

Ecclesiastes Review

- The book was written by one old man ("Pops") quoting another old man ("Solomon") to teach his son ("the youths") wisdom.
- Pop's goal? - Use the wisdom of Solomon to teach his son how to live a life of meaning.
- King Solomon was a historical legend and cultural icon.
- Message? You need God! All the things we look to for meaning never satisfy us apart from God.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3

These are the words of the Teacher, King David's son, who ruled in Jerusalem. "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!" What do people get for all their hard work under the sun?

Principles of Wisdom for a Meaningful Life

- 1. Without a God above the sun,
all the good things under the sun
are like vapor.**
- 2. Learn to enjoy the simple good
things of life as gifts of God.**
- 3. Life is hard. Then you die.
Deal with it.**

Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:3

I also noticed that under the sun there is evil in the courtroom. Yes, even the courts of law are corrupt! I said to myself, “In due season God will judge everyone, both good and bad, for all their deeds.”

I also thought about the human condition—how God proves to people that they are like animals. For people and animals share the same fate—both breathe and both must die. So people have no real advantage over the animals. How meaningless! Both go to the same place—they came from dust and they return to dust. For who can prove that the human spirit goes up and the spirit of animals goes down into the earth? So I saw that there is nothing better for people than to be happy in their work. That is our lot in life. And no one can bring us back to see what happens after we die.

Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:3

Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. So I concluded that the dead are better off than the living. But most fortunate of all are those who are not yet born. For they have not seen all the evil that is done under the sun.

“Under the Sun Despair”

-In the places there should be justice, there is corruption. (3:16)

-There is rarely a happy ending for the oppressed. (4:1)

-In the end, we die and become dirt just like any other animal. (3:18)

-Is it possible that it's better to never be born than to ever be born? (4:2)

Over the Sun Reality

- Purpose: Every human life is here by God's design.
- Value: Every human life has special value.
- Morality: There are objective universal standards of right and wrong.
- Love: We are made to love by a God who is love.
- Hope: There will be a final reckoning by God and then life after death.

Under the Sun Reality

- Purpose: All human life is here by chance.
- Value: Humans are decaying matter like everything else.
- Morality: Right and wrong are determined by subjective tastes.
- Love: Love is evolved brain chemistry that helped us survive.
- Hope: We have no future and will ultimately fade into nothingness.

Proverbs 27:6

Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.

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Ecc 3:17

I said to myself, “In due season
God will judge everyone, both
good and bad, for all their deeds.”

**What We Know That Pops
Didn't ... Christian Hope**

What We Know That Pops Didn't ... Christian Hope

Christianity teaches that we have a
God who suffers with us this side of
heaven.

What We Know That Pops Didn't ... Christian Hope

Christianity teaches that God didn't
cause evil, but He is actively
working against it for you.

- God is not evil. He is holy and love.
- God created human beings (and spiritual beings) to share that love.
- For love to be possible, God had to give us the freedom to choose it.
- Our freedom to choose love must also freedom not to.
- Therefore, God never causes evil.
- Rather than using his power to take our free-will before it goes bad, God uses His power to defeat our free-will after it goes bad.
- This process cultivates virtues in us like contentment (Jms 1:2), resilience (Jms 1:3) and wisdom (Jms 1:5).

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.

Romans 5:3-5

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because He has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love.

“The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation ... In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.”

-Richard Dawkins

What We Know That Pops Didn't ... Christian Hope

Christianity teaches that one day there will be divine judgment, final justice, and eternal heaven.

Romans 12:19-21

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord. Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.” Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Revelation 21:3-5

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among His people! He will live with them, and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

Revelation 21:3-5

And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.”

What We Know That Pops Didn't ... Christian Hope

We have a God who suffers with us
this side of heaven.

God didn't cause evil, but He is
actively working against it for you.

One day there will be divine
judgment, final justice, and eternal
heaven.