

# 26-0301a - Detailed Summary

## 26-0301a - *Chasing the Wind*, Tom Freed

**Bible Readers:** Mike Mathis and John Nousek This detailed summary by Grok, xAI, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

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## Chasing the Wind

### *Solomon's Search for Meaning Under the Sun*

#### Scripture Readings

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading** (0:04 - 0:31): Mike Mathis

**Ecclesiastes 1:2:** The service begins with Mike reading

Ecclesiastes 1:2: "Vanity of vanities, says the preacher. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** (0:36 - 1:02): John Nousek

**Ecclesiastes 1:14:** John follows with Ecclesiastes 1:14: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun. And indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind."

## Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 33:06), Preacher: Tom Freed

### (1:07 - 4:06) Opening Scripture Readings and Introduction

The preacher, Tom, greets the congregation warmly and explains that Ecclesiastes has inspired him to preach on it both morning and evening. He admits the book appeals to his own negative tendencies, which he struggles with, but notes it appears bleak yet ends uplifting. Today's sermon is titled "Chasing the Wind," focusing on Solomon's search for meaning "under the sun." Tom describes Solomon as the wisest man of the ancient world, possessing unimaginable wealth, power, palaces, vineyards, servants, armies, peace, and every pleasure imaginable. Solomon built the magnificent temple in Jerusalem and an even larger personal palace. Despite achieving everything, Solomon's final verdict on his life is "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Tradition identifies the preacher in Ecclesiastes as Solomon, offering one of the Bible's most raw and honest examinations of life—declaring everything vanity while still pointing toward hope. Solomon conducted history's greatest personal experiment, deliberately testing wisdom, pleasure, work, wealth, and achievement to find what truly satisfies the human soul.

### (4:08 - 4:43) Solomon's Conclusion: All Is Vapor

Solomon pursued every possible experience without restraint or expense, yet reached the stark conclusion that all is vapor. The Hebrew word translated as "vanity" is **hebel**, appearing 38 times in Ecclesiastes. Literally meaning vapor, mist, breath, or puff of wind, **hebel** evokes the image of breath visible on a cold morning—real and beautiful for a moment, but impossible to grasp or hold. Achievements, pursuits, and life itself seem substantial but vanish like mist through the fingers.

## **(4:45 - 6:59) The Fleeting Nature of Wealth and Modern Parallels**

Solomon illustrates the transience of riches in Proverbs 23:5, where wealth sprouts wings and flies away like an eagle. The preacher connects this to everyday experience: people save money only to face sudden car repairs, medical bills, or emergencies that wipe it out. Even billionaires lose fortunes overnight. Modern society mirrors Solomon's pursuits—obsessing over wealth, pleasure, knowledge, status, experiences, promotions, bigger homes, better cars, and relationships—yet many feel persistent emptiness despite gains. People chase the next thing expecting lasting happiness, but satisfaction remains temporary, leading to further chasing.

## **(7:01 - 8:30) Insatiable Human Desires**

Solomon discovered that humans are rarely satisfied; getting what is wanted only fuels desire for more. He captures this in Proverbs 27:20: "Death and destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man." Just as the grave never says "enough," human desires remain perpetually hungry. Ecclesiastes 5:10 states directly: whoever loves money never has enough and is never satisfied with income—this too is meaningless. Even millionaires and billionaires continue accumulating despite unimaginable wealth, always wanting more. The preacher shares personally that he earns more than imagined yet feels more broke than ever, as increased income leads to spending on bigger and better things.

## **(8:31 - 9:24) Material Things Cannot Satisfy the Heart**

No one can ultimately be satisfied with more money or possessions. The heart cannot be filled by material things; they promise fulfillment but deepen the void, resulting in more chasing after the wind. The sermon will explore Solomon's life—his unrivaled wisdom, wealth, and power—to show how even the greatest earthly gains prove empty apart from God. The preacher hopes listeners will examine their own pursuits and discover true meaning in fearing God and keeping His commandments, as Solomon concludes in Ecclesiastes 12:13.

## **(9:25 - 15:51) Solomon's Unmatched Wisdom and Its Limits**

The sermon turns to Solomon's wisdom as the foundation of his reign. In 1 Kings 3, Solomon asked God for wisdom to govern Israel, and God granted him a uniquely wise and discerning heart unlike any before or after (1 Kings 3:12). Kings and queens traveled great distances to hear him. 1 Kings 4:33 describes his vast knowledge across nature: trees (from cedars of Lebanon to hyssop), beasts, birds, creeping things, and fish—equivalent to advanced expertise in botany, zoology, ornithology, herpetology/entomology, and ichthyology. He composed 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32), attracting visitors from all nations (1 Kings 4:34). In modern terms, Solomon was a polymath celebrity combining brilliance, wealth, influence, songwriting, and teaching—more famous through word of mouth than today's social media stars. Yet in Ecclesiastes 1:16-18, he reflects that despite surpassing all prior rulers in wisdom and knowledge, even this pursuit of wisdom, madness, and folly proved to be chasing after the wind. Greater wisdom brings greater sorrow, and more knowledge brings more grief. Highly intelligent people often experience more depression because they perceive the world's unsolved problems clearly. Wisdom apart from an eternal perspective only reveals brokenness, cycles without purpose, and problems without ultimate solutions.

## **(15:52 - 19:23) Wisdom's Emptiness and Wealth's Insufficiency**

If the smartest man found knowledge empty, it challenges modern obsessions with endless degrees, certifications, and education for fulfillment, status, or security. Solomon shows these are vapor unless rooted in the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"). Many pursue perpetual schooling instead of practical work or Bible study, wasting time and money. Turning to wealth, Solomon received 666 talents of gold annually (about 25 tons, roughly \$4 billion today at current prices, 1 Kings 10:14), with silver as common as stones (1 Kings 10:27), plus immense income from trade, tributes, and gifts—potentially \$10-20 billion yearly. He built the temple, a 13-year palace, and exotic gardens. The Queen of Sheba declared the reports of his wisdom and prosperity fell short of reality (1 Kings 10:7). His throne was ivory overlaid with gold, household items were gold, and ships imported peacocks and precious stones. In power, he ruled vast territory with 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen (1 Kings 10:26), unmatched in splendor. Yet even this staggering wealth, achievement, and power could not fill his soul's emptiness.

## **(19:25 - 21:36) Solomon's Experiments with Wealth and Pleasure**

Solomon details his extensive pursuits in Ecclesiastes 2:4-11, describing great projects: building houses, planting vineyards, creating gardens and parks with all kinds of fruit trees, constructing reservoirs to water flourishing trees, acquiring male and female slaves along with those born in his household, amassing more herds and flocks than anyone before him in Jerusalem, accumulating silver and gold, collecting treasures from kings and provinces, hiring men and women singers, and maintaining a harem for the delight of the heart. He became greater than anyone before him in Jerusalem, denying himself nothing his eyes desired or his heart craved, finding temporary delight in his labor. Yet, upon surveying everything his hands had achieved, he concluded it was all meaningless—a chasing after the wind—with nothing gained under the sun. The preacher notes this sounds depressing, as Solomon accomplished everything imaginable yet felt it meant nothing. This mirrors modern celebrities and athletes who attain fame, fortune, mansions, cars, endorsements, and adoring crowds, only to confess deep emptiness despite it all.

## **(21:39 - 24:16) Modern Examples of Emptiness in Success**

Some champions declare that after winning a world title or championship, there is nothing left to live for. Extreme misery has led some to contemplate suicide. Deion Sanders exemplifies this: achieving NFL stardom, Super Bowl rings, millions in wealth, countless relationships, worldwide fame, and even a rap career with the song "Must Be the Money." Behind the glamour, he was broken, depressed, empty, and once suicidal. He hit rock bottom until surrendering his life to Christ, after which he found real purpose and now speaks openly about Jesus transforming everything. Many celebrities follow similar patterns—depression, drug use, overdoses, and alcoholism—but some find Christ and fill the void. Solomon's pursuit of opulence and power evaporated like mist without enduring joy. Jesus warned against greed in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:15-21), stating life does not consist in an abundance of possessions, directly opposing the world's message that "he who has the most toys wins."

## **(24:17 - 26:18) Dangers of Loving Possessions and the Rich Fool**

The preacher admits loving cars himself but notes possessions bring pain, breakdowns, expenses,

and anxiety. In the parable, the rich man builds bigger barns for his abundant crops and goods, only for God to call him a fool that night when his soul is required. The preacher recalls a former boss who worked 16-hour days into old age, even while dying of cancer, still fixated on business, money, and politics instead of enjoying life. Fortunes and empires built over lifetimes often crumble overnight or are left to heirs who squander them quickly. Jesus teaches in Matthew 6:19-21 not to store up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in, but to store treasures in heaven where they are secure, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

### **(26:20 - 27:40) Vanity of Earthly Treasures Without God**

Solomon's palaces, vineyards, and gold heaps, like the rich fool's barns, end the same way—meaningless when amassed for self without being rich toward God. All glittering things pursued are vain without the Lord; chasing them is chasing after the wind. Power amplified Solomon's pursuits as king with absolute authority, yet Ecclesiastes 4:1 laments oppression under the sun, with the powerless weeping without comfort—his rule could not end injustice. Pleasure included denying himself nothing: wine, women (1,000 wives and concubines per 1 Kings 11:3), laughter, and folly (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3), yet all returned to vanity because these pursuits remain temporal, lacking eternal anchor.

### **(27:42 - 29:18) Solomon's Downfall and Warning**

Solomon's heart turned away from God in 1 Kings 11 through foreign wives, leading him to worship their gods and causing Israel to stray. His wealth, wisdom, and power became snares that pulled him from the Lord. Even today, wealth and possessions can turn people away from God. Solomon serves as the ultimate example: the man who pursued worldly success—education, knowledge, money, possessions, power, pleasure—more thoroughly than anyone, yet declared it all vanity. Modern pursuits mirror this: chasing degrees for identity, hoarding money and stuff for security, climbing for status, and seeking every pleasure in a short life. Without God at the center, these multiply emptiness, unable to satisfy a soul created for Him.

### **(29:21 - 30:45) Choice Between God and Worldly Pursuits**

Many realize these worldly chases are vain. Jesus states in Matthew 6:24 that no one can serve two masters—you cannot serve God and money (mammon). The choice is clear: pursue worldly things or pursue the Lord, His word, and what pleases Him. Jesus could have surpassed Solomon in wealth and kingship but chose homelessness and poverty, dedicating His life to God's will because He knew earthly things are meaningless. Listeners are urged to examine their lives: What vanities are being pursued? Is the heart set on earthly treasures that decay? Solomon's story calls for repentance from vain pursuits and turning to the One offering lasting fulfillment.

### **(30:49 - 31:48) Solomon's Final Conclusion**

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 provides the conclusion: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil." This is life's purpose—simple yet difficult amid material temptations. The preacher urges stopping the chase after wind; Solomon tried everything and found it empty. Yet hope exists beyond vanity.

## **(31:50 - 33:06) Hope in Christ and Invitation to Respond**

In Christ is living water that satisfies forever (John 4:14), wisdom incarnate (1 Corinthians 1:30), forgiveness, purpose, and unfading treasure in heaven (1 Peter 1:4). True life comes not from worldly pursuits but from relationship with the living God through Jesus, who died for sins and rose again. If the Holy Spirit convicts anyone that money, possessions, education, or success have left them empty, they should not leave unchanged. An invitation is extended: if someone has never surrendered to Christ or has wandered and wants to return, come forward now. The church will pray, assist with baptism into Christ for forgiveness and new life. Believers struggling are also invited to come for prayer and support. As the congregation sings, anyone moved by the Spirit should respond by coming forward.