



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”
2 Peter 1:21

A Study of the Book of Ecclesiastes

By Alex Hale

AUTHOR: Solomon (1:1, the Son of David, king in Jerusalem)
 (1:12, king over Israel in Jerusalem)
 (2:12, allusion that no one would be as wise as this king – see also 1:16; 1 Kings 3:12)

AUDIENCE: There is not a particular recipient (or group) mentioned in the introduction [as opposed to Proverbs, which seems to be more personal in its audience – “My son,” Prov 1:8, 10; 2:1; 3:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; etc. – “My children,” Prov 4:1; 8:32; etc.]

- In Ecclesiastes, the term “my son” is used once in the concluding remarks (12:12).
- The Hebrew title means “one who addresses an assembly.” Ecclesiastes is derived from *ekklesia*, which means “assembly” or “congregation.”
- Part of Ecclesiastes (if not all) is directed particularly at younger people (11:9; 12:1-7).
 - This causes some to believe that Solomon was an old man when he wrote Ecclesiastes.
 - While this is possible, 12:9 suggests that Ecclesiastes was written before many of the proverbs.
 - In other words, when Solomon is writing Ecclesiastes, he still has much life to live!
 - Because of this, I do not believe Ecclesiastes is the “deathbed confessional” that some have painted it to be.

OCCASION/PURPOSE: In his book *Searching for the Meaning of Life*, Paul Earnhart writes, “The purpose of Ecclesiastes seems fairly clear but it does not yield itself to an obvious, clear-cut outline. The book seems to spiral freely and repeatedly through the same themes of the world’s bewildering contradictions and frustrations and the confidence that the God who sits above the sun will bring an ultimate resolution.”

In his writing, Solomon seeks to:

(1) Show us the results of “life under the sun” (life without God)

- 1:1-2 Vanity of vanities
- 1:3-11 Cycles of life
- 1:12-18 Wisdom and knowledge are vanity
- 2:1-12 Earthly pleasure/treasures are vanity
- 2:13-26 Wise and fool both die
- 3:16-22 Injustice (also 5:8)
 - Because of this, 4:1-3
- 4:4-8 Earthly pursuits do not satisfy (5:10-17; 6:1-12)
- 7:15 Just man perishes
- 8:10-17 Death comes to all (also 9:1-6)
- 12:12 No end to pursuit of knowledge

(2) Offer advice (particularly to younger)

- 2:24 Work is a blessing from God (also 3:12-15; 5:18-20)
- 3:1-8 Everything has a time or season
- 3:12-15 There will be judgment
- 4:9-16 Value in companions
- 5:1-7 Watch what you say; be careful when dealing with God
- 7:5-14 Work hard and be joyful but realize difficult days may come
- 7:16-29 Role of wisdom
- 8:1-9 Obey authorities
- 9:7-12 Enjoy what you have; not promised tomorrow
- 10 Wise vs. fool
- 11 Work hard; cannot predict future
- 12 Youth does not last

(3) Reveal our true purpose in life

- 3:11 He has put eternity in our hearts
- 7:1-4 Think about eternal things (7:1, the importance of a good name)
- 12:1-8 Remember God in the days of your youth
- 12:13-14 One thing is needed – fear God and keep His commandments
 - Because there will be a judgment! (also 11:9-10)



CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1017 S. 2nd St. (Old Hwy. 367)
 Cabot, AR 72023
cabotwestsidechurchofchrist.com
facebook.com/cabotwestside

When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
 Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
 Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
 Kelly Kendall
 Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale