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Ecclesiastes

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# ECCLESIASTES: A LIFE WORTH LIVING?

SERIES: *THE WAY OF WISDOM*

We come now to the second of our three-part series on “*The Way of Wisdom*,” from the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job.<sup>1</sup> These books have a different tone and voice than other books of Scripture. They require active engagement and diligent interaction to probe their mysteries. These texts are designed for the developing minds and inquisitive hearts of young adults who are intersecting the wayward ways of the world. To survive, they need a more comprehensive guidebook than merely the didactic teachings of the law. They need the advice of seasoned veterans whose tried and true experience can help guide them past the veiled seductions of the world to a better way of life as the Creator designed it to be lived. Into this vast sea of uncertainty the book of Proverbs offers “wisdom” – a skillful moral mastery over the dark chaos through a disciplined, well-managed life. If one begins to understand how the Creator put the moral universe together, and walks accordingly, the rewards are infinite – length of days and years of life, peace and prosperity, favor and good repute, straight and smooth paths, healing, refreshment and abundance, to name just a few (Prov 3:1-12). If we were to think of an image that conveys the essence of the teaching of Proverbs, Kidner suggests “the seven-pillared house of Wisdom, or better still that gracious, well-stocked home of the accomplished wife, whose virtues bring the book to its serene close.”<sup>2</sup>

But sages are not only moral guides to guard us from the doorways of destruction and redirect us in the “way” of eternal life, they are visionaries to take our thinking to higher ground. As we grow into adulthood we are not only confronted with dangerous paths to walk on, but a myriad of paradoxes that our minds must grapple with, paradoxes that take exception to “conventional wisdom” and defy comprehension. This occurs mainly in the first years of college, when a student’s world view is confronted with new ways of observing the universe, whether through philosophy, science, or social relationships. A good sage doesn’t deny new discoveries, as the Catholic church did Galileo’s, but rather, like a faithful mountaineering guide, the sage challenges us to shed old formulas, urging us higher up the mountain for a more comprehensive view. There is nothing wrong with the “conventional wisdom”; it just isn’t the whole truth.

Ironically, oftentimes we find it more difficult to adopt new ways of thinking than to consider right moral choices. This is because our old ways have worked well to this point. We cherish them because they keep us comfortable by giving the illusion that we are in control of our destiny. We know how life works, where we are going and how to get there. Each night we hang a sign our door, “*Don’t disturb my well-ordered universe.*” Challenging someone’s ethics may cost a relationship, but challenging their world view could get one crucified. So it takes a masterful sage to unsettle us from our cocksure viewpoints. The author of the book of Ecclesiastes is such a sage. To him, the conventional wisdom of Proverbs is foundational. It works well, but it is not the whole truth; there are radical exceptions. In contrast to the symbol of the seven-pillared house representing Proverbs, Kidner suggests the image of Ecclesiastes could be “a great house (12:3-4) in the grip of slow, inexorable decay.”<sup>3</sup> The sage’s unsettling theme song rings out five times in his very first line:

“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher,  
“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” (Eccl 1:2, NASB)

After the sure statements and warm stability of Proverbs, these words feel like ice water poured over a sunburn. And this is just the opening statement of this book, whose language, structure, argument, style, dating and authorship have had scholars grinding their teeth for centuries. It’s no wonder, as

Waltke writes, the book was considered “the black sheep of the canon of biblical books.”

It is the delight of skeptics and the despair of saints. Kaiser Wilhelm – not known for his piety – named it as the best book in the Bible, and literature courses in secular universities commonly select it as the one book of the Bible students must read because it represents the triumph of the human spirit over harsh reality through unflinching honesty. By contrast, the founders of rabbinic Judaism, Hillel versus Shammai, questioned its right to be numbered among the canonical books because of its contradictions (cf. 5:19f. and 11:8) or of its skepticism (cf. 4:2) and agnosticism (3:21). The church ignores it, and some evangelicals deny that the “preacher/teacher” (*Qohelet*) reveals infallible truth.<sup>4</sup>

The question for us this morning is, What do we do with such a book? In the midst of the chaos, let me humbly offer you some of my own presuppositions about it.

1. Ecclesiastes is the inspired word of God (12:9-11). It is not the second-class wisdom of a skeptic who has forsaken his covenantal faith and is shut up to his own rationale. Because it is inspired, it is therefore authoritative for the Church.

2. Though the speaker is a master of “indirection,” the book has a well-defined unity that is absolutely brilliant.

3. If we are troubled by the author’s way of speaking in the extreme, it would be helpful to remember that this approach is the sage’s sacred tool to pry our boots off the comfortable ledges of conventional thinking, driving us higher up the mountain. It is also typical of the way the Old Testament teaches us. As Kidner writes, “It [the Old Testament] tends to give itself wholly to one thing at a time, saying it with maximum force and leaving any resulting imbalance to be corrected in due course by an equally massive counter-weight. In this way more justice can be done to a many-sided subject than by steering a middle course between its extremes. It also makes for colour and vitality, in contrast to the convoluted style in which every statement must be qualified as soon as [it is] made.”<sup>5</sup>

4. The purpose of the book is not to espouse a hypothetical or philosophical treatise for ivory tower academics. Rather, the sage is addressing down to earth, live issues facing Israel, correcting deeply entrenched, sinful attitudes in response to those issues. The book is not theoretical; it is supremely pastoral. Therefore, if we take time to understand its historical context, we will be in a better place to come to terms with its message.

5. The modern relevance of the book stems from the fact that, in my opinion, the socioeconomic context is practically a mirror image of today’s Silicon Valley world.

So rather than ignoring or running away from Ecclesiastes because of its difficulties, I encourage us to immerse ourselves in it and learn to use it properly, rather than leaving it in the hands of university professors to deconstruct the faith of naïve students.

## I. Who Wrote Ecclesiastes?

Ancient tradition holds that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes, since the writer calls himself “the son of David, king in Jerusalem” (1:1). Some scholars still hold to Solomonic authorship, but because the language and style of the book are much later than Solomon’s time, most do not. It has a number of assertions it seems unlikely that Solomon would have made about himself. Seow suggests, “It is probably the intent of the author to evoke memory of

Solomon, the wise king *par excellence* and the best example of the one who has it all.”<sup>6</sup>

To complicate matters further, a careful reading of the book reveals the presence of at least two “identities” behind Ecclesiastes. First, there is the “preacher,” whose identity is veiled behind the term *Qohelet*. (*Qohelet* is derived from the verbal root *qabal*, which means “gatherer,” used of one who to assemble a group of people). His words make up the bulk of the book. Second, there appears to be an anonymous author who has gathered *Qohelet*’s words together and views them as inspired and authoritative.

**In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge; and he pondered, searched out and arranged many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find delightful words and to write words of truth correctly. The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd. (12:9-11)**

While we can determine little about the identity of our sage, the language and style of Ecclesiastes place its final composition and original audience in the post-exilic Persian period. “He probably composed his work in Palestine some time between the second half of the fifth and the first half of the fourth centuries B.C.E.”<sup>7</sup>

## II. What Was Going On?<sup>8</sup>

The world into which Ecclesiastes was written was obsessed with one thing: acquiring financial security. Palestine was a much different place than it had been for generations prior to the exile. Its basic agrarian economy had given way to thriving commercial enterprises, so much so that Jerusalem, once a sleepy town on the Sabbath, was now bustling with extensive business and trading to keep pace with gentile merchants (Neh 13:15-16). The potential loss of revenue on the Sabbath was considered too great to entertain the luxury of “rest.” Prompting this rapid upsurge in the economy was the Persian government’s implementation of a highly orchestrated tax structure that demanded payment in hard currency. To provide for the needed tax payments and spur trade, the government began minting coins at an enormous rate. This radically transformed the economy, as coinage became not just a vehicle for trade, but also a treasured commodity in its own right. Inscriptions from this period are replete with references to money, and the rich hoarding huge stockpiles as security against an uncertain future.

Besides trade, another major source of income was land, a commodity that not just royalty but private individuals could now purchase. With this new opportunity for investment the rush was on to get land in every way possible. Seow explains: “The Persians instituted a system of property grants under which rights over various properties were given to favored individuals, military personnel, or temple communities...The recipients of such grants had the responsibility for collecting the taxes from their domains, but the grant meant that they were also entitled to retain a portion of the revenues. The grantees sometimes further divided grant portions of their fiefs to those whom they favored, in return for annual taxes and military services as needed.”<sup>9</sup>

If you happened to know the right people, a land grant could place you high up on the ladder of success, with a high rate of return for your investment. But for the “have-nots,” acquiring land was a far off dream. Whole families had to slave away at menial jobs for years, pooling all their money to acquire a small piece of property. Others would borrow substantial sums to purchase land. But interest rates were high (60 to 120 percent per annum), and the penalty for default severe. Entire estates, including homes and families, were seized from those who couldn’t pay their debts.

A fifth-century Aramaic ostracoon from Elephantine provides a glimpse of the economic uncertainties that many families faced. The text is a letter from a man who has been away from home for some reason. He writes to his wife and instructs her to sell his possessions so that the family may survive: “If you will sell all my valuables, (then) the babies may eat. There are no more coins left!”<sup>10</sup>

Into this volatile world driven by greed and fear, *Qohelet* speaks. The possibility of wealth had never been greater for the fortunate few, while the weight of debt haunted the rest of the population. The wealthy kept

consuming more and more, but never had enough, while the poor toiled endlessly, on the brink of poverty. Both groups were driven and discontent. Beset by anxiety about their future security, God’s people were living just like the pagans around them, refusing to take time to rest and enjoy life.

## III. *Qohelet*’s Structure: The two sides of *hebel*

“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher,

“Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” (1:2, see also 12:8)

The book’s thesis is found in the key word of the text, “*hebel*,” which appears thirty-eight times in the book. Its importance cannot be overstated. It is the first word we hear from *Qohelet*, ringing out five times in the second verse. It also shapes *Qohelet*’s theme statement, which appears twice in the book (1:2; 12:8). The term *hebel* has a broad range of meanings, from “a puff of air,” “a breath,” “a vapor,” to that which is “enigmatic,” “absurd,” or “meaningless.” Seow further explains: “It refers to anything that is superficial, ephemeral, insubstantial, incomprehensible, enigmatic, inconsistent, or contradictory. Something that is *hebel* cannot be grasped or controlled. It may refer to something that one encounters or experiences for only a moment, but it cannot be grasped – neither physically nor intellectually.”<sup>11</sup> The narrator structured the book into two equal halves,<sup>12</sup> each shaped around a different meaning of *hebel*. The first half of the book (1:2-6:9) focuses on the frustration that nothing seems permanent, while the second half deals with the fact that life is “enigmatic” and “incomprehensible.” Each half is further subdivided into two parts (Part I: 1:2-4:16; 5:1-6:9; Part II: 6:10-8:17; 9:1-12:8). “The first block in each half presents a certain situation that people face, while the second contains mostly practical advice on how to cope with that situation. Reflection is followed by ethics.”<sup>13</sup> A simple outline of the book (adapted from Seow) would look like this:

### Part I

A. Reflection: Everything is Ephemeral and Unreliable (1:2-4:16)

B. Ethics: Coping with Uncertainty (5:1-6:9)

### Part II

A. Reflection: Everything is Elusive (6:10-8:17)

B. Ethics: Coping with Risks and Death (9:1-12:8)

## IV. *Qohelet*’s Reflections: Everything is *hebel*

Whereas Proverbs presents a well-ordered and successful life, based on a moral universe that rewards good and punishes evil, *Qohelet*’s voice rings out in dissonant cries. He holds that life is filled with uncertainties, risks and enigmas that defy human comprehension. There is much about life that is outside our control, and no matter how much we accomplish through wisdom, it is not going to last. One day we are all going to lay our bodies in the dust.

As *Qohelet* sees it, people try to cope with the situation in various ways. They toil and fret. They are never content with what they have. They accumulate wealth and hoard it. They long for more wisdom and understanding. They endeavor to give an accounting of all that is happening. They desire to straighten out everything that is crooked, correct every injustice, and fill every void. They strive to gain an immortality of sorts through fame, through their wealth, or their accomplishments. They try to be without offense whatsoever. In short, they try everything conceivable to take a hold of the situation and gain some control. But nothing really works, since all is *hebel*.<sup>14</sup>

By stating that all of life is *hebel*, *Qohelet* is not suggesting that all life is “meaningless or insignificant, but that everything is beyond human apprehension and comprehension.”<sup>15</sup> Every time a tragedy occurs, our immediate reaction is to attach “meaning” to the event, as if we know how this finite moment in time will work out in the grand scheme of things. We have a very terrible time living in the tension of “unknowing.” We want rock bottom clarity. And when the event is extremely complex and baffling, we just babble on and on, hoping to land on some thought bordering on significance. But *Qohelet* explains that when we insist on multiplying our words to bring definition to what we do not know, all we succeed in doing is creating more “smoke” (*hebel* - “vanity,” “a puff of wind”), adding more contradiction and confusion. “The more the words, the less the meaning, and how does that profit anyone?” (6:11 NIV).

Many things defy explanation. For example, though the acquisition of wisdom is far superior to might, Qohelet painfully notes how some of wisdom's greatest moments go utterly unnoticed, with no public acknowledgement or acclaim due to prejudice (9:13-16). If a wealthy person saves a city, it makes the front page; but if the hero is poor, the person is soon forgotten. Prejudice can wipe out the memory of all that is good. Whose funeral received the greater publicity during the first week in September 1997, Mother Teresa's or Princess Diana's? And then consider all the work it takes to produce order, beauty and good, and how just one fool or foul-up can destroy everything in a moment.

**Wisdom is better than weapons of war,  
but one sinner destroys much good.  
Dead flies make a perfumer's oil stink,  
so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor. (9:18-10:1)**

Tonight, Elie Wiesel, one of the most articulate voices to survive the Holocaust, will speak at Stanford University. Can you imagine the generations upon generations of Jewish life and culture that were wiped off the face of Europe through evil of one fool? Can you give meaning to that? It is beyond human comprehension.

How do some of our wisest individuals end up as servants, while some of the most foolish run our companies and lead nations (10:7)? Doesn't it seem incomprehensible who ends up in positions of power and influence? And then consider people who are extremely righteous, yet by their righteousness they are unable to divert disaster. Consider how it is that so many parents who want children are plagued by infertility, while others, who become pregnant out of wedlock, abort their children. Or consider others who are able to give birth multiple times, yet neglect and abuse their children.

Decades after the loss of our two children, I felt God had graciously filled our empty void with deep significance, receiving back many times over that which we lost (Mark 10:29-30). But listening to the testimony of a couple with a similar enzyme deficiency silenced my confidence that my paradigm could give meaning to everyone else's suffering. The odds for this couple to have healthy children were the same as ours, 3 out of 4, yet their firstborn son, Michael, died twenty-two days after his birth. Then they had a healthy daughter, Erin. Eager for more children and with the odds in their favor, they got pregnant and gave birth to another son, Nathaniel. He lived only three days. Then they received the gift of another son, David Josiah. But it was as if the dice rolled that same dreaded number *one* again, and David died. A fifth child was given, Stephen Isaac, this time unexpected and unplanned. He filled them with hope until, on the third day, he died, like his brothers. In a lament poem, the mother repeated the gut-wrenching refrain, "the die has no memory...the die has no memory." Hearing those crushing words silenced any hope I had of giving meaning to their world. Qohelet affirms, we seek to understand all this, but it is beyond us.

**He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end. (3:11)**

We yearn for eternal significance because God has placed that longing in our hearts, yet as we observe life "under the sun," so much of it appears hollow, painfully brief and disappointing. Where is the lasting "return" or "advantage" for all our years of painful toil? Even the individual we think may have it all, like the "king" or the wealthy CEO, must eventually come to terms with the tyranny of old age and death, when his memory will be no more, and all that he has acquired will be left to others outside his control.

If all this sounds like a bad movie, we must remember the sage faces us with life's harsh realities for a good reason. As an honest sage he will not give in to happy, naïve optimism, but with clarity courageously voices our frustrations over glaring injustices, the painful loss of our youth and the universality of death. We have some dear friends in Romania who gave birth to a beautiful little girl, Emma. Tragically, after a couple of months of the sweetest memories, she was diagnosed with a rare enzyme disease that doctors said would prove fatal. As the news spread, Christians came out of the woodwork, from every nook and cranny of the world it seemed, invading their home with promises of health and healing. Some suggested the sick-

ness was the result of sin, since the family owned a restaurant that served alcohol. Others tried to get them to go through their family histories with a fine tooth comb in search of that dreaded "generational sin" that brought this judgment on them. Plagued by these self-proclaimed wonder workers, Emma's parents cried out in agonized confusion. Then a friend of mine had the courage to insert a word of truth into this three-ring circus fiasco. Playing the role of Qohelet, he wrote them an e-mail saying, "Your daughter will die. You will watch her die. And when she dies, you will die with her." It is now a year after Emma died, and we know which sage was truly "wise."

At Stanford's 2005 graduation ceremony, Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer and of Pixar Animation Studios, gave the commencement address. After two religious speakers pontificated about the glory of the human spirit and the "unlimited" potential of these new graduates, Steve Jobs spoke like Qohelet, recounting three life-changing experiences of frustration, failure and death. I thought, what a fabulous speech, telling Stanford graduates they were all going to die! But it was for a good purpose. Like Qohelet, Jobs shared the changes these experiences had made in his life: "Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure – these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart."<sup>16</sup>

For Qohelet, it takes the grim reality of death to shake us out of our complacent, insulated universes, where life is well defined, with squeaky-clean categories. As the French novelist Georges Bernanos wrote, "In order to be prepared to hope in what does not deceive, we must first lose hope in everything that deceives."<sup>17</sup>

#### V. Qohelet's Advice

What advice does Qohelet give to us in the midst of all this uncertainty?

**Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward. Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart. (5:18-20)**

The conventional wisdom of Proverbs is designed to bring order and beauty to our lives, but Qohelet warns us that though this is true, there is much in life that is outside our control. There is only so much order you can bring into the world. There will always be a certain amount of chaos, risk, uncertainty and injustice. So we have to learn to live with that tension. Any attempt to bring total control over our world is a "striving after wind," to secure a future that is not ours to secure. Yet, even in the midst of troubling chaos and painful toil, God offers the joy of a moment. This joy is the gift of God to us, and in fact, he calls us into account if we fail to spontaneously rejoice when the opportunity presents itself. Joy is Qohelet's antidote to both aspects of *hebel*, whether it is facing life's "uncertainties" or grappling with its incomprehensible mysteries. This is the dominant drum he beats over and over again, seven times in key passages. God requires us to embrace each of these moments fully. This is a radical word to a high control, materialistic audience. "Unlike the prophets, Qohelet's ethic does not explicitly call for social transformation and the elimination of injustice. Yet his ethic requires radical change – not of social and political structure, but of attitude toward everything that humanity may want: material possession, wisdom, esteem, and passion."<sup>18</sup>

How often do we neglect the beauty of a child by saying, "Not now, I'm working." Are you newly married? Qohelet would say, "Be romantic. Enjoy the wife of your youth." Are you working late every night for your children's college fund? Qohelet would say, "Forget it. Go home early and enjoy a leisurely dinner. Then go to the park and throw the ball with your son." Are you overly righteous and involved in too many activities for "the kingdom?"

Qohelet would say, "Take a day off and go to the spa." Do you have a vacation planned this summer? Qohelet would say, "Double it." It really doesn't take much to enjoy life, just a table, a home-cooked meal, a glass of wine, some friends and extended, uninterrupted time. In our men's Bible study we have a motto we reaffirm each evening in the middle of our weekly dinner. We look into each other's eyes, raise our glasses and exclaim, "It doesn't get any better than this!"

Along with joy, Qohelet also recommends a dash of spontaneity when facing the uncertainties of life. The threat of uncertainty has a way of paralyzing most people, so they freeze in their ability to make commitments. They want total knowledge prior to investing, whether in the realm of finances or relationships. Qohelet says, "You want complete knowledge? Forget it! You are like the farmer who is forever watching the wind to predict the weather patterns before he sows his crop." "He who watches the wind, never sows" (11:4); he just gets flat feet. When it comes to investing in an uncertain world, be wise and don't put all your eggs in one basket. Leverage your risks, but on the other hand, balance responsibility with spontaneity. Risk a little, and sow at any and every opportunity (11:6). As to kindness, be even more spontaneous and give to others liberally: "Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days" (11:1).

And finally, along with Qohelet's counsel of joy and spontaneity, the narrator advises, "fear God and keep the commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil" (12:13-14). No longer speaking "under the sun," the narrator expands our horizon to a time when God will put all things right and grant meaning to what we could not see. But we must remember that "fearing God" is not only obedience to his commandments, but a divine contentment that finds constant joy in the lot he has given us.

I find it amazing that this masterpiece of rhetoric is designed just to get us to lighten up and enjoy life. If we think the message of Qohelet is troubling or unique, we need only take a quick glance at the teaching of Jesus to find the same truth reiterated in the Sermon on the Mount. But Jesus raises the ante even more, equating Qohelet's "joy in the moment" as the holy intersection of where we experience the kingdom of heaven on earth:

**"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matt 6:31-34)**

And further, the good news of Christ's death and resurrection has removed Qohelet's agonizing cry of futility in one's toil:

**O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor 15:55-58)**

What more do you need to let loose and rejoice?

1. The title for this message is taken from the chapter title on Ecclesiastes in Derek Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 90.

2. Kidner, *Wisdom*, 116.

3. Kidner, *Wisdom*, 116.

4. Bruce K. Waltke, "Ecclesiastes," *An Exegetical Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming). Special thanks to Bruce for these unpublished notes.

5. Kidner, *Wisdom*, 123-124.

6. Choon-Leong Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB; New York: Doubleday), 37.

7. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 38.

8. All of the material on the socioeconomic background is taken from Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 21-36.

9. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 23.

10. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 34.

11. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 47.

12. Scholars have noted that each half of the book has 111 verses and 1,491 words. "Apart from the five Hebrew words 'this, too, is vanity and pursuit of wind'" (an appropriate phrase for a pivot!), we have precisely the same number of words in the first half of the book as in the second." Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 45.

13. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 46.

14. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 57.

15. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 59.

16. *Stanford Report*, June 14, 2005.

17. Jacques Ellul, *Reason for Being: A Meditation on Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 47

18. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 58.

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