



THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

A JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE'S QUESTIONS

A STUDY ON THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES



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- ² "Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely meaningless!"
- ³ What do people get for all their hard work under the sun?



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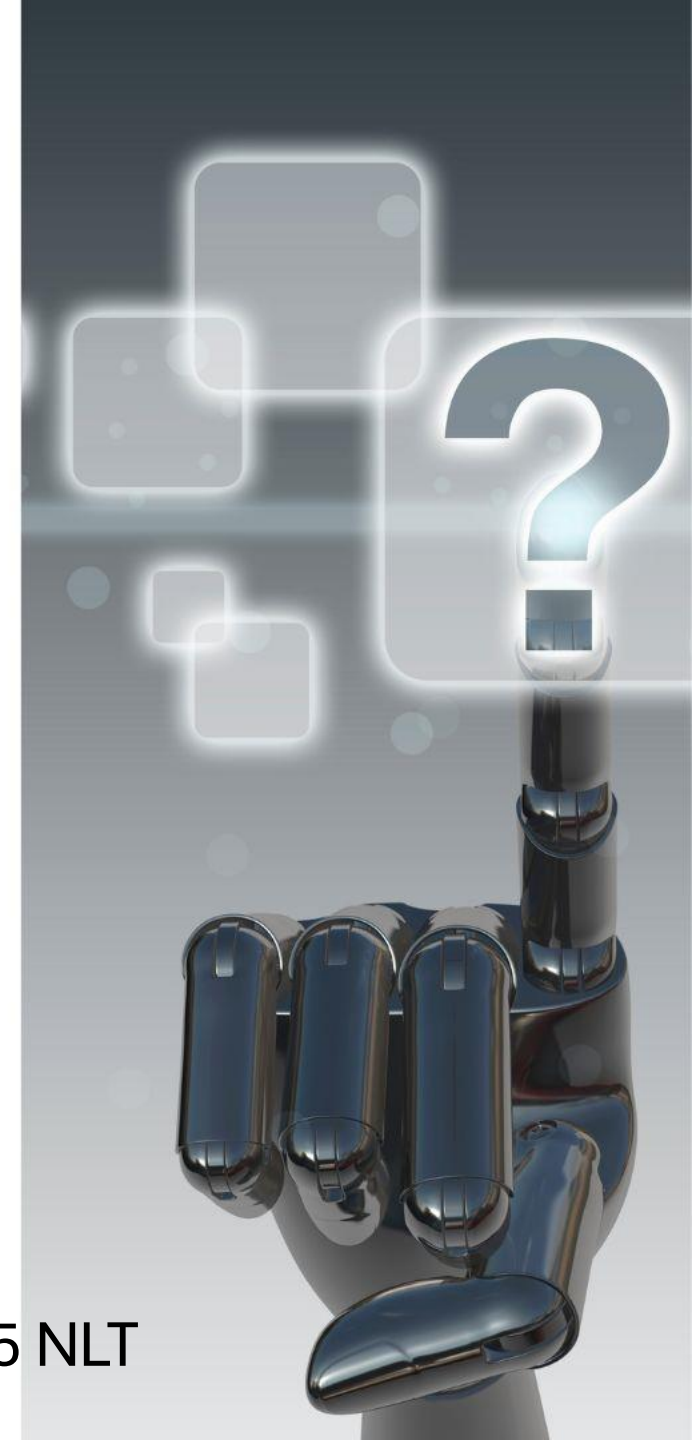
Meaningless – Hebrew word, "*hebel*" – occurs 36 times in the book.



¹² I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem.¹³ I devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race.¹⁴ I observed everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

¹⁵ What is wrong cannot be made right.
What is missing cannot be recovered.

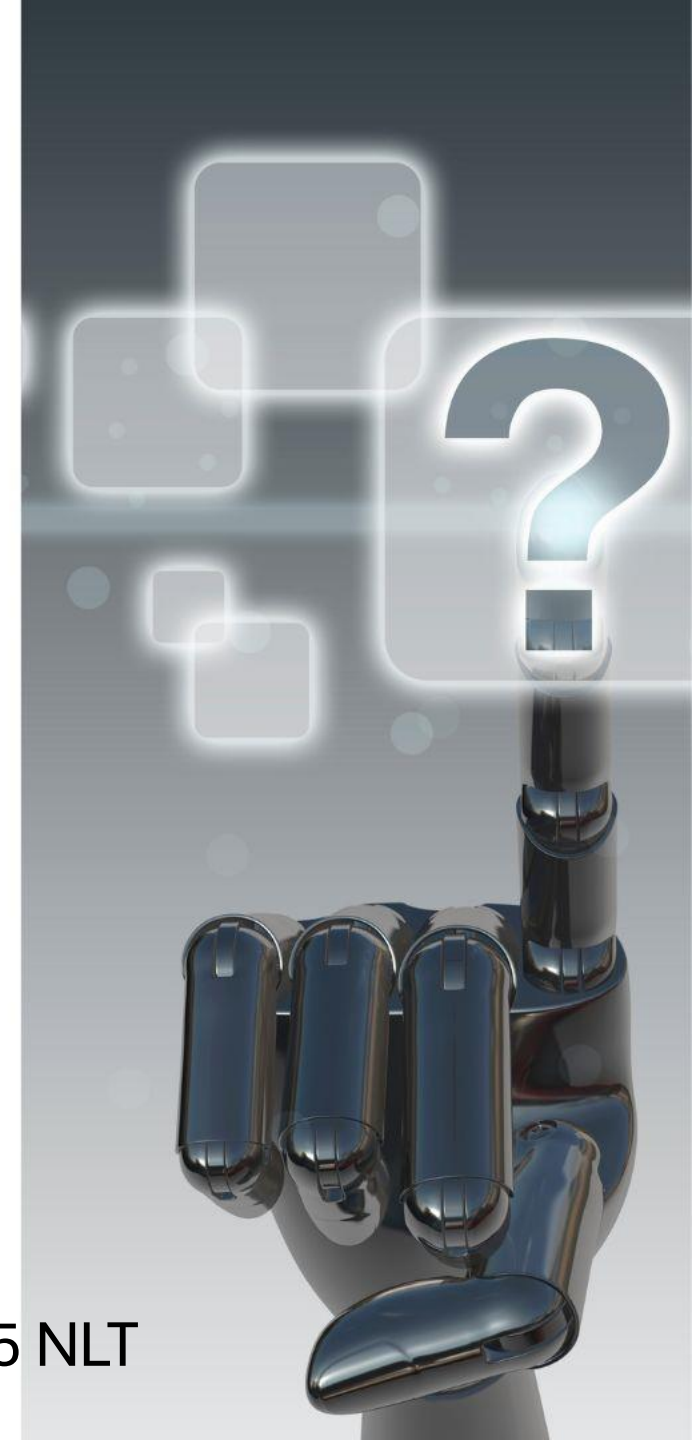
Ecc. 1:12-15 NLT



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To the teacher, God is ***distant, indifferent***, and sometimes ***cruel***.



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- Under the sun – personal experience in a ***fallen*** and ***broken*** world.
- All meaningless – the ***futility*** of it all, the opposite of ***glory***.
- Chasing the wind – even if you ***catch*** it, you still come up ***empty***.



⁹ So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before me, and my wisdom never failed me. ¹⁰ Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. ¹¹ But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

Ecc. 2:9-11 NLT





Ecc. 2:17-20 NLT

¹⁷ So I came to hate life because everything done here under the sun is so troubling. Everything is meaningless—like chasing the wind. ¹⁸ I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned. ¹⁹ And who can tell whether my successors will be wise or foolish? Yet they will control everything I have gained by my skill and hard work under the sun. How meaningless! ²⁰ So I gave up in despair, questioning the value of all my hard work in this world.

Though the Teacher expresses despair, he never advocates for *suicide* or *nihilism*.



²⁴ So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures are from the hand of God. ²⁵ For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him? ²⁶ God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him. But if a sinner becomes wealthy, God takes the wealth away and gives it to those who please him. This, too, is meaningless—like chasing the wind.



For the Teacher, meaning is not found
in *wisdom*, *hard work*, or *pleasure*.

