

Greatness

- Name some great people and what makes them great
- How would God answer that question?

1

Ecclesiastes: a search for...

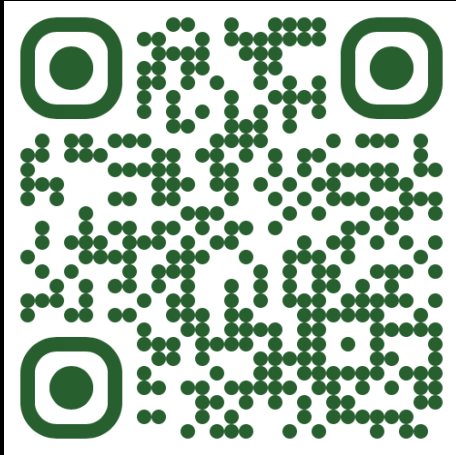
- A life that is not pointless or empty
- A life that has meaning and value

Pray

2

Greatness Falls

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16 bib.ly/Ec4.NIV



You are here



3

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16

¹³ Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to heed a warning. ¹⁴ The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom. ¹⁵ I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king's successor. ¹⁶ There was no end to all the people who were before them. But those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

4

Ecclesiastes 4:13

¹³ Better

a poor

but wise

youth

than

an old

but foolish

king

who no longer knows how to heed a warning.

Hard of hearing → Hard of listening

5

Ecclesiastes 4:14

¹⁴ The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom.

**Wisdom can overcome
extreme disadvantages**

Wisdom has great value!

6

Ecclesiastes 4:15-16

¹⁵ I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, **the king's successor**.

¹⁶ There was no end to all the people who were before them. But those who came later were not pleased with the successor.

This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

7

It seems that this is the storyline...

- Old king: yet foolish, so he lost the throne
- Poor youth: yet wise, so he became king
- Another youth: became the next king
 - Everyone abandoned the earlier kings
- And more will come and displace all these

There is an unending succession of people who rise, and rule, then fall into nothingness

→ Wisdom is better than folly, but not enough

8

“All go to the same place; all come
from dust, and to dust all return.”

Ecclesiastes 2:20

“The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.”

Psalms 103:15-16

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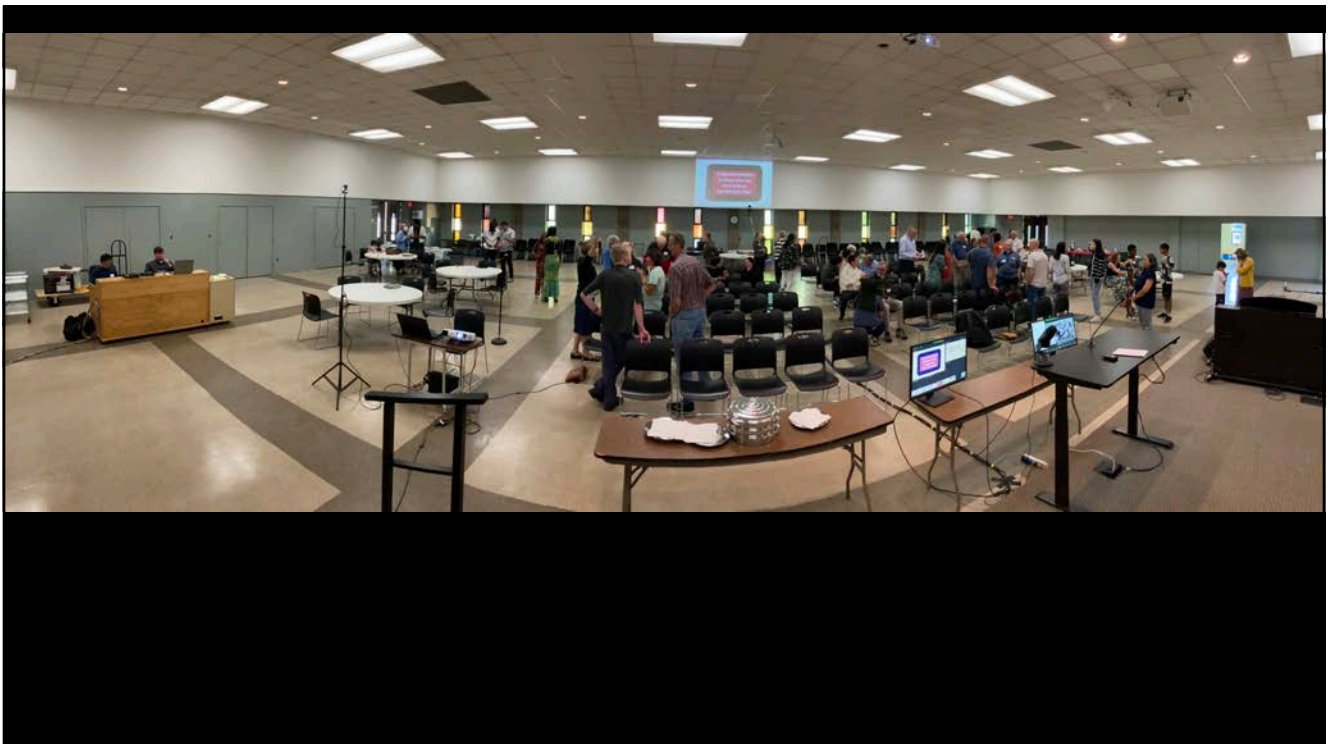
“Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket;
they are regarded as dust on the scales;
he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.”
Isaiah 40:15

10

The Big (negative) Idea

There is no meaning or value
that isn't washed away by time

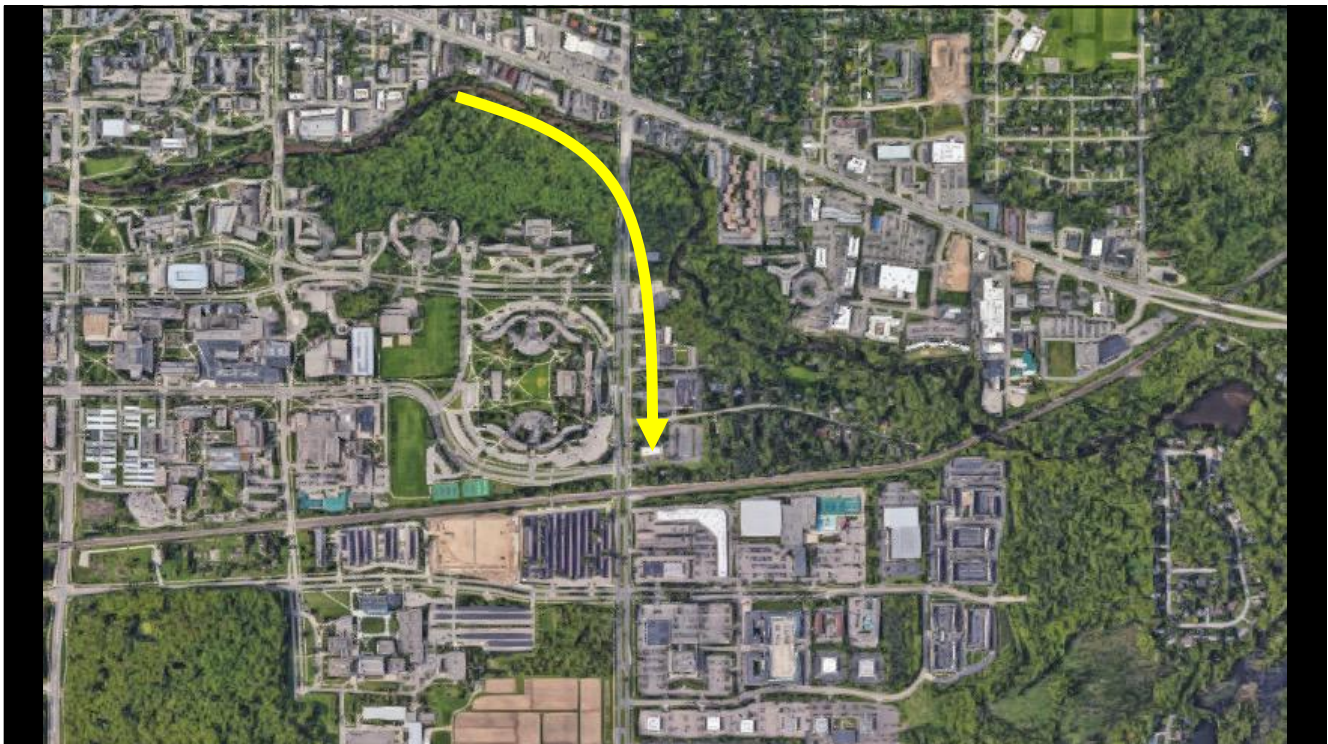
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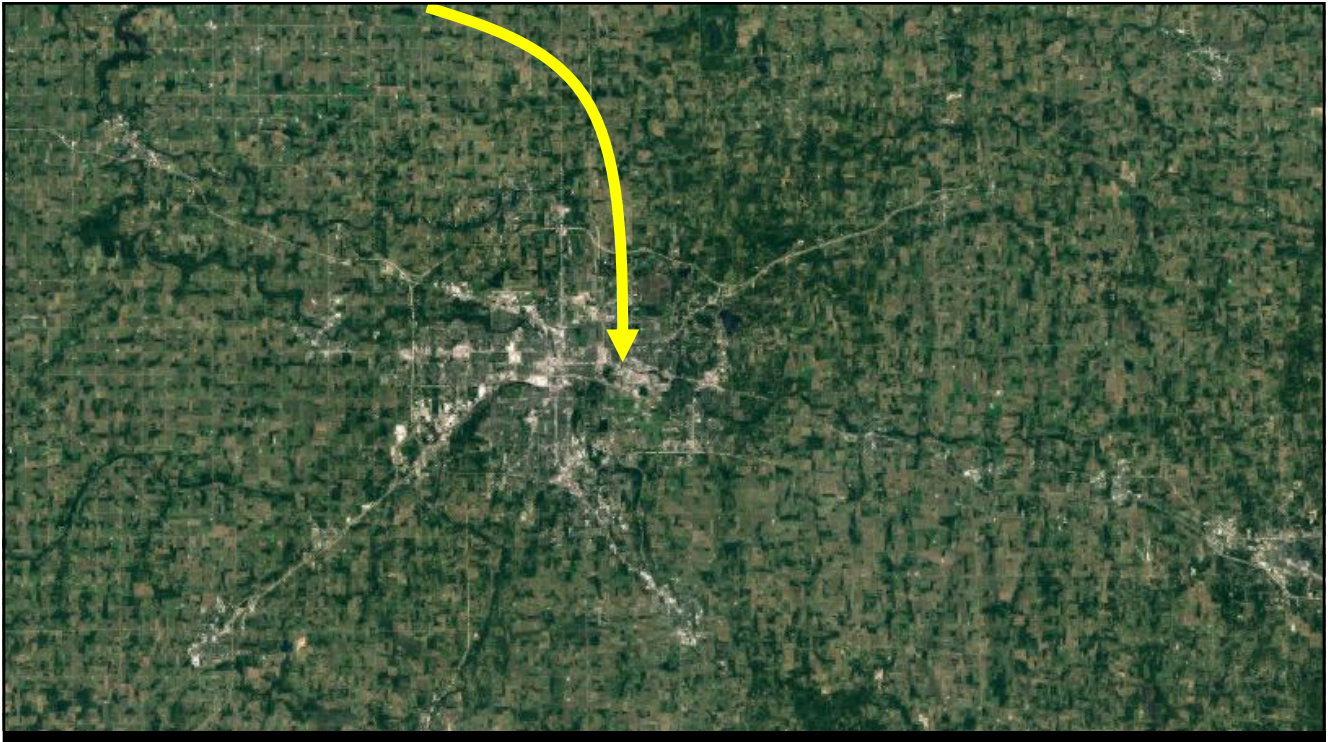
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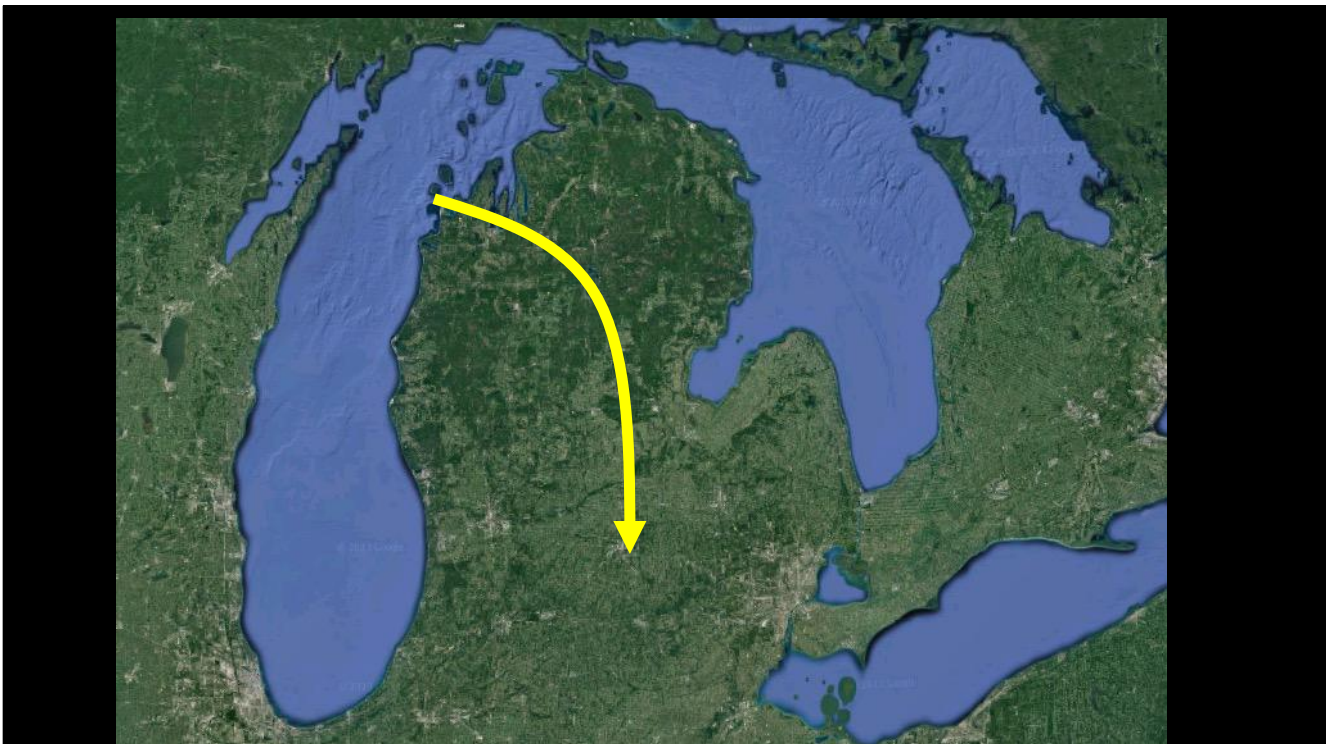
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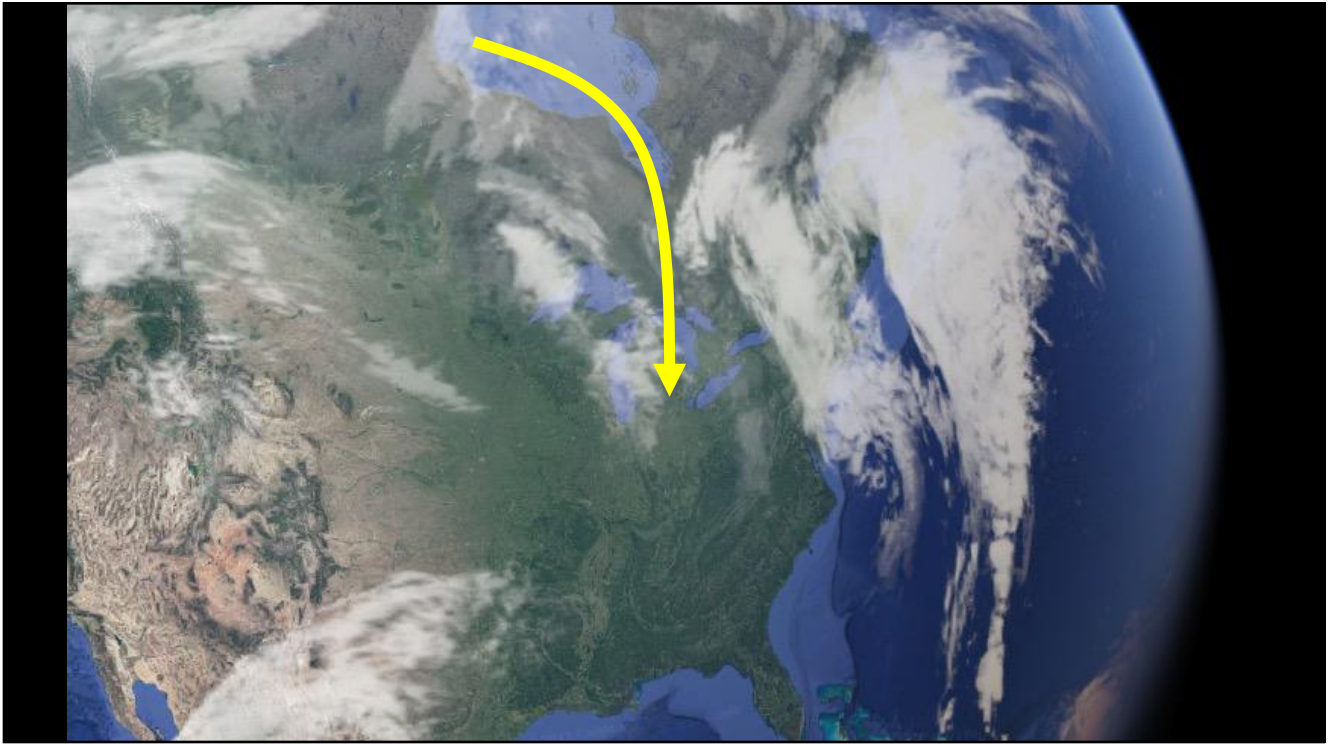
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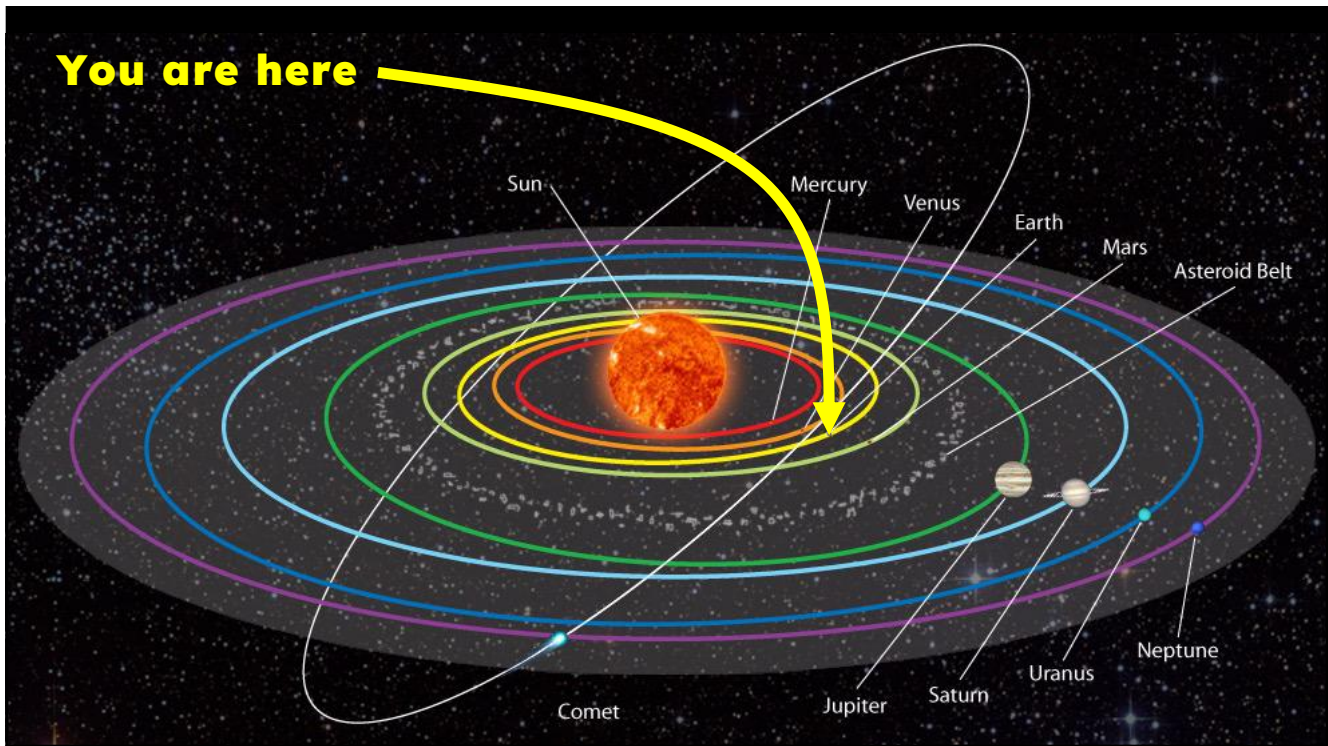
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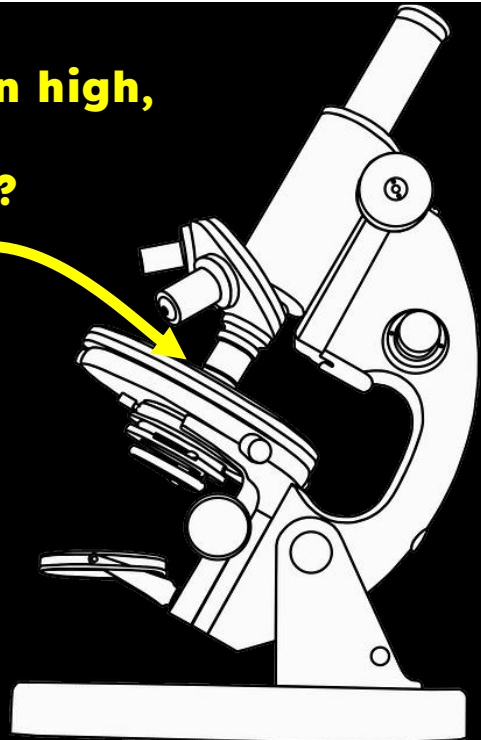


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20

**Who is like the Lord our God,
the One who sits enthroned on high,
who stoops down to look
on the heavens and the earth?
Psalm 103:5-6**

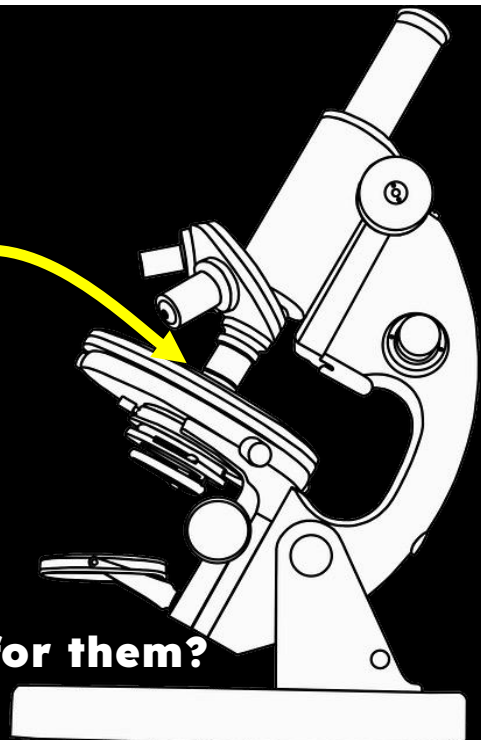


21

**When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,**



**what is mankind that you
are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?
Psalm 8:3-4**



22

The Big (negative) Idea

There is no meaning or value
that isn't washed away by time

**In our natural state
no single life actually matters**

23

**“Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you
[for I proclaim a mystery]—the mystery that
has been kept hidden for ages and generations,
but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. To
them God has chosen to make known among
the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery,
which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”**

Colossians 1:24-27

24

The Big Idea
Every life in Christ **and only in Christ**
has profound value and meaning

25

The greatness of a messenger is tied to
the greatness of the message carried

John the Baptist: the forerunner of Jesus
was the greatest human prophet

“I tell you, among those born of women
there is no one greater than John;
**yet the one who is least in the kingdom of
God is greater than he.**”

Luke 7:28

26

“But we have this **treasure in jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7

This treasure = God “made his light shine in our hearts to give us the **light of the knowledge of God’s glory** displayed in the face of Christ” 2 Corinthians 4:6

27

The Big Idea
Every life in Christ **and only in Christ**
has profound value and meaning

*When the One who is life and love
lives in us*

28

Action Items

- Find our meaning in Christ, and Christ in us
 - “...the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**”
Colossians 1:24-27
- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but **have eternal life.**”
John 3:16



29

Action Items

- Run from ideas of human-importance
 - Whether raising up ourselves or others
 - “For who makes you different from anyone else? **What do you have that you did not receive?** And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”
1 Corinthians 4:7
 - “**Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves,** but our competence comes from God.”
2 Corinthians 3:5

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Action Items

- Run from ideas of human-importance
 - “God **opposes** the proud but shows favor to the humble.”
1 Peter 5:5b

31

“It is absurd to quarrel about the superiority of anyone in the church, because only God matters.”

- “So **neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything**, but only God, who makes things grow.”
1 Corinthians 3:7

Run from ideas of human-importance!

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Action Items

- Run from human-belittling
 - Belittling ourselves or others
 - The poor widow's offering
 - "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others."
- Luke 21:3

33

Those who are in Christ **will reign with Him**

- "Here is a trustworthy saying:
If we died with him,
we will also live with him;
if we endure,
we will also reign with him."

2 Timothy 2:11-12

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A life of unending meaning

God LIVING IN us through Jesus Christ

- To be **free** from the struggles of human greatness
- To be entrusted with good work **by God**
 - Now
 - Forever