

*Theme Question:
Where do we find the greatest
good for people?*



*Ecclesiastes 6:12
For who knows what is good for man while
he lives the few days of his vain life, which
he passes like a shadow?*

*You an Author?
Your Best Wisdom*

Prologue

Dedication (to whom do I pass it on?)

Chapter 1

How do I value the best?

Chapter 2

Where have I found it?

Chapter 3

About friends

About family

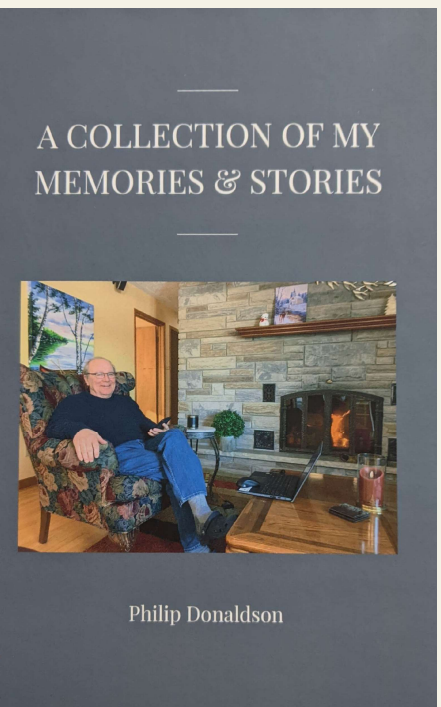
About faith

About fear

About the future...



A Collection of My Stories & Memories
Peggy Donaldson



What does the book's title mean?

Hebrew

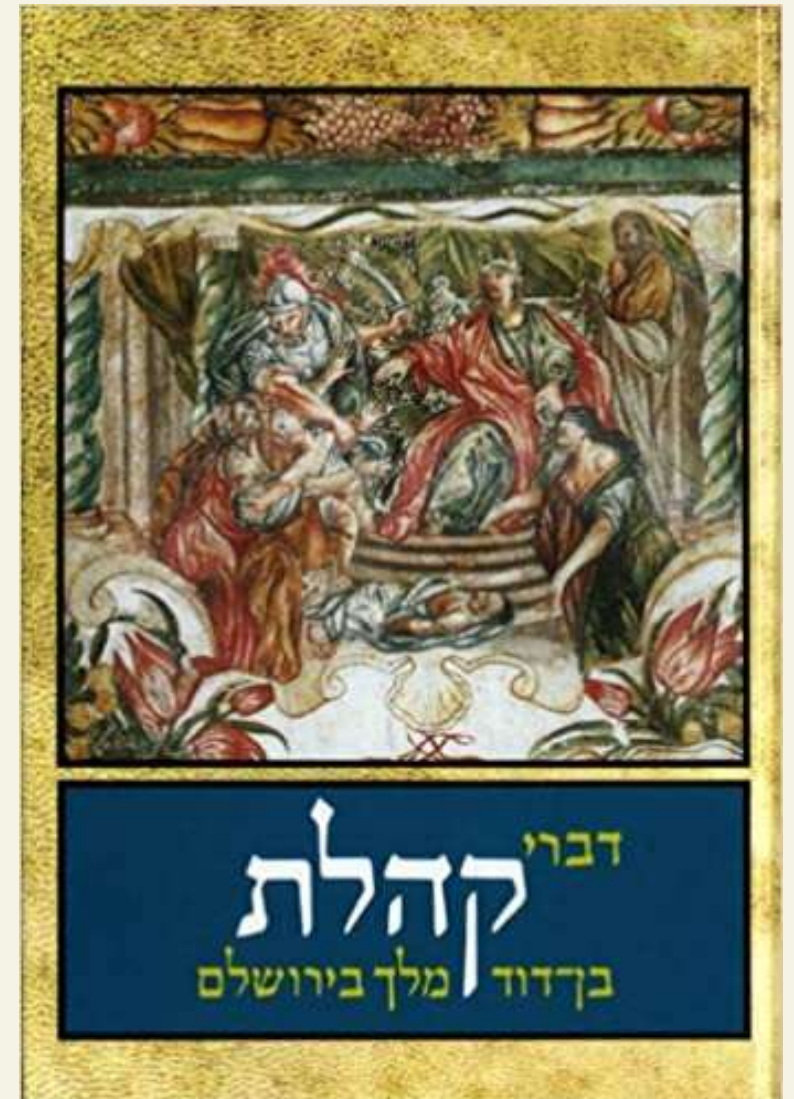
קְהֵלֶת qôheleth, ko-heh'-leth;

*Gatherer (for sharing as
with students)*

Greek Septuagint

Ἐκκλησιαστής

*To call out for a purpose
(NT church, ekklesia)*



Who wrote the book?
Who was the audience?

- **Author**

- 1. **King Solomon**
- 2. *Later collector, post exilic timeframe?*

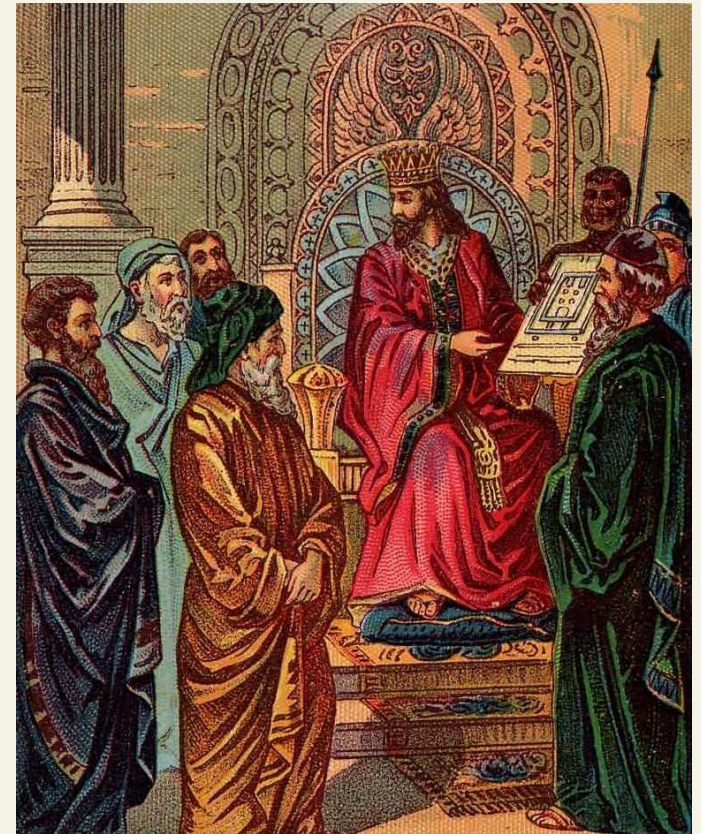
- **Internal evidence**

- *Direct*
- *Early Jewish writings*

- **Historical Setting**

- *Reign 971 to 931 BC*
- *Latter part of his life*

- *Ch 1:1,12,16*
- *Ch 2:3,8,..*



King Solomon Story

- *Son of King David & Bathsheba*
- *Kingship secured through murder*
- *His wisdom from grant by God*
- *Building and dedication of Temple*
- *Accumulation of wealth and influence*
- *His spiritual decline, a few steps to deep spiral of disobedience and sin*



- *2 Samuel 12:24 - 1 Kings 11:43;*
- *1 Chronicles 28, 29;*
- *2 Chronicles 1-10;*
- *Nehemiah 13:26;*
- *Psalms 72;*
- *Matthew 6:29, 12:42.*

Ecclesiastes Word Usage Stack (NIV)



56	man
41	time
41	god
35	meaningless
35	sun
29	wisdom
26	better
25	heart
24	wise
21	one
19	men
17	days
15	good
14	go
14	wind
14	fool
14	know

Meaning of "meaningless"?

- **הבל**
 - (phonetic) hevel
 - **Literal: Mist, vapour**
 - **Synonymous parallelism**
 - Chasing after the wind
 - **Metaphor for "of fleeting value"?**
 - **Must be interpreted in each context**



Various translations

- **NIV** **Meaningless**
- **AV, NKVJ** **Vanity**
- **NASB** **Futility**
- **Message** **Smoke**

Interpretation of metaphor?

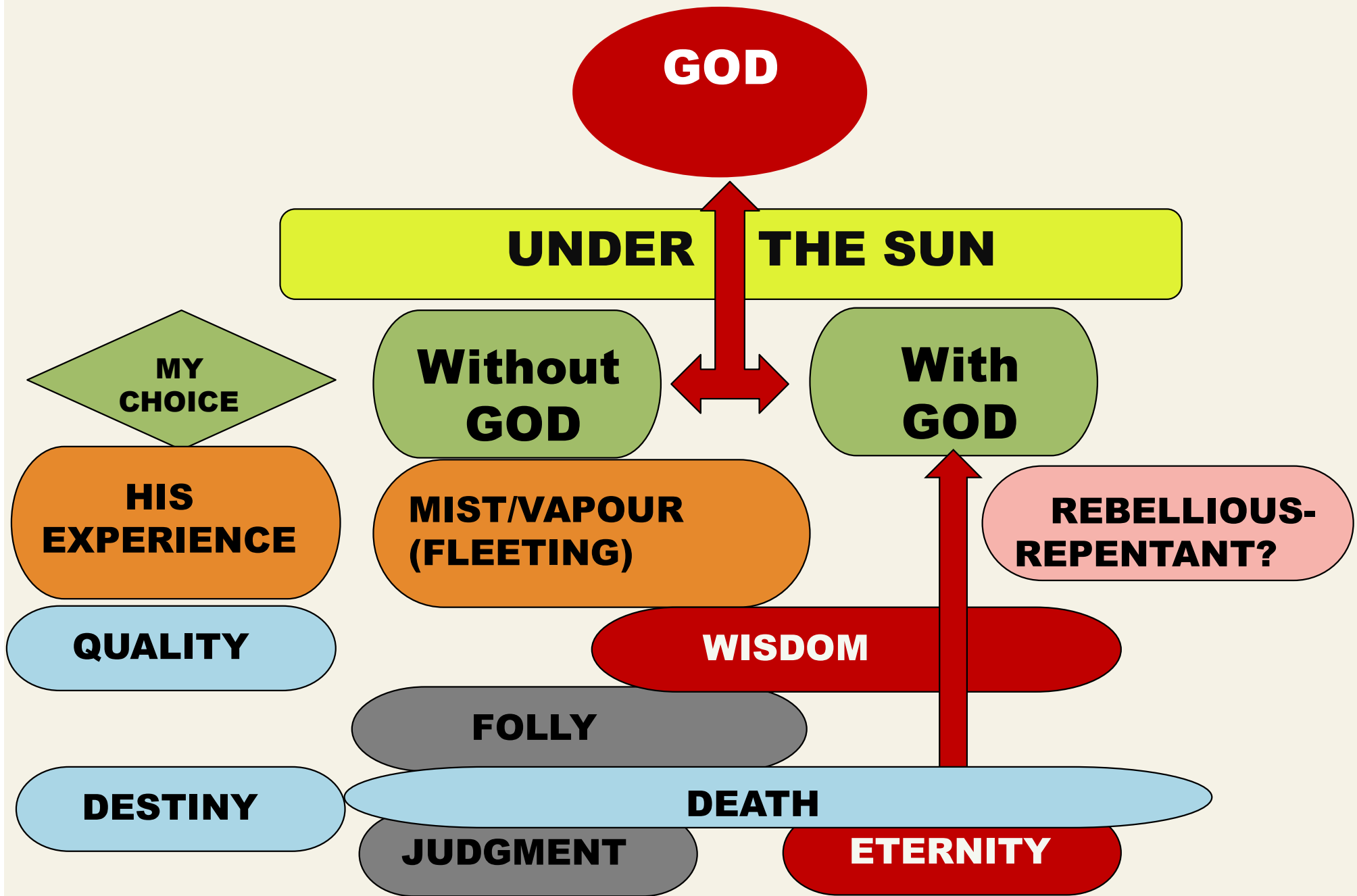


- *In each context throughout book*
 - *Start with actual meaning at the time*
 - *Interpret its use as metaphor in context*
 - *Example:*
- Ch 9:7 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that **God** favours what you do.
 - 8 Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil.
 - 9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this **meaningless-FLEETING** life that **God** has given you **under the sun** — all your **meaningless-FLEETING** days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labour under the sun.

Under the sun?

- *1. the world where people live*
- *2. perspective where people ignore God in how they choose to live in the world*
- *3. Solomon's own perspective where He ignored God in his choices*

What does "under the sun" mean?



Wisdom?

- *The ability to use your knowledge and experience to make **good** decisions and judgments (Cambridge)*
- *The soundness of an action or decision with regard to the application of experience, knowledge, and **good** judgment (Oxford)*
- ***Where do we find** the greatest good for people?*

Wisdom?

- **Usage in Ecclesiastes**

- *The opposite of madness and folly (1:17)*
- *The best application of knowledge (1:16)*
- *The source of the best wisdom is God (2:26)*
- *The capability to discern*
 - *The strategy and tactics that deliver the best results (2:3)*
 - » *The appropriate time (3)*
 - » *The best goals to strive for (6)*
 - » *The nature of the people and the situations around you (7)*
 - *The motivations that deliver the greater good (6:4)*
 - *The values of relationships (6:8)*
 - *The resolve for self control (7)*
- *The capabilities to learn from new knowledge & experience with resolve to improve*

Biblical Wisdom?

- **Source**
 - *Fear of God, Jesus & His Example, God's Word, Holy Spirit*
- **Partners (Receiving, Applying & Imparting)**
 - *Knowledge, Instruction, Understanding, Experience*
- **Types and Presentation**
 - *God's versus the world's folly*
 - *Choices and outcomes are best based on God's Character and Will*
- **Capabilities & Practiced Skills**
 - *Discretion*
 - *Judgment*
 - *Counsel*
 - *Reproof*
 - *Relational*
 - *Self Control*
 - *Humility*

Purposes in writing?

- *1. To show that all earthly goals viewed as ends in themselves result in a sense of valueless pursuit*
- *2. To demonstrate that ignoring God and living in disobedience is a slide to depths of sin, which leads to God's judgment*
- *3. To discern wisdom*
- *4. To exhort the younger generation to live with and for God as the key to the greatest good.*

Ch 1:4

Ch 11:9

Ch 12:1

Structure of the Book



Message #			
1	THE PROBLEM DEFINED	Introduction	Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
1	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	1. Methodology	Ecclesiastes 1:12-18
1	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	2. Testing of Wisdom	Ecclesiastes 2:1-11
2	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	3. Wisdom and Folly	Ecclesiastes 2:12-16
2	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	4. Toil, Work, Legacy	Ecclesiastes 2:17-23
2	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	5. Finding Satisfaction in God	Ecclesiastes 2:24-3:17
3	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	6. Dust to Dust	Ecclesiastes 3:18-22
3	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	7. Oppression & Evil	Ecclesiastes 4:1-6
3	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	8. Being Alone	Ecclesiastes 4:7-12
3	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	9. Kingship	Ecclesiastes 4:13-16
3	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	10. The Mouth & Vows	Ecclesiastes 5:1-8
4	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	11. Wealth	Ecclesiastes 5:9-6:12
4	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	12. The Better Good	Ecclesiastes 7:1-29
5	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	13. Wisdom & Governance	Ecclesiastes 8:1-14
5	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	14. Our Common Destiny	Ecclesiastes 8:15-9:12
5	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	15. The Wise & The Fool	Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20
6	THE PROBLEM STUDIED	16. Sowing & Reaping	Ecclesiastes 11:1-8
6	THE PROBLEM'S SOLUTION	The Solution	Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:12

The starting point for the Preacher

- ***The problem stated***

- ***Everything is fleeting***

- ***The earth continues***

- ***All passes away***

- ***What is the value of our life?***

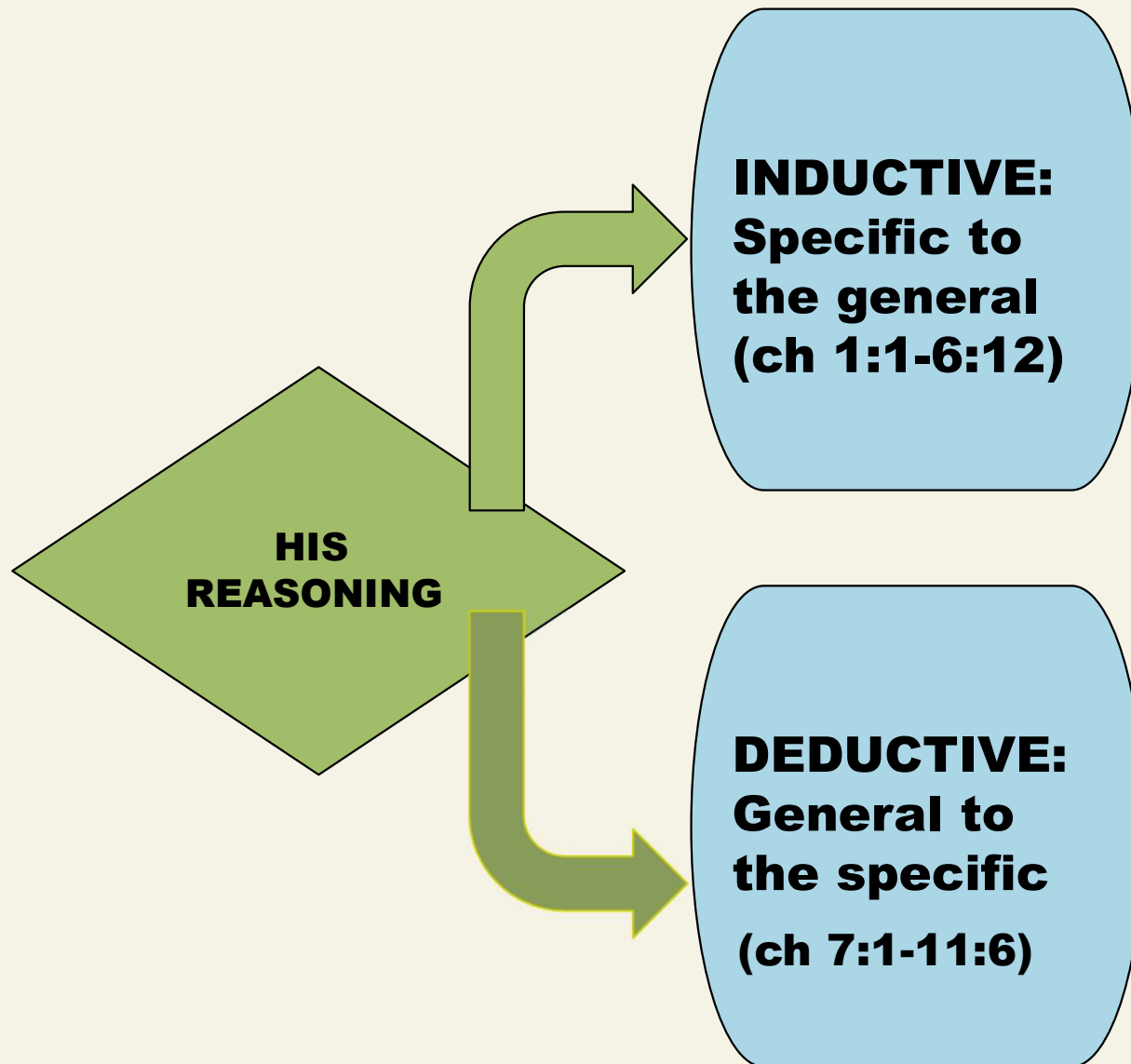
Ecclesiastes 1:1-12

The starting point for the Preacher

Ecclesiastes 1:13-18

- 12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem.
- 13 I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men!
- 14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.
- 15 What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.
- 16 I thought to myself, "Look, I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge."
- 17 Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.
- 18 For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.

Solomon's Methodology



- **Experience to conclusion**

- **Perspective of the pursuit of the better without God**

The Experience of Solomon

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

- I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with **PLEASURE** to find out what is good." But that also proved to be **fleeting**.
- 2 "**LAUGHTER**," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?"
- 3 I tried cheering myself with **WINE**, and embracing **FOLLY** — my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worth while for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.
- 4 I undertook great projects: I built **HOUSES** for myself and planted **VINEYARDS**.
- 5 I made **GARDENS** and **PARKS** and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.
- 6 I made **RESERVOIRS** to water groves of flourishing trees.

The Experience of Solomon

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11

- 7 I bought male and female **SLAVES** and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me.
- 8 I amassed **SILVER AND GOLD** for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women **SINGERS**, and a **HAREM** as well — the delights of the heart of man.
- 9 I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.
- 10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my **WORK**, and this was the reward for all my labour.
- 11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, **everything was fleeting**, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

Why study the words of the Preacher?

- *Learn from one who "had it all"*
 - *Wisdom started as a gift from God*
- *Don't take any steps towards the abyss*
- *Value the discerning that only turning to God's wisdom will bring the greatest good in this fleeting life*
- *Maintain your eternal perspective*
- *End well on the path God started in you*
- *Do we really seek the greatest possible good?*

