

**A Study of "Under the Sun" in Qohelet**  
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A. Notes:

1. An asterisk marks verses that talk about what Qohelet has seen, thus: 3:16\*.
2. 11 of the 27 "under sun" verses are "saw" verses; there are only 17 "saw" verses in all. All of Qohelet has 222 verses.
3. Eaton's conclusion that "under the sun" represents a carnal view does not seem justified. The expression is used far more widely than his list (p.57) indicates, and sometimes (5:18\*; 8:15 (2x); 9:9) in positive contexts reflecting faith. The sense rather seems to be, "the totality of earthly human experience," as in Ps. 19, where nothing is hid from the light of the sun.

B. What can be "under the sun"?

1. Labor labored, 1:3; 2:11; 2:18; 2:19; 2:20; 2:22; 5:18\*; 8:15a
2. Unspecified, 1:9; 9:6 (wrought?); 9:11\*
3. Works wrought, 1:14\*; 2:11; 2:17; 4:3\*; 8:19\*
4. Place of judgment, 3:16\*
5. Evil, 5:13\*; 6:1\*; 9:3 (wrought?); 10:5\*
6. Oppressions, 4:1
7. Vanity, 4:7\*
8. People walk, 4:15
9. The future, 6:12
10. Life, 8:15b; 9:9
11. Wisdom, 9:13\*

C. Evaluation of things "under the sun"

1. No profit, 1:3; 2:11
2. Nothing new, 1:9
3. Vexation, 1:14\*; 2:11; 2:17; 2:22
4. Vanity, 1:14\*; 2:11; 2:17; 2:19; 4:7\*
5. Grievous, 2:17
6. Hated, 2:17; 2:18
7. Heart dispairs, 2:20
8. Unqualified, 3:16\*; 4:1; 4:15; 4:3\*; 5:13\*; 6:1\*; 6:12; 8:9\*; 9:6; 9:11\*; 10:5\*
9. Good! 5:18\*; 8:15 (2x); 9:9
10. Evil, 9:3
11. Great, 9:13\*

D. Refs

1. Under the Sun
  - a) 1:3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?
  - b) 1:9 The thing that hath been, it [is that] which shall be; and that which is done [is] that which shall be done: and [there is] no new [thing] under the sun.
  - c) 1:14\* I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all [is] vanity and vexation of spirit.

- d) 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all [was] vanity and vexation of spirit, and [there was] no profit under the sun.
- e) 2:17 Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun [is] grievous unto me: for all [is] vanity and vexation of spirit.
- f) 2:18 Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.
- g) 2:19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise [man] or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun. This [is] also vanity.
- h) 2:20 Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.
- i) 2:22 For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?
- j) 3:16\* And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, [that] wickedness [was] there; and the place of righteousness, [that] iniquity [was] there.
- k) 4:1 So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of [such as were] oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors [there was] power; but they had no comforter.
- l) 4:3\* Yea, better [is he] than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.
- m) 4:7\* Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.
- n) 4:15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.
- o) 5:13\* There is a sore evil [which] I have seen under the sun, [namely], riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.
- p) 5:18\* Behold [that] which I have seen: [it is] good and comely [for one] to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it [is] his portion.
- q) 6:1\* There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it [is] common among men:
- r) 6:12 For who knoweth what [is] good for man in [this] life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?
- s) 8:9\* All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: [there is] a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.
- t) 8:15 Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.
- u) 8:17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot

find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek [it] out, yet he shall not find [it]; yea farther; though a wise [man] think to know [it], yet shall he not be able to find [it].

- v) 9:3 This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness [is] in their heart while they live, and after that [they go] to the dead.
- w) 9:6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun.
- x) 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that [is] thy portion in [this] life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.
- y) 9:11\* I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race [is] not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.
- z) 9:13\* This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it [seemed] great unto me:
- aa) 10:5\* There is an evil [which] I have seen under the sun, as an error [which] proceedeth from the ruler:

2. Under the Heavens (the only other use of "heaven" is 5:2).

- a) 1:13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all [things] that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.
- b) 2:3 I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what [was] that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.
- c) 3:1 To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

3. Upon the earth

- a) 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter [any] thing before God: for God [is] in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.
- b) 7:20 For [there is] not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.
- c) 8:14 There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just [men], unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked [men], to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also [
- d) 8:16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also [there is that] neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)

- e) 10:7 I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.
- f) 11:2 Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.
- g) 11:3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty [themselves] upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.