

Ecclesiastes Introduction and Chapter One

Introduction

- Vanity – used thirty-eight times in this book
- Under the sun – life on this earth without God – used twenty-nine times
- Ecclesiastes in a philosophical discourse based on what man (Solomon) can determine by reason alone
- It does not dwell on the Covenant, redemption, the Law of Moses, prophecy, etc.
- It focuses on man as a creator – that life apart from the creator is futile and meaningless
- John 10:10 – Jesus brings us the abundant life
- I Corinthians 15:58 – our labor in Christ is NOT IN VAIN

Author – Solomon

- Son of David
- King in Jerusalem
- Solomon began strong and humble but, in the end, he departed from God’s word and commandments.
- Duet 17:14-20
 - Do not acquire vast number of horses
 - Do not take many wives (Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubine’s)
 - Do not accumulate excessive amounts of gold. (Wealth that was incalculable)
- Solomon’s later years were miserable for God had removed His hand of blessings
- I Kings 11:9-11
- Used the title PREACHER - in Greek *ecclesia* from which the book gets its name

Relevance for Today

- Injustice to the poor
- Crooked politicians
- Incompetent leaders
- The guilty allowed to go unpunished
- Emptiness of materialism and pleasure

Chapter One

VS 1 Preacher, Son of David, King in Jerusalem

VS 2 Theme of the book – vanity used five times in one verse – human effort gains no lasting value

VS 3 Profit not fulfilling with all the toil if only focus is “under the sun”.

VS 4 – 18 Summary

- Nothing is changed (vs 4-7)
- Nothing is new (vs 8-11)
- Nothing is understood (vs 12-18)

Nothing Has Changed in the Natural Order

- VS 4 – The earth remains yet people come and go
- VS 5 – The Sun it is course and night follows day and heavens remain the same
- VS 6 – The Wind blows where it will (John 3:8)
- VS 7 – The Sea is feed by the rivers yet is never full and never changes
- Nature is permanent, man is transient

Nothing is New

VS 8 – All labor is wearisome, monotonous, and futile. Human hunger for something new, engaging, exciting, (Acts 17:21) Hollywood

- The eye is not satisfied
- The ear is not satisfied
- Augustine – “*our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee*”
- Jesus – come to me and I will give you rest – Matthew 11:28

VS 9 - 10 Mankind has advanced in many ways – communication, travel etc. but it is only an expansion of what we have discovered about our world that was always here and from the creator.

- New Things – New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- New Song – (Psalm 40:3)
- New and living way (Hebrews 10:20)
- New heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1)
- Behold I make all things new (Rev 21:5)

VS 11 – we have short memories and do not always learn from history

Nothing is Understood

VS 12-13 Seeking through wisdom the grievous work God has given man to do

- The fall and the curse
- Thorns, sweat, labor

VS 14 – all is vanity

VS 15 – only God has the ability to make straight that which is crooked

- God does not change the past but can change how the past impacts us – forgiveness, etc.

VS 16 – 18 Wisdom and experience will not solve every problem

- God does not explain everything to our satisfaction – Job
- God requires us to trust Him and live by His promises – Thomas
- Without God we live in a closed system – cause/effect
- With God we have the promise that He will intervene on our behalf from outside the system