

Ecclesiastes

Overview

Adult Bible Class

Sunday, October 15, 2023



1. What does the word “Ecclesiastes” mean? Look up its etymology (<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=ecclesiastes>).

One who addresses an assembly.

Preacher - English

קהלת - Hebrew

εκκλησιαστος - Greek

Ekklesiastēs - Transliteration

2. Write down words/phrases from the following verses (1:1[3], 2, 12, 16; 2:9; 7:26-29; 12:8-10) that identify the author. Who is it?

1. Preacher (7x).

2. Son of David.

3. King in Jerusalem (2x).

4. Increase wisdom more than all.

5. Great & increased more than all.

6. Woman whose heart is snares.

7. Wise man.

8. Taught people.

9. Pondered/searched out.

10. Arranged many proverbs.

Solomon.

3. What question is raised in vs. 1:3? The answer is provided in 1:2. What is it? These 2 verses describe the theme of the book. What is it?

What advantage does man have in all his work under the sun?

All is vanity.

Man's work here on earth is vain.

4. What does the word “vanity” mean? What does the phrase “vanity of vanities” mean? What phrase is used in the book to describe vanity (1:14, 17, 2:11)?

2. the quality of being
worthless or futile {New Oxford
American Dictionary}

“Vanity of vanities” - Hebrew
superlative, “how utterly fleeting!”

“Striving After Wind”.

5. If the theme of book is man's work here on earth is vain, why write the book? There is a purpose. Read 2:24-26, 5:18-20 and write down the purpose.

To set forth proper philosophy of life in view of the circumstances and give wise counsel for living life under the sun.

6. This Book is written from a special viewpoint of life in this physical world. This contrasts with the rest of the Bible which focuses on the spiritual. Fill in the blanks in the following table showing this contrast.

Physical View Point	Spiritual View Point
Eccl. 7:16-17 Do not be excessively right or [redacted]	Eph. 5:15-17 Be [redacted] how you walk, days are evil.
Eccl. 9:2 Fate of the wicked & righteous is the [redacted]	Php. 1:21-23 To die and be with Christ is [redacted]
Eccl. 2:24 [redacted] to eat & drink and enjoy life.	Lk. 12:19 Eat, drink, be merry; God said You [redacted]

7. The Book can be summarized in these 3 Scriptures. What are the conclusions?

1:2-3:

All is vanity under the sun.

2:24:

Enjoy life, it is a gift from God.

12:13-14:

Our purpose on earth is to fear God and keep His Commandments.

8. Is the “great evil” in vs. 2:21 sin, i.e. transgression against God’s law (see also 5:16?)

No. Word “evil” in Ecclesiastes used mainly meaning “misfortunate”.

9. What is the grievous evil in 5:13 and 5:16?

Riches being hoarded.

Man was born into this world without possessions and will die without his possessions.

10. According to the Preacher, why is going to a funeral better than going to a birthday party (vs. 7:1-4)?

It causes the living to consider the fate (i.e. death) of every person.

11. What should be our attitudes in times of prosperity and poverty (adversity) according to 7:11-14? Who is the source of these times? What should righteous people do when they see wicked people prosper (8:12)?

Prosperity: be happy. Poverty: be appreciative.

God.

Continue to fear God.

12. What is the one fate for all mankind whether good or bad? If this is so, does that mean there is no heaven or hell? Explain.

Death.

There is a heaven and hell.

Remember point of view: life in this physical world.

13. If the dead do not know anything after death, does that mean men and women do not have a soul that is conscious after death in 9:5?

No. Other Scriptures clearly teach men and women have a soul and is conscious after death. Again, remember the point of view: life in this physical world.

14. In 9:7, it states “drink your wine with a cheerful heart”. Does this mean it is OK to drink wine that contains alcohol?

No. Wine in the Bible can be alcoholic or non-alcoholic (see Isa: 16:10, 65:8, Gal. 5:21). Scriptures teach Christians should not drink alcoholic drinks that affect their mental state that can lower their resistance to sin.

15. Does vs. 9:10 mean that we are all going to hell? What is Sheol?

No. Sheol is not hell but death, “going to the grave”.

16. Solomon repeatedly recommends enjoying life in this book. In the table below, put the words from the verses supporting this recommendation.

2:24	Eat and drink, labor is good.
3:12	Rejoice, do good.
3:22	Man should be happy.
5:18	Eat, drink, enjoy oneself.
8:15	Eat, drink and be merry.
9:7	Eat your bread in happiness, drink your wine with a cheerful heart.
11:7-9	Let him rejoice.

17. Two things will happen at death according to vs. 12:7. What are they? Read Gen. 3:19.

1. Dust will return to the earth.

2. Soul (spirit) will return to God.

18. Explain why Solomon recommends in 2:24 “to eat and drink” and enjoy life while Luke calls the man in Lk. 12:19-20 a fool who eats, drink and is merry.

Different points of view. Life under the Sun vs. eternity. The man in Luke put his priority in attaining goods while forgetting about his soul and his responsibilities toward God. Also, Solomon told us to enjoy life but recognize we will give account to God for the deeds done under the sun.