

If you know me very well, then you know that one of my favorite books of the Bible is the book of Ecclesiastes. The main focus of Ecclesiastes is life on planet Earth. It is really a book all about human nature and the search for fulfillment in life. The way Solomon approaches this is by trying earthly things, so this phrase “under the sun” keeps showing up. This phrase shows up 26 times in this book and if you take the verses that use this phrase and put them in one big list, you start to notice some common themes that show up. These themes are a representation of what Solomon observes life under the sun offers human beings:

### **Vanity (1:3, 9, 14; 2:11, 20, 22; 4:7; 6:12; 8:17)**

1. The first thing is kind of counterintuitive, but the first thing life under the sun can offer us is nothing. It offers us vanity! An emptiness or incompleteness. You and I do things that we think are so important. We work so hard to pay the bills or are trying to get an education, but ultimately it doesn't mean anything. Let's read a couple of examples, **Ecclesiastes 1:2-3**. Solomon doesn't try to hide it, he says all is vanity then he asks a rhetorical question that he answers by giving examples of the repetitive nature of life. He says the sun comes up and it goes back down and the wind blows to the south then it blows toward the north and it just keeps repeating himself. Solomon's answer to this question is that there is no advantage in a man's labor under the sun. Then in **1:9**, Solomon says \_\_. There may be new ways of doing something but when it comes down to it, it's just another way of accomplishing something already done. There's nothing new under the sun. And he concludes with **1:14** So, life under the sun offers us vanity.

### **Oppression (3:16; 4:1, 3; 6:1; 8:9, 14; 9:13; 10:5)**

1. The second thing life under the sun offers us is oppression. Bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people. Isn't that just the reality of life? Let's look at some examples. **Ecclesiastes 3:16** says \_\_. When you live among humans in life under the sun, things are corrupted and the innocent or the weak often become prey. Look at **4:1**, this is the sad reality of life under the sun. We can hardly turn on the news without seeing people in other countries who have terrible lives, we see governments in those countries and sometimes in our own who oppress their citizens, and in our country if you go to a big city there are so many people that need help. There are people living on the streets and being oppressed whether or not they got into that situation themselves is another matter, but we can see the oppression and it's an awful thing! **5:8**, we really shouldn't be shocked when we see this in practice, oppression is something life under the sun has always offered to us.

### **Death (2:19; 4:15; 5:13; 9:3-6, 11)**

1. The third thing we can see life under the sun offers in Ecclesiastes, in death. We're all going to die and Solomon is clear in Ecclesiastes that man has few days in life so we should enjoy what we have while we have it. We all have had loved ones pass away and we know that we are going to as well. Once we die, we will no longer have our possessions. In **Ecclesiastes 9:3-6**, we get a full view of what Solomon has observed about death. \_\_. Solomon says that once we die, we're gone. We can't do anything else and we know nothing and we gained nothing in our lives because everything is pointless anyway. In **verse 6**, Solomon says once we die we no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun. So, life under the sun can offer us death and once we get that, we have nothing. Life under the sun is over.

These are the things that life under the sun can offer us. If you take God completely out of the equation, then this is what life offers. Nations may change, the times may change, the fashion, but these 3 things have never changed. They are things people have been dealing with forever. But something has changed. When you add God to it something changes. What has changed life under the sun, is a new offer. Instead of life under the sun, we can live life in the Son, that is Jesus. Let's look at **Colossians 2:9-14**. Let's see what life in the Son can offer.

### **Substance (Colossians 2:9-10)**

1. The first thing Jesus offers is something to fill the emptiness of the world. Substance, a purpose. We see in **verse 10** that in Christ we have been made complete. We have something and somebody to live for! Have you ever heard the saying that life without Jesus is pointless? Solomon would agree! I agree! Paul would agree! **Philippians 3:7-9**, I want to really look at **verse 8**. Paul says I have counted ALL things loss, everything else is pointless compared to knowing Christ! Then he says he has lost all things but that's okay! He counts them as rubbish as garbage because Christ gives us a purpose.

### **Freedom (Colossians 2:11-12)**

1. The next thing Jesus offers us is freedom from the bonds of sin. Where the world offers oppression, Christ offers freedom. **Verses 11-12**, We are removed from the body of the flesh in baptism and raised with Christ through faith. The oppression of this world is awful and there may be things that we have to deal with in this life, but we have a greater hope. We know that this earthly body will pass away and if we have been baptized then we have been freed from the bondage of sin. **Romans 6:4-7**, notice **verses 6-7**. When we are baptized, we are no longer slaves to sin! Christ has freed us! Life in the Son offers freedom.

### **Life (Colossians 2:13-14)**

1. The last thing Jesus has to offer us in this passage is life. **Verses 13-14**, Although we sin and are deserving of death, Christ has made us alive together with him and has forgiven us of all our transgressions. Jesus has forgiven us but he has done so much more, he has completely removed all of the debt and took it on himself when he was nailed to the cross. He has taken it away for us! **1 John 1:9**, Christ will take it all away! It is not that He has forgiven us but still holds a record of our shortcomings to bring up once we sin again, NO, Jesus completely wipes it away and offers us life.

We live life every day on planet Earth. We are subject to what life under the sun offers us and we may think about heaven and think one day it all be okay, and that's absolutely true. But, right now you have the opportunity to live life in in the Son. To escape the woes and worries of life under the sun. But you have to be in the Son, in Christ. The only way to do that is to submit to God and have your body immersed in baptism for the remission of your sins. If we can help in any way in your spiritual walk with God, please come forward.