

A Study of the Wisdom Literature (OT Survey Lesson 295—Eccl. 1:12-2:23)

Introduction: The wise man in his opening argument presented the **vanity of the secularist world view: life “under the sun” is vanity.** Someone may respond, “But do not wisdom or pleasure in some way remedy the vanity of earth life?” Solomon shows by his own experience that such will not bring an end to life’s vanity.

Lesson aim: To show that wisdom (education) and pleasure cannot remedy life’s vanity.

Wisdom will not remedy life’s vanity (1:12-18)

1. What did the preacher purpose to do? (v. 12-13) How did he regard this task?
2. What did discover as the conclusion of his examination? (v. 14) In what ways did he see vanity? (v. 15)
3. From a personal viewpoint how he regard himself? (v. 16) What was his goal? (v. 17) Yet what was his discovery? What are often the accompaniments of wisdom and knowledge? (v. 18)

Pleasure will not remedy life’s vanity (2:1-11)

1. In what other way did the preacher seek to remedy the vanity of life under the sun? (2:1) What was his conclusion? (v. 2)
2. In what ways did Solomon seek to bring pleasure to himself? (v. 3-8)
3. What was the only reward he experienced through this accommodation of wisdom and pleasure? (v. 9-11)

Regardless of wisdom or achievement all will die (2:12-23)

1. Is it possible for the successor of a wise man to enlarge upon his works or do differently? (v. 12) What observations did Solomon make about wisdom? (v. 13-14) Yet what fate awaits both the wise and the foolish? (v. 14-15)

2. What else did he consider vanity? (v. 16) What effect did these realizations have upon him? (v. 17)
3. What else did all this cause him to hate? (v. 18) Why? (v. 18-19) What was his outlook in view of this? (v. 20)
4. How else could one's labor be considered vain? (v. 21-23)