

LSJS TANACH COURSE
Sefer Kohelet (Book of Ecclesiastes)

Outline by chapter
(Aided in part by Da'at Ha'mikrah)

Chapter 1

1. "All is vanity" (1:2)
2. Cyclical nature of nature
3. Futility of life and wickedness of man
4. Acquisition of knowledge/ wisdom provides no solution to meaning/ purpose of life

Chapter 2

1. Indulging in physical pleasures, great acquisitions and projects, "*and behold everything is vanity, and there is no profit under the sun*" (2:12)
2. Wisdom is better than folly, with one event awaiting all. (2:14)

Chapter 3

1. "There is time for every matter under heaven" (3:1-8)
2. Who God has given man, but man cannot understand God.
3. "*There is nothing better than to rejoice and do good, and eat and drink. It is the gift of God*"
4. There is no justice in the world except divine justice.
5. The similarity between men and animals; all come from dust, and to dust they return" (3:20)

Chapter 4

1. Does the solution lie in human relations?
2. The variable examined:
 - o Suffering of the oppressed
 - o Human jealousy
 - o Pursuit of wealth
3. Conclusions! "*Two are better than one*".
4. hope for improvement in future generations is futile (4:9)
5. Is the answer in the *Beit Hamikdash* (Temple)? (This is continued in chapter 5)

Chapter 5

1. Take care of how you speak/ think of God. (5:1-2)
2. Beware of taking oaths. (5:3-5) – (based on Deut. 23,:22)
3. Fear God (5:6)
4. When you witness poverty and oppression do not be lead to question divine providence.
5. The labourer versus the one who accumulates wealth (continued in chapter 6)

Chapter 6

1. In the future the one who accumulates wealth; loneliness, misery, joyless – and destined to lose it to a stranger.
2. Not only does wealth harm its owner, you can't ensure its transmission to next generation.
3. "*For who knows what is good for man in his lifetime, the number of days of his life of vanity...*" (6:12)

Chapter 7

1. Death is better than birth, and mourning is preferable to laughter and partying (7:1-4)
2. Rebuke of the wise is better than taunts of the fools (7:5-7)
3. *"The end of the thing is better than the beginning"* (7:8), patience is better than haughtiness and haste.
4. *"Whoever is in the shade of wisdom is in the shade of money."* (7:12)
5. A good day and a day of adversity.
6. Examining the suffering of the righteous and success of the wicked.
7. Wisdom is a great distance away! Beware the evil woman, and *"one is a thousand..."*

Chapter 8

1. Praise the wise and obey the king's words. (8:1-4)
2. Every desire has times and a judgement
3. Human beings (and even a king) cannot control deaths
4. The wicked will worship at the Temple and their evil deeds are forgotten (hypocrisy)
5. *Kohelet* believes (despite this) that righteousness will prosper and the wicked will suffer.
6. And yet, reality shows that the opposite is true, and *"this too is vanity,"* (8:14)
7. The wise will not be able to comprehend this, so they should eat, drink and be merry. (8:15)

Chapter 9

1. Everything is in God's hands, even love and hate.
2. One event awaits all men, both the righteous and the wicked.
3. Yet, life is better than death.
4. How to lead the good life (9:7-10)
5. Success of a man is not in his hands.
6. Wisdom is better than weapons, and one sinner can destroy much good. (9:18)

Chapter 10

1. Foolishness and the fool. (10:1-5)
2. Folly at great heights.
3. The fool does not beware
4. The words of the wise and the words of the fool
5. On the folly of princes and kings.
6. Laziness and waste.

Chapter 11

1. Cast your bread upon the waters (11:1)
2. Sow your seeds and live your life, for you do not know your future.
3. Rejoice in life when it's good, but remember there will be much more suffering, that's life.
4. Rejoice in your youth sombre anger and evil, and remember that you will not last.

Chapter 12

1. *"And remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of evil come, and fears arise about which you will say, 'I have no desire in them.'"* (12:1) – the decline of age.
2. The end of man – *"dust returns to the earth, and the sprite returns to God..."* (12:7)
3. The conclusion (12:8-14)
4. *"The ends of the matter, everything having been heard, fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the entire man."* (12:14)