

The Book Of Ecclesiastes

Introduction:

1. The meaning of the word Ecclesiastes is: To address an assembly.
2. The key words and phrases in Ecclesiastes:
 - A. _____ - 46 times
 - B. _____ - 36 times
 - C. _____ - 37 times
 - D. “Under the Sun” - _____times
3. The purpose of the writing:
 - A. “To convince men of the uselessness of any worldview that does not rise above the horizon of man himself. It pronounces the verdict ‘vanity of vanities’ upon any philosophy of life which regards the created world of human enjoyment as an end in life.” (Wilmington’s Guide to the Bible, pg. 136 quoting Gleason L. Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction p. 459)
 - B. “You do not have to go outside the Bible to find the merely human philosophy of life. God has given us in the book of Ecclesiastes the record of all that human thinking and natural religion has ever been able to discover concerning the meaning and goal of life. The arguments in the book, therefore are not God’s arguments, but God’s record of man’s arguments. This explains why such passages as 1:15, 2:24, 3:3, 4, 8, 11, 19, 20, 8:15 are at positive variance with the rest of the Bible.” (What the Bible Is All About, Henrietta Mears, p. 200)
- I. Ecclesiastes Chapter 1 - The Preacher pronounces his preliminary assertions that there is nothing new under the sun, that every endeavor of man is unfulfilling and empty and that the acquisition of wisdom brings grief.
 - A. The _____ Of The Writer (1:1, 12): The author introduces himself as the “Preacher,” the “Son of David” (presumed by most to be Solomon) who was “King over Israel in Jerusalem.”
 - B. The _____ Of The Writer (1:13, 16)
 1. The mandate of his search (1:13): Solomon “gives” himself to understand the meaning and purpose of life and it’s afflictions.
 2. The motivation for his search (1:16): Solomon concludes that he is qualified to discover these truths because of the great wisdom, authority and experience he possessed.

- C. The _____ Of The Writer (1:2-11, 14-15, 17-18):
The foundational thoughts that drive the investigation reveal four discouraging “truths.”
1. Life is circular (1:2-7, 14,17): Every element of life merely goes in circles.
 2. History is repetitive (1:9-10)
 3. Evil and need are pervasive (1:15)
 4. Memory is fleeting (1:11)
- II. Ecclesiastes Chapter 2 - Solomon attempts to find contentment by indulging in various activities.
- A. Solomon’s _____ (2:1-10): Solomon engages in seven areas of indulgence.
1. Mirth and pleasure (2:1-2)
 2. Merriment through wine (2:3)
 3. Massive and ornate buildings (2:4a)
 4. Multiple and fruitful vineyards (2:4b)
 5. Manicured parks filled with assorted fruit trees (2:5-6)
 6. Masses of possessions, including:
 - a. Domestic wealth in human servants (2:7a)
 - b. Agricultural wealth in many herds and flocks (2:7b)
 - c. Material wealth in much silver and gold (2:8a)
 - d. Eclectic wealth in the finest musicians and instruments (2:8b)
 7. Manifold Praise and Labors (2:9-10)
- B. Solomon’s _____ (2:11-26)
1. The _____ truth (2:11-23)
 - a. Solomon’s _____ (2:11-16): He realizes that even the things that bring pleasure and joy in life are empty and useless because all men will die and be forgotten.
 - b. Solomon’s _____ (2:17-23): He realizes that his life’s labor will be left for another to rule and he has no control over the character of the one who comes in his place.

2. The _____ truth (2:24-26): Allow God to provide the contentment and reward in your labor.
- III. Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 - Solomon views a myriad of human endeavors, which undertaken in their “time” are “beautiful.” He addresses the truth that ultimately God is in control of time and eternity.
- A. The Proper _____ For All Human Endeavors (3:1-14, 22)
 1. The catalogue of activity (3:1-8)
 - a. A time to be born and a time to die (3:2a)
 - b. A time to plant and a time to harvest (3:2b)
 - c. A time to kill and a time to heal (3:3a)
 - d. A time to break down and a time to build up (3:3b)
 - e. A time to weep a time to laugh (3:4a)
 - f. A time to mourn and a time to dance (3:4b)
 - g. A time to cast away and a time to gather (3:5a)
 - h. A time to embrace and a time to refrain (3:5b)
 - i. A time to acquire and a time to lose (3:6a)
 - j. A time to keep and a time to discard (3:6b)
 - k. A time to rend and a time to repair (3:7a)
 - l. A time to be silent and a time to speak (3:7b)
 - m. A time to love and a time to hate (3:8a)
 - n. A time for war and a time of peace (3:8b)
 2. The _____ of activity (3:9-14, 22): It is God who places man in the course of his life and fulfills His purpose through the labors of men. The man who finds contentment in the labor, which God gives him, will be satisfied in what he does.
 - B. A Proper Perspective On All Human Endeavors (3:15-21)
 1. The activity of man is seen by _____ (3:15).
 2. The end of man is as the end of all creatures - _____ (3:18-21).
 3. At man’s end, both the righteous and wicked will be judged by God (3:16-17).
- IV. Ecclesiastes Chapter 4 - Solomon considers those who are oppressed, the affect of oppression and the solution to alleviating its effect.

- A. The _____ Things In Life (4:1, 4-8, 13-16) (Wilmington)
1. The _____ Solomon finds
 - a. The unrepresented poor (4:1, 4-8)
 - b. The unsatisfied rich (4:4, 7-8)
 - c. The unmotivated fool (4:5-6)
 2. The _____ Solomon feels (4:2-3, 13-16)
 - a. Concerning life and death (4:2-3)
 - (1) It is better to be dead than living (4:2)
 - (2) It is better to have never been born (4:3)
 - b. Concerning prisoners and potentates (4:13-16)
 - (1) It is better to be a poor but wise youth with a prison record than to be a rich but foolish king (4:13-16a)!
 - (2) However, in the final analysis, it matters little who and what one is (4:16b)!

B. The _____ Things In Life (4:9-12)

1. Two are better than one (4:9-12a)
 - a. If one falls, the other can help (4:10)
 - b. If one is cold, the other can provide warmth (4:11)
 - c. If one is attached, the other can defend (4:12a)
2. Three are better than two (4:12b): A triple braided cord is not easily broken.

V. Ecclesiastes Chapter 5 - Solomon instructs concerning vows made to God, the void of riches, the vice of men and the victory of labor.

A. The _____ made to God (5:1-7)

1. Beware of rashness in your approach to God because we are but dust and God is Sovereign. (5:1-3)
2. Be careful to fulfill the vows made to God because He does not delight in fools....fear God by fulfilling your vow. (5:4-7)

B. The _____ of Men (5:8) : God sees it all

C. The _____ of Riches (5:9-17)

1. The bounty of the earth is for all (5:9)
2. The emptiness of making riches your life's goal (5:10-12)

3. The injury of hoarding wealth granted by God and the fleeting nature of earthly wealth (5:13-14)
 4. The naked truth of earthly riches (5:15-17)
 - D. The Victory in Labor (5:18-20): Solomon advises to be content with God's blessings and enjoy the work of your hands.
- VI. Ecclesiastes Chapter 6 - Solomon considers the source of joy. (Dr. Wilmington)
- A. _____ Does Not Bring Joy (6:1-2)
 1. Most wealthy people are unhappy with their possessions in life (6:2a).
 2. All wealthy people leave their possessions to others in death (6:2b)
 - B. Family Does Not Bring Joy (6:3-5): A stillborn child is better off than the unhappy father of 100 children.
 - C. Fullness Of Years Does Not Bring Joy (6:6-12): This is true even if a person could live to observe his or her 2000th birthday!
- VII. Ecclesiastes Chapter 7 - Solomon considers the better things in life.
- A. The “_____” (7:1-2, 19)
 1. A good reputation is better than fine perfume (7:1a)
 2. The day of death is better than the day of birth (7:1b)
 3. Funerals are better than festivals (7:2)
 4. Sorrow is better than laughter (7:3-4)
 5. Criticism from a wise man is better than praise from a fool (7:5-6)
 6. Finishing is better than starting (7:8a)
 7. Patience is better than pride (7:8b)
 8. Wisdom is better than wealth (7:11-12)
 9. Wisdom is better than power (7:19)
 - B. The “_____” (7:26): The snares of a prostitute are more bitter than death!
 - C. The Bottom Line (7:13-18, 20-25, 27-29): Solomon concludes the following:
 1. What is crooked cannot be made straight (7:13)
 2. Enjoy today, for tomorrow is uncertain (7:14)
 3. Don't be too good or too wise (7:15-18)
 4. There is no one who has not sinned (7:20)

5. Don't eavesdrop (7:21-22)
6. Wisdom without God is impossible (7:23-25, 27-29)

VIII. Ecclesiastes Chapter 8 - Solomon makes further observations about life.

- A. Concerning _____ (8:1, 16-17)
 1. Wisdom brightens a person's appearance (8:1)
 2. Wisdom comes only from God (8:16-17)
- B. Concerning Unquestioned Obedience (8:2-5): Obey the king, for his word is supreme.
- C. Concerning Uncertainty (8:6-8): No one can escape death.
- D. Concerning _____ (8:9-14)
 1. Solomon's frustrations (8:9-11, 14)
 - a. Why do the wicked often receive that which the righteous deserves? (8:9-11)
 - b. Why do the righteous often receive that which the wicked deserves? (8:14)
 2. Solomon's realization (8:12-13): God will eventually punish the wicked!
- E. Concerning the Ultimate (8:15): Be content, and enjoy life!

IX. Ecclesiastes Chapter 9 - Solomon reflects on the things that control human destiny.

- A. The _____ One (9:1): The affairs of all people are in the hands of God.
- B. The Insanity (9:2-6, 11-12)
 1. Death ends every person's life (9:2-6)
 - a. The living know they will die (9:5a)
 - b. The dead know nothing at all (9:5b)
 2. Chance controls every person's life (9:11)
 - a. The swift do not always win the race (9:11a)
 - b. The strong do not always win the battle (9:11b)
 - c. The smart do not always acquire wealth (9:11c)
 3. Calamity stalks every person's path (9:12)

- C. The _____ (9:7-10)
 - 1. Enjoy life with your wife (9:9)
 - 2. Whatever you do, do well (9:10)
- D. The Illustration (9:13-18)
 - 1. The Contents (9:13-15)
 - a. The saving (9:13-15a): By his wisdom a poor but wise man once saved his town from a powerful king who's armies had surrounded it.
 - b. The sorrow (9:15b): His noble achievements were soon forgotten because he was poor.
 - 2. The Conclusion (9:16-18): Wisdom is still better than strength!
- X. Ecclesiastes Chapter 10 - Solomon reflects on different kinds of people.
 - A. The Individuals Described By Solomon (10:1-7, 12-18, 20)
 - 1. The _____ (10:2a, 12a)
 - a. Their hearts direct them to do right (10:2a)
 - b. Their mouths give forth gracious words (10:12a)
 - 2. The _____ (10:2b-3, 6-7, 12b-15)
 - a. Their hearts direct them to do evil (10:2b)
 - b. The way they walk betrays them as fools (10:3)
 - c. They are often (tragically) given great authority (10:6-7)
 - d. They are consumed by their own words (10:12b-14)
 - e. They are exhausted by even the simplest tasks (10:15)
 - 3. Those in authority (10:4-5, 16-17, 20)
 - a. Stay calm, and don't quit if your boss is angry with you (10:4)
 - b. Woe to the land whose king is a child (10:16)
 - c. Happy is the land whose king is a nobleman (10:17)
 - d. Don't make light of a king, even in your thoughts (10:20)
 - 4. The _____ man (10:18): He lets the roof leak and the rafters rot.

- B. The Injuries Warned About By Solomon (10:8-11): He cautions concerning:
 - 1. Digging a well, lest you fall into it (10:8a)
 - 2. Demolishing an old wall, lest a snake bite you (10:8b)
 - 3. Working a quarry, lest stones crush you (10:9a)
 - 4. Chopping wood, lest the axe strike you (10:9b-10)
 - C. The Insights Observed By Solomon (10:19)
 - 1. A party gives laughter (10:19a)
 - 2. Wine gives happiness (10:19b)
 - 3. Money gives everything (10:19c)
- XI. Ecclesiastes Chapter 11 - Solomon considers various rules for life.
- A. General _____ For All People (11:1-6)
 - 1. Be gracious (11:1-2)
 - 2. Don't delay in matters of sowing and reaping (11:3-4)
 - 3. Don't try to understand the work of God (11:5)
 - 4. Keep on sowing your seed (11:6)
 - B. Special Rules For _____ People (11:7-10)
 - 1. Rejoice (11:7-9a): Enjoy your youth. Live life to the fullest.
 - 2. Remember (11:9b-10): Keep in mind that someday you must account to God for everything you do.
- XII. Ecclesiastes Chapter 12 - Solomon gives some concluding thoughts.
- A. The _____ (12:1-8)
 - 1. What his readers are to do (12:1-2): They are to honor their Creator early in life.
 - 2. Why they are to do it (12:3-8): God desires the strength of His people when they are young, before old age reduces the body to a pitiful shell of its former days.
 - B. The Collection (12:9-12)
 - 1. The information (12:9): The Preacher collected and classified many proverbs.
 - 2. The instruction (12:10): The gifted Preacher then taught the proverbs to his people.

C. The Conclusion (12:13-14)

1. What his readers are to do (12:13): Fear God and Obey His commandments.
2. Why his readers are to do it (12:14): God will judge us for everything we do.