

**Christ in Prophecy**  
**Jesus in the Old Testament 28**  
**Meaning in the Midst of Vanity (Ecclesiastes)**  
**Key Verses: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**

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## Opening

**Tim Moore:** Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope. Thanks for joining us for this episode of Christ in Prophecy. As we continue on our Jesus in the Old Testament series, we're still in the wisdom literature at the center of your Bible. Along with Psalms and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes offers specific insights on worship and wisdom.

**Nathan Jones:** Although the writer of Ecclesiastes does not identify himself by name, several clues and common understanding points to Solomon as the original author. Solomon certainly had the opportunity to witness much during his lifetime, from his lofty heights of his unmatched wisdom to the despair of wandering away from God and coming to the end of himself.

**Tim Moore:** The author does identify himself as the son of David, and one given to much wisdom. Yet he calls himself the preacher, emphasizing that he had much to say, and that his urgent message contains godly instruction. Without being emphatic, we accept that Solomon was the author, which dates this book around 930 BC.

**Nathan Jones:** The writer sets a tone early in this short, 12 chapter book that all is futile. That is the attitude of someone given over to despair, not someone trusting in the Lord. And yet, it is a thought that crosses the mind of most men and women at some point in their life. They simply grow weary and they wonder, what's the point?

**Tim Moore:** We want to encourage you not to give in to that kind of despair, even as we recognize that it creeps into our lives as fallen human beings. Left to our own devices, we would have no hope and would be consigned to discouragement and despair. That is the kind of attitude our society's culture of death embraces, and it leads inevitably to young and old alike concluding that life has no meaning.

**Nathan Jones:** But as we'll discover today, the author of Ecclesiastes came full circle to find meaning in the midst of vanity.

## Part 1- Interview with Pastor Robert J. Morgan

**Tim Moore:** I was first introduced to our guest today while he was the pastor of The Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee, where my brother and his wife attended. Robert Morgan has the incredible gift of having a photographic memory, and an anointed ability to preach the Word of God.

Even then he was a recognized author with great talent. And today, his ministry focuses on writing. I keep two of his daily devotionals by my bed to this day and am grateful for the insights and biblical truths that he communicates through his clear and succinct writing.

Rob, thank you so much for connecting with through Zoom today from Nashville we are delighted you could be on with us.

**Rob Morgan:** Well, it is my joy, both Tim and Nathan, thank you for letting me be here. And thank you for the ministry you have and the people you reach. I appreciate the invitation.

**Tim Moore:** Well, thank you sir, it is really a blessing for us and I know it will be a blessing for our viewers. I have to observe this you are no longer actively pastoring, but the role of pastor has to be one of the most difficult and often thankless jobs. Because not unlike kings and presidents and prime ministers you don't always have the privilege of unloading some of the burden that you must carry on behalf of your flock. And sort of like the writer of Ecclesiastes you are often exposed to much that is good or bad or sometimes even ugly.

**Rob Morgan:** Well, I love being a pastor. I was the senior pastor from 1978 until just about five years ago, and my wife Katrina became disabled with multiple sclerosis and I couldn't be a full-time pastor and a full-time caregiver. So, I changed my role at the church, or with the church's permission, we shifted roles so that now I am a teaching pastor there, and my wife has gone on to Heaven. But I still preach at my church once a month, and I teach a Wednesday night class.

So, I am still involved in pastoring. But the wonderful thing about pastoring is the opportunity of teaching and preaching God's Word. As long as I stayed in the Scripture and I've viewed my primary purpose the exposition of Scripture to feed the flock, then I never got burned out. And there were a lot of burdens. There are a lot of hardships to being a pastor. But when your occupation gives you the opportunity of devoting outsized amounts of time to Bible study and the preparation for teaching it and preaching it, then well, that is the greatest thing in the world.

And I miss it, but I'm still able to be very involved with it, and not only at my local church, but as you said, through speaking and through the ministry of writing.

**Tim Moore:** Yes, sir.

**Nathan Jones:** Well, Pastor Morgan your writings have inspired me for many years, so thank you so much. Well, Solomon wrote Proverbs, and that is a book of Wisdom, we come to Ecclesiastes and he says in chapter 1:13, "in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain." So, is Solomon telling us then that we should only seek a little wisdom and a limited amount of knowledge?

**Rob Morgan:** Well, I have a view of Ecclesiastes, I think maybe you will share it, that Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes after his years of apostasy. He came back to the Lord and he created what amounts to a philosophy class for the students in Jerusalem. I don't know that he didn't go to the University of Jerusalem, such as it was in that time, and teach. And he was teaching that under the sun then wisdom has great limitations, that if you only accept a materialistic view of life. And the more you learn the more discouraged you become because everything ends in death. But if you look at things above the sun, that is things related to God, and to eternity then wisdom leads to great joy.

You know the book of James talks about the wisdom from above, and the wisdom from below. So, the wisdom from below leads to a great deal of despair because we can't find the real answers we need simply from a materialistic worldview. But the wisdom from above we can never get too much of that, and that is primarily embedded in the Scripture. So, it depends on which kind of wisdom you are talking about.

**Tim Moore:** It certainly does. And obviously for many of our viewers and much of the world our focus tends to be on worldly things if we get caught up in the day-by-day. And so, even as our point is not to criticize our current leaders, there does seem to be a great lack of wisdom in our society today. So, listening especially to the banal comments of some of our top leaders just this year as war was unleashed in Europe you get a sense that we are not being led sometimes by our best and brightest. So, what is a Christian to do when national and cultural leaders seem determined to drive us over a cliff?

**Rob Morgan:** Well, yes, this has always been a problem since the days of Elijah and Elisha, really since the days of Enoch who was a preacher of righteousness. The typical pattern for God's people throughout history has been that we are a minority who have things to say that are not necessarily appreciated by the majority, and we are called to say it anyway. John the Baptist said that he was a voice crying in the wilderness. By that he was saying well, this is a great wilderness here in terms of the number of people in front of me who really want to hear what I have to say, but I am going to cry out anyway.

The same was true for all of the great prophets. Jeremiah had almost nobody who listened to him but he continued preaching truth to culture. Isaiah had a better reception because he was a little bit earlier in Israel's history. Jesus of course was crucified. The Apostle Paul endured a great deal of hostility. And John the apostle was banished on the Island of Patmos. So, it's always been true that believers have something to say that the world needs to hear. We are commissioned to say it. We say it in the spirit of Elijah, and the spirit of Elisha, and the spirit of John the Baptist, and of Jesus, and of Paul, and of John.

And then we find our refuge and our hiding place in Christ. One of my favorite hymns says, "And heavenly love abiding, no change my heart shall fear; and safe is such confiding, for nothing changes here. The storm may rage without me, my heart may low be laid, but God is round about me, and can I be dismayed?"

So, my own attitude is to be intrepid, audacious, I don't want to be rude or needlessly offensive but God has called us to preach the truth to this society. And whether they listen or whether they don't He will protect us as we give this world the Word that they need to hear.

**Tim Moore:** Amen.

**Nathan Jones:** Amen. I think back in the 60s before my time, but there was a famous passage Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and it talks about word for word the song writer was Pete Singer and he made a famous song, you are probably familiar with by the Byrds called "Turn! Turn! Turn! To Everything There is a Season. Turn! Turn! Turn!" And that song became a Bible passage most people memorized because they sang the song all the time, and it reflected the angst of that era. Would you say then that we are living in a time period of great angst? And that this song and this passage is now relevant again today?

**Rob Morgan:** Well, I'm old enough to remember that song. I remember when it came out, and we were all listening to it on the radio and sort of thrilled that somebody was using the Bible for lyrics. It was also John F. Kennedy's favorite passage, and if he was going to quote a passage he would quote this one. And just today I read about a pastor in Ukraine, they asked him what Scripture is keeping you going? And he said it is the Scripture in Ecclesiastes 3 that there is a "time for peace and a time for war." And he said, "And this is a time for war when we've got to fight for our freedom."

So, this is a passage that talks about the cycles that we go through in life, the stages that are cyclical in history, we see that it is true. But also, that passage ends with a very hopeful word in chapter 3. It says in Ecclesiastes 3:12, I know regardless of these cycles, "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in their own work, for this is the gift of God." So, in the middle of all of the changes and the transitions of life one thing doesn't change for those of us who know Him. We eat and drink and go about our work with the joy that God gives us regardless of the changing times and season. And I've found this to be very true.

**Tim Moore:** And very encouraging as well. Rob, you touched on the war that occurred this year in Ukraine and the horrible truth of chapter 4, the evils of oppression has come into stark clarity once again. So, the author, we think is obviously Solomon, has witnessed acts of oppression and has seen tears of the oppressed but he realizes that on the side of the oppressors was power and they had no one to comfort them. And again, that does seem to describe the horrible tragedy that Russia recently inflicted upon Ukraine.

**Rob Morgan:** It is ruthless. It is evil. And it is in the spirit of the Antichrist.

I've been doing a series of studies the last few days, I'm working on a podcast on the Antichrist, the biblical biography of the Antichrist. And it goes all the way back to Nimrod. It goes all the way back really to Genesis 3:15, the seed of the serpent who will become the great enemy of the seed of the woman. And Daniel talks a great deal about the Antichrist. Isaiah refers to him, and so does Zechariah, Jesus does, Paul calls him the man of lawlessness, and he's fully described for us in the book of Revelation. But there are a lot of lead ups to the Antichrist. Ruthless rulers who are godless and insane and supernatural in their level of evil. And it's all leading towards the ultimate Antichrist at the end of the age.

But when you see someone like Vladimir Putin who thinks nothing about sending a missile into a maternity ward, or starving children, or torturing people in all kinds of gruesome ways, or poisoning his enemies and he is absolutely godless, then that is the kind of evil that is going to one day be eradicated. It will be eradicated when Christ comes again. But this war and rumor of war cycle is going to get worse until the end of time. So, I think what we see right now in Ukraine is a prelude to the eventual battle of Armageddon. It is a preview of the eventual Antichrist. And it is sheer supernatural, demonic evil that we see being portrayed right now on our screens.

**Nathan Jones:** As we are looking at the Old Testament, and we are trying to find Jesus in it, we have been looking at typologies in this series, we've been looking at Christophanies and symbols. Can you find Jesus in the book of Ecclesiastes?

**Rob Morgan:** Well, yes, absolutely. You see Him in the author of Ecclesiastes. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived up to the time of Christ. He was the son of David who reigned over the kingdom of Israel, and what was a preview of the Millennium.

Now, Jesus said when He was on earth He said, “Now there is a greater than Solomon, a greater than Solomon is here.” And so, He was saying Solomon was a prototype, a miniature preview of me. He was wise. He had answers to life. He could resolve riddles and puzzles. He knew everything that anybody could know that would be helpful. And He reigned over a kingdom as the son of David, in which His people were happy, the borders were expansive, the silver and gold characterized his empire, but it was all flawed. And Solomon himself was a sinner, but I am a greater than Solomon, I can really answer your questions. I really possess wisdom and I will bring in that ultimate kingdom of which Solomon’s was only a precursor.

So, I think the very author of Ecclesiastes is a type of Christ, in our Lord’s own words, we can say that with biblical authority. The wisdom that we find in the book of Ecclesiastes represents Christ. And at the very end of the book it says, “Like a shepherd bangs into a board different nails, so I am banging into a book different truths that will stand the test of time.” And when we look at the Bible it is one book, made out of these 66 different nails that are embedded in it, Ecclesiastes being one of them, and which represents to us the Shepherd who gave us the Word of God. So, there are some various indicators or adumbrations of Jesus Christ within the book of Ecclesiastes. He is there just like He is in all of the other 39 books of the Old Testament.

**Tim Moore:** Well, Rob I’ve already mentioned that your anointed writing has been a blessing to me. I have two of your devotionals on my nightstand right now I reference every day. But you have written another book, you have it there in the background, *The 50 Final Events in World History*. So, what motivated you to write that book? And what do you see as the culmination of events pointing to the end times that we speak to all the time?

**Rob Morgan:** Yes, I want to talk about the book of Revelation, the Bible’s last words on earth’s final days. And I think that this is a very important subject because all of the 66 books of the Bible lead to Revelation; the other 65 would be incomplete. The Bible would end with the book of Jude, which is a wonderful book but it is not an appropriate book for ending God’s precious word. And so, the 65 books from Genesis to Jude simply lead us to Revelation. And then the 22 chapters of Revelation lead us to Heaven.

And the portrait of Jesus Christ that is painted in the Bible would be incomplete without the finishing brush strokes that we have in the book of Revelation. And this book is not called obscurity. It is not called confusion. It is called Revelation. The Bible in Revelation 1:1 says, “That God gave it to show His servants what must soon take place.” And we are living on the very edge, at the very crest of prophetic times. And I believe that I can explain the book of Revelation simply, and as easily as, well, I think that I could teach a middle schooler, the pattern and program of God’s future history for the earth that is imbedded in the book of Revelation and we need this.

And so, I wrote, *The 50 Final Events of World History* to demystify the book of Revelation and to teach people in these days exactly what God wanted to say at the very end of His book, the Bible.

**Tim Moore:** Wonderful.

**Nathan Jones:** That is excellent. That is a great way to sum up the book of Revelation. Let's sum up the book of Ecclesiastes. The final insight Solomon gives us is this: "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." Then we can go up to John 3:36 where it tells us to flee from the wrath that is to come and then into the loving arms of our Savior. So, as the world continues to get dark what kind of hope can you give us?

**Rob Morgan:** Well, our hope has to be interwoven with warnings. You know the prophets were big about warnings. The Lord Jesus Christ was constantly warning people to be on guard against things that might be coming. The Apostle Paul would warn people. The book of Revelation is filled with warnings. And people right now don't heed warnings very well. They wait until the air raid sirens go off, that jolts them out of bed, and by then it may be too late. So, we have got to warn people of the wrath to come, of the judgment of God, that we are all going to stand before Him. And those without Christ will stand at the Great White Throne judgment to be condemned. And it is a frightening thing to think that we will stand, that we are in the hands of the living God.

So, to give this warning is the biblical thing. But then to quickly say God loves us, and Jesus came, and died on the cross and rose from the dead for us, and we must believe on Him and if we do we have eternal life. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and I am the life. He who believes in Me, though he should die, yet shall he live. And he who lives and believes in me shall never die."

And you know our lives on earth are very brief, like a vapor that appears for a little while and then disappears. But the eternal life that God has for us is, well it is glorious beyond description. My wife is in Heaven, and I'm looking forward to seeing her, being reunited with her is very real to me. I think about it every day. And I look forward with anticipation to days to come. And only the Bible can do that for us.

We can have momentary anticipation, like going to Disneyland or going on a cruise, or having a vacation, or something like that, but the only ultimate anticipation that really will bear us through life is the anticipation of what Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you maybe also."

So, this is the message, the twofold message of repentance towards God and faith toward Jesus Christ that we are called to proclaim in times like these.

**Tim Moore:** That is a beautifully, well put sentiment because even at the very concluding verse of Ecclesiastes Solomon says, "For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." And that is a promise of warning to those upon whom the wrath of God abides, and a promise of great goodness and hope for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ and all that remains is the blessing of eternity with Him. Rob, how can our viewers connect with you and with your ongoing ministry, and even purchase your wonderful books?

**Rob Morgan:** Well, my books are available wherever people like to get their books, all of the book distributors have them. My website is: [robertjmorgan.com](http://robertjmorgan.com). And my books are there as well. And we have also my blog, my podcast. On social media I do a 59 second Bible study

every day. I teach through books of the Bible one minute at a time on social media. So, I would love for people to check out both my website: [robertjmorgan.com](http://robertjmorgan.com), and my books wherever they buy their Christian books, or their books of any kind.

**Tim Moore:** Well, I hope that they will, because I know that our viewers will be blessed as Nathan and I have. Rob, I really appreciate you taking the time. You are writing a book right now I suspect, but you have joined us, and I hope that our paves will cross in person soon and very soon.

**Rob Morgan:** Well, I hope so too. Thank you so much for letting me be with you. And the Lord bless you richly until we meet again.

**Tim Moore:** Amen, Brother. Godspeed.

## **Part 2- Signs of the End Times: All is Vanity**

**Tim Moore:** “Vanity of vanities,” Solomon wrote “All is vanity!” In modern language: Futility! All is futility!

If our short time on earth is all there is, our lives have no meaning. We might as well eat, drink, and be merry for eventually we will die. This is the materialistic lie Satan has inflicted upon the world.

Many people today are endeavoring to fill their lives with sensual pleasures, material indulgence, or power. Adult resorts are now themed around offering uninhibited hedonism. Formerly family-friendly parks now celebrate abomination and promote values that are hostile to a biblical worldview. Others are numbing the lingering ache in their souls with alcohol and drugs. But it is all vanity, emptiness that will end in despair, death, and destruction.

There may be no more glaring example of the hopelessness gripping the world than the explosion of homelessness in America. I’m not talking about those who are tragically displaced from job and home for a season of life. I’m referring to the thousands who have decided “all is vanity” and chosen to live destitute, often drug-hazed lives on the streets of many American cities.

Solomon understood that God “set eternity in the heart of man.” Only Jesus offers eternal meaning. Through the power of His Holy Spirit, we are called to serve the Lord in ways that transcend our own lives. Obeying Him faithfully allows us to store up riches in heaven.

Sadly, we know the world will grow darker and darker. Bible prophecy says that society will be like the days of Noah when Jesus bursts from heaven. And, when He comes, Solomon’s closing verse and our Key Verse this week will ring with prophetic finality: “God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”

## **Closing**

**Tim Moore:** Nathan, I’m so glad that Pastor Rob Morgan could join us today. His day-by-day devotionals have been a great blessing to me for many years.

**Nathan Jones:** Well, as you mentioned Tim, in our application segment that our lives can have eternal meaning if we put our faith in Christ. But we would still agree with Solomon that some of the pursuits of this world are eternally futile.

**Tim Moore:** You are absolutely right. This is an example of the tension that we accept as Christians. We live in a fallen world even as we serve a risen Savior. While in our mortal bodies, we eat and sleep, experience highs and lows, and have troubles. But because our eternal destiny is secure, we are citizens of heaven and ambassadors of God on earth.

**Nathan Jones:** We can also serve the Lord with an eternal impact as we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you want to bear much fruit for the Lord, we pray that you support the evangelist efforts of faithful ministries.

**Tim Moore:** Most weeks we offer you a resource from Lamb & Lion's wide-ranging list of DVDs and books. Today we'd like to invite you to become a Prophecy Partner, helping us share the Gospel and proclaim the soon return of Jesus Christ.

**Nathan Jones:** Our goal is to warn unbelievers to flee from the wrath to come and into the arms of our loving Savior, by warning them that outside Christ the wrath of God abides on them. And we encourage believers towards urgent evangelism, holy living, and keeping our eyes on Jesus, our Blessed Hope.

**Tim Moore:** For only \$25 a month, you can support the outreach of Lamb & Lion Ministries and make an eternal impact. And, as a Partner you'll receive regular reports and special gifts from us. Just visit our website or call the number on the screen. Next week, we'll turn our attention to the Song of Solomon. Until then, this is Tim Moore.

**Nathan Jones:** And Nathan Jones, saying, "Look up, and be watchful, for our LORD who gives our life meaning is drawing near!"

**End of Program**