THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Ecclesiastes: The Quest For Meaning In Life
I. Meaning In View Of The Futile Cycles Of Life
(Ecclesiastes 1:1-11)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

From a human viewpoint, many realms of today's life seem to be caught in a series of meaningless cycles:

(1) It occurs in our state politics: "With" just over a week "before the election for governor . . . Gov. Ned Lamont has opened so wide a lead over state Sen. Ryan Fazio, according to a new Sacred Heart/WFSB/CT Insider poll, that we need to step back and ask a hard question . . . Why" so? After all, "this poll shows a nagging dissatisfaction among voters. Thirty-five percent said the state is on the wrong track, compared with 27% who said we're on the right track. Asked about the state's economy, 48% said it's worse over the last year and just 19% said it's better . . . And 25% said they'd be unlikely to still live in Connecticut in five years . . . So what gives? President Donald Trump . . . and a general slowdown of the national economy . . . (C)ould even Ronald Reagan make headway? Abraham Lincoln? Dwight D. Eisenhower? No Republican can beat the 2026 trend in this, arguably, the nation's bluest state." (Dan Haar, "Lamon's lead is widening," Republican-American, October 19, 2026, p. A1)

Surprisingly, the same poll released in August "found 29.4% of registered voters identified the cost of living and inflation as the single most important issue in deciding their vote for governor, 12.9 % selected taxes, 10.8% named electricity and energy costs, and another 10% said jobs and the economy." (Paul Hughes, "Surge in fuel prices renews Connecticut tax holiday debate," Op. cit., October 6, 2026, p. A1) However, the governor is now running away with the lead in the polls!

(2) We also seem caught in a futile series of meaningless cycles in our national politics: "House Democrats are preparing an ambitious 100-days agenda focused on . . . reinstating Affordable Care Act tax breaks, reversing Republican Medicaid cuts, holding votes against the Iran war and undoing President Donald Trump's tariff regime." (Lisa Mascaro, "House Democrats planning 100-day agenda if they sweep to power," Op. cit., October 15, 2026, p. A9) They want to return to the tax-and-spend agenda of the Biden administration! On the other hand, if "Republicans retain power," House Speaker "Johnson has said they would press on with what they have already accomplished alongside Trump, which has been an agenda focused on cutting taxes and federal spending." (Ibid.) Conversely, though they before voted to impeach President Trump, Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries "has said" that if his party returns to power, another impeachment of the President "is neither on nor off the table." (Ibid.) So, here we go again!

(3) We seem to be caught in a series of meaningless cycles with our state's business climate: "Connecticut's manufacturers are powering one of the top-performing state economies of 2026. They still face significant challenges as "Connecticut Business & Industry Association" CEO and president Chris DiPentima "said in a written statement" that "'Connecticut's growth is encouraging. And with more than 86,000 open jobs, the state must address persistent labor shortages and slowing population growth so we can sustain this growth . . .'" (Paul Schott, "State's manufacturers need workers, even with production booming," Op. cit., October 6, 2026, p. A1)

(4) We seem caught in a meaningless cycle with Social Security: Over "765,000 Connecticut residents who receive Social Security benefits are set to receive larger monthly . . . checks next year after inflation triggered a 3.6% cost-of-living adjustment." Nevertheless, "while the . . . adjustment helps preserve purchasing power . . . increases in Medicare premiums or other expenses can reduce how much additional money beneficiaries actually see in their monthly checks." (Jordan Nathanial Fenster, "Social Security checks going up," Op. cit., October 15, 2026, p. 1A)

***Need*: So we ask, "How can we find meaning in life in view of the seeming meaningless cycles that occur in life?"**

I. King David's son Solomon who authored Ecclesiastes (Ecclesiastes 1:1) stated the theme of the book in Ecclesiastes 1:2 NIV when he wrote, "Everything is meaningless" (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 975-976).

II. He qualified this statement in the book by repeatedly using the phrase "under the sun" (as in v. 3) to mean that his argument was based on viewing man's existence only in regard to this life on the earth.

III. Accordingly, Solomon asserted that all of man's labors considered only in relation to this earthly life are utterly meaningless (Ecclesiastes 1:3), and that due to the futile cycles of this life, Ecclesiastes 1:4-11:

A. Generations of people are born, live and die on this earth, only to be replaced by newer generations though the earth perpetually remains through all such human generations, Ecclesiastes 1:4.

B. As for the events of the earth itself, they are marked by seemingly futile, endless cycles, Ecclesiastes 1:5-7:

1. The sun rises, and then it sets, and it hurries back to the place where it rises again, Ecclesiastes 1:5.

2. The wind blows toward the south, then it turns around and blows toward the north, going around and around and always returning to its original course, Ecclesiastes 1:6.
3. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full, for the moisture of the streams that ends up in the sea returns to the place where the streams begin so that it flows into the sea all over again, Ecclesiastes 1:7.

C. As for human experience "under the sun," Solomon claimed that everything is more wearisome than one can say, Ecclesiastes 1:8a NIV. He then explained this statement in Ecclesiastes 1:8b-11:
1. The eye is never satisfied with seeing nor is the ear ever satisfied with hearing, Ecclesiastes 1:8b.
2. What has existed in the past will exist again, and what has been done before will be done again, for there is nothing really new "under the sun," for in many ways history truly repeats itself, Ecclesiastes 1:9-10.
3. In addition, no one remembers the former generations, and even those generations of people to come will not be remembered by those generations of people who will come after them, Ecclesiastes 1:11!

IV. Thankfully, the conclusion of the book in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 gives real meaning to this life (as follows):

A. Solomon concluded that man must revere God and keep His commands as his whole duty in life, for God will bring every human being's every deed into divine judgment, whether it be good or evil, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

B. Scripture elsewhere greatly expands on this conclusion by Solomon (as follows):
1. For those who **believe** in Christ for salvation from sin and hell, at the rapture of the Church, they will be taken to heaven where they will stand before Christ's judgment seat to have their works evaluated by the Lord whether they be good or bad, 2 Corinthians 5:10. If one's work was good in having been performed by relying by faith on God's power and obeying His will, the believer will be rewarded, 1 Corinthians 3:13-14. If his work was bad, he himself will still be saved due to the believer's unconditional salvation security, but his work will be destroyed by God's purifying fire, 1 Corinthians 3:15 with John 5:24.
2. For those who do **not** believe in Christ for salvation from sin and hell, they will be judged by Christ at the Great White Throne judgment that occurs after Christ's Millennial Kingdom on earth, Revelation 20:1-10, 11-15. When that judgment occurs, the old universe will pass away, proving that this life on earth was just a stage for man to test how mankind would function in relation to God, Revelation 20:11. The unsaved whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, the "Lamb" being Jesus Christ (John 1:29), will be cast into the lake of fire to face constant torment forever and ever, Revelation 20:15 with 20:10.
3. Thus, all the saved and the unsaved will give an account to God for their lives on earth "under the sun"!

<u>Lesson</u>: Though this earthly life as considered only from the human viewpoint seems like a series of meaningless cycles, in view of God's existence and man's eternal accountability to Him, whether man reveres and obeys God on this earth has great ramifications in eternity, for this life is merely a stage for God to test our relationship to Him!

<u>Application</u>: (1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we function in our labors in this life in ways that revere God and obey His Word in view of our future eternal personal accountability to Him.

<u>Conclusion</u>: (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

In view of our eternal accountability to God, Scripture provides applications to the issues in our introduction:

(1) As for the coming elections of state and national officials in an atmosphere of high living costs, high government spending and high taxes, Deuteronomy 17:16 orders rulers not to multiply wealth to themselves, and Deuteronomy 17:19-20 tells rulers not to view themselves as more valuable than their countrymen. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 with 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 direct people to work for their living. Thus, we should vote for tax relief while encouraging people to work for a living versus trying to make a career out of living off of the taxpayer.

(2) As for business issues, James 4:13-17 directs us to heed God's will in our choice of a career, James 5:1-6 calls employers quickly to pay for their employees' work and James 5:7-9 urges employees to wait upon God to deal with injustices by their employers. If everyone involved heeded these directives, the workplace would run smoothly!

(3) As for Social Security issues, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10 counter the program of government welfare via Social Security as they direct heads of households to provide for their family livelihoods by working. Some people are incapable of supporting themselves due to unavoidable circumstances, so God calls heads of households to meet the livelihood needs of vulnerable dependents even in their extended families (cf. 1 Timothy 5:8, 16), what will lessen society's dependence on Social Security and make it more effective for the truly helpless.

May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life. May we function in life in ways that revere God and obey His Word for our accountability to Him.