

Book: Ecclesiastes
Series: Two Ways to Live: Under the Sun or In the Fear of God
Lesson 2: The Futility of Life, Part 1
Text: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11; 2:1-11
Date: Sunday, January 20, 2013
Next Lesson: Ecclesiastes 1:12-18; 2:12-17

INTRODUCTION

In the first several chapters of the book of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher focus on a dark backdrop, and, in the words of Kidner, doesn't "commend the light to us directly," but rather "does [so] by making the darkness intolerable." His point is simple: **life merely lived "under the sun" is futile**—pointless, useless, meaningless, empty, transient, unfortunate, confusing, frustrating, etc. This is the gloomy reality that we must take our first several weeks to explore.

THE _____ CYCLE OF EXISTENCE ILLUSTRATES THE FUTILITY OF LIFE "UNDER THE SUN" (1:1-11).

1. *The cycle of people (vv. 3-4)*
2. *The cycle of the planet (vv. 5-7)*
3. *The cycle of performance (vv. 8-11)*

Application:

Realization:

THE EMPTINESS OF _____ ILLUSTRATES THE FUTILITY OF LIFE "UNDER THE SUN" (2:1-11).

1. _____ (v. 2)
2. _____ (v. 3a)
3. _____ (v. 3b)
4. _____ (v. 4)
5. _____ (vv. 5-6)
6. _____ (v. 7a)
7. _____ (v. 7b)
8. _____ (v. 8a)
9. _____ (v. 8b)
10. _____ (v. 8c)

Application:

Realization:

CONCLUSION

Solomons are alive and well, and still on their quest, in our society today. We can't help but read 1:3 and 2:11 and hear Jesus' question ring in our mind—"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). There really are only two ways to live—"under the sun" or "in the fear of God." One is described as the way to life, abundant and everlasting; the other is strewn with those who, disheartened by life's cycle and disillusioned by empty pleasure, have been swallowed by the darkness. May we be ambassadors from Solomon and from the Savior with a message of light to pierce their darkness and an offer of hope to erase their futility.