

# Finding Life's Meaning "Under The Sun"

## Lesson 3

### The Monologue (1:12 – 12:8)

***THE SEARCH: Trying To Find The Meaningful Life (1:12 – 2:26)***

#### Introduction

Having made his initial "observations" (1:3-11), Solomon saw no purpose to life "under the sun." This led him to embark on his "journey" to uncover life's meaning. ***The Monologue***, which starts at 1:12, begins by listing Koheleth's "experiments" and the places he looked for life's meaning. Using all his available resources, he was in a unique position re: his wealth & wisdom. If anyone could find happiness "under the sun," it would be Solomon.

#### *The Vanity Of Wisdom (1:12-18)*

- 1) Why would Solomon be the most qualified in this area? (1 Kings 3:6-12; 4:29-31)
  
- 2) What did Solomon "set his mind" to do? (1:13a) Be able to explain 1:13b... *"a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with."*
  
- 3) What did he conclude? (1:14) Despite his great wisdom, how was he limited? (1:15-17) Can you think of any present-day applications for us?
  
- 4) Be able to explain his words *"...in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain."* (1:18)
  
- 5) If Solomon failed in this area, what does that say about our chances? (1 Cor. 1:18-31)

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### The Vanity Of Pleasure (2:1-3)

- 6) Given his wealth, what kind of "indulgent lifestyle" might Solomon have lived? Thought question: are there any clues in the text that lead you to think the pleasure Solomon sought was wild, mindless, and sensual, or that which was not immoral?
  
- 7) Do you think Solomon was becoming a drunk, or aspiring to be a "connoisseur of wine?" Either way, what was the inherent danger? (Prov. 20:1; 23:29-35)
  
- 8) What did he conclude about mirth, laughter, and pleasure? (2:1b, 2b) Why will true happiness not be found here? (cp. 7:2-4; 2 Tim. 3:1, 4)

### The Vanity Of Possessions (2:4-11)

- 9) What kind of building projects or possessions does Solomon catalog? (2:4-6) Thought question: what 1 major "building project" is not mentioned? Why do you suppose that is so?
  
- 10) What other "possessions" does he mention in which he tried to find happiness? (2:7-8) How wealthy did Solomon become? (2 Chron. 1:14-15a; 1 Kings 11:3a) Research question: be able to relate Moses' warning in Deut. 17:14-17 to what Solomon writes about himself.
  
- 11) How "great" did he become? (2:9) Without accusing him of anything sinful, did he "limit" himself in these experiments? (2:10)
  
- 12) What did Solomon conclude about his experimentation? (2:11)

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#### What He Learned (2:12-23)

- 13) What does Solomon say about anyone who attempts these same "experiments" after him? (2:12) Does he admit that wisdom is better than folly? (2:13-14a)
- 14) What else does he admit that proves the answer is not found in wisdom? (2:14b-16) What does he even bemoan re: himself? (2:15b)
- 15) What was his conclusion re: work done "under the sun?" (2:17-18a) What made his conclusion especially "grievous?" (2:18b-22; cp. Lk. 12:15-21; 1 Tim. 6:6-10)
- 16) What else made all these efforts "grievous?" (2:23)

#### His Conclusions (2:24-26)

- 17) This is Solomon's first glimpse "above the sun." What does he say? (2:24-25)
- 18) What will God do to him that is "good in His sight?" (2:26a) What of him who is the "sinner?" (2:26b) Why would his condition be "...vanity and striving after the wind?"