

# The Bible Jesus Used

A Gospel-Centered Glance at  
the Old Testament

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# Ecclesiastes at a Glance

## Prologue (Eccl 1:1)

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|---|--|--------|
| <b>Qoheleth's Queries</b><br>(1:2–12:8) | <b>A</b> –Indicative Moto: All is <i>Hebel</i> (1:2)     | Part 1 |
|   | <b>B</b> –Introductory Poem (1:3–11)                     |        |
|   | <b>C</b> –Qoheleth's Investigation<br>of Life (1:12–6:9) |        |
|   | <b>C'</b> –Qoheleth's Conclusions of Life<br>(6:10–11:6) | Part 2 |
|   | <b>B'</b> –Concluding Poem (11:7–12:7)                   |        |
|   | <b>A'</b> –Indicative Moto: All is <i>Hebel</i> (12:8)   |        |
| <b>Epilogue (12:9–14)</b>               |  |        |

## ❖ **The Enigmatic Nature of Life “Under the Sun”**

### ❖ **The Refrain:**

- ❖ **Ecc1 1:2 (DeRouchie)**: Ultimate enigma, says the Preacher, ultimate enigma! All is an enigma. Cf. 12:8.
- ❖ **That life is unsatisfying, repetitive, and troublesome creates high levels of puzzlement, mystery, and even vexation for the believer and non-believer alike.**

- ❖ **God has cursed the world and made it engimatic.**
- ❖ **Ecc1 7:13.** Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?
- ❖ **Ecc1 1:14–15.** I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is *an enigma* and a shepherding of wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.
- ❖ **Ecc1 8:17.** I saw all the work of God, and that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun.

- ❖ **The bright purposes and kindnesses of God get dimmed from our vision due to:**
  - ❖ The monotony of life's repetitions (1:4–11)
  - ❖ How quickly one is forgotten after death (2:14–16)
  - ❖ The brevity of wisdom, skill, wealth (2:21; 5:16)
  - ❖ Rebel *and* remnant experiencing birth *and* death, love *and* hate, peace *and* war (3:2, 8).
  - ❖ Ignorance (3:11; 11:5)
  - ❖ Injustice and oppression (4:1)
  - ❖ Discontentment (4:8; 6:2)
  - ❖ Financial loss (5:13)
  - ❖ Persistent battle with sin (9:3)
  - ❖ Unexpected trial (9:12; 11:2)

❖ **Ecclesiastes is “under the sun” theology.**

- ❖ There is no lasting gain “under the sun” (Eccl 1:3; 2:11), for death comes to all (6:12; 9:6).
- ❖ Nothing new happens “under the sun” (1:9).
- ❖ All that is done “under the sun” is *an enigma* (1:14; 4:7), and because of this it is grievous (1:17).
- ❖ “Under the sun” there are corruptions (3:16), oppressions (4:1), evil deeds (4:3), and grievous evil (5:13; 6:1; 9:3; 10:5).

- ❖ All life as we know it happens “under the sun” (4:15; 9:9) and comes as a gift of God (5:18; 8:15):
  - ❖ Toils, labors, and deeds (1:18–20; 5:18; 8:9; 9:6, 9)
  - ❖ Joy (8:15)
  - ❖ Time and “chance” (9:11)
  - ❖ Wisdom (9:13)
- ❖ Mankind cannot discern all God’s work “under the sun” (8:17; cf. 7:13–14).

- ❖ **Everyone, believer and non-believer alike, is part of life “under the sun,” and in this world all is enigmatic (1:2; 12:8; cf. 1:14; 4:7).**
- ❖ **Eccl 1:2 (DeRouchie)**: Ultimate enigma, says the Preacher, ultimate enigma! All is an enigma. Cf. 12:8.
- ❖ **Rom 8:20–21**. For the creation was subjected to *futility* [enigma?], not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.



## ❖ **The Proper Response:**

- ❖ **The question:** Why then has God cursed the world and rendered it enigmatic?

## 1. To create dependent people who fear him.

- ❖ Eccl 7:13. Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?
- ❖ Eccl 3:11, 14. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. . . . <sup>14</sup> I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him.
- ❖ Eccl 5:7. When dreams increase and words grow many, there is enigma; but God is the one you must fear.

## 2. To create a people who seek real gain beyond judgment.

❖ The Preacher believed there was no *gain* under the sun but asserted that even in this cursed world the life of wisdom has gain.

❖ Eccl 2:11, 13. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was an enigma and a shepherding of wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun. . . .<sup>13</sup>  
Then I saw that there is more gain in wisdom than in folly, as there is more gain in light than in darkness.

❖ How can there be “no gain” under the sun and yet “more gain” in wisdom?

- ❖ **Those who fear God (the beginning of wisdom) are enabled to enjoy this world as a gift of the Creator and therefore as a channel for worship.**
- ❖ **Eccl 2:24–25.** There is nothing better for a person that that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, <sup>25</sup> for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment.
- ❖ **Eccl 6:1–2.** There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it lies heavy on mankind: <sup>2</sup> a man to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that he lacks nothing of all that he desires, yet God does not give him power to enjoy them, but a stranger enjoys them. This is an enigma; it is a grievous evil.

❖ **Ecc1 12:1.** Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come.

- ❖ **Those who walk in wisdom today, fearing God and living in light of future judgment, will escape the wrath that will one day fall on the wicked.**
- ❖ **Ecc1 3:17.** I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.
- ❖ **Ecc1 7:12.** The advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.
- ❖ **Ecc1 8:12–13.** Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

- ❖ **The fear of God today leads to the approval of God, which frees you and me to delight in today as we hope for tomorrow.**
- ❖ Eccl 9:7. Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.
- ❖ Eccl 11:9; 12:1. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. . . . <sup>12:1</sup> Remember your Creator.

## ❖ **Synthesis:**

❖ **God has cursed the world to create enigma.**

❖ **Ecc1 7:13–14**. Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked? <sup>14</sup>  
In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

❖ **God does it this way so that people will fear him.**

❖ **Ecc1 3:14**. I perceived that whatever God does endures forever. . . . God has done it, so that people fear before him.



- ❖ **Ultimately, life under the sun is out of our control; grasping it is like the “shepherding of wind” (1:14, 17; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6, 15–16; 6:9 ).**
  - ❖ Eccl 1:14–15. I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is an enigma and a shepherding of wind. <sup>15</sup> What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.
- ❖ **In this broken world, we can either become despondent or trust the One Shepherd.**
  - ❖ Eccl 12:11. The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd.

- ❖ **The fear of our Shepherd helps one live wisely today and empowers one to enjoy life in the present whenever possible.**
  - ❖ Eccl 11:9. Rejoice, O young man, in your youth. . . . But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.
- ❖ **The fear of our Shepherd today secures our future tomorrow, after judgment.**
  - ❖ Eccl 8:12–13. Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

**John 10:16, 27–30.** And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, **one shepherd**. . . . <sup>27</sup>

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. <sup>30</sup> I and the Father are **one**.

**Ecc1 12:13–14.** The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.