- I invite God into my life so that my life will go better.
- We just assume God is up to something in our lives
- We have great expectations about what God is going to do in your life because we are faithful
- Usually, we don't think about the specificity of our expectations.
- When life gets hard then we are very aware of what God is not doing what we expected in our lives.
- It's then that we begin to doubt...

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Offers Another possibility

- What if God is not the problem?
- What if the problem is our expectations of religious fulfillment?

Time, Death, Expectations

Barriers to living a grateful life

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