

Bible Study: Ecclesiastes

rights. ... of their
ve beer to those who are perishing,
wine to those who are in anguish;
them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.
speak up for those who cannot speak
for themselves,
for the rights of all who are
destitute.
speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and
needy."

Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character

A wife of noble character who can
find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her servant girls.
She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a
vineyard.
She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.
Her trading is profitable.

and faithful instruction is on her
tongue.
27 She watches over the affairs of her
household
and does not eat the bread of
idleness.

fleeting; ... beauty is
but a woman who fears the LORD is
to be praised.
31 Give her the reward she has earned,
and let her works bring her praise at
the city gate.

Ecclesiastes

Everything Is Meaningless

1 The words of the Teacher, a son of Da-
vid, king in Jerusalem:
2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!"
says the Teacher.
"Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless."
3 What does a man gain from all his labor
at which he toils under the sun?
4 Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever.
5 The sun rises and the sun sets,
and hurries back to where it rises.
6 The wind blows to the south
and turns to the north;
round and round it goes,
ever returning on its course.
7 All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.
To the place the streams come from,

Wisdom Is Meaningless

12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in
Jerusalem. 13 I devoted myself to study
and to explore by wisdom all that is done
under heaven. What a heavy burden God
has laid on men! 14 I have seen all the things
that are done under the sun; all of them
are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.
15 What is twisted cannot be straightened;
what is lacking cannot be counted.
16 I thought to myself, "Look, I have
wisdom more than anyone else in
Jerusalem because I have ex-
amined much of wisdom
and knowledge. I applied my-
self to the understanding of wisdom,
and also of madness and folly. I learned
that this, too, is a chasing after the wind."
18 For with much wisdom and
sorrow;

Bible Study: Ecclesiastes

■ Author

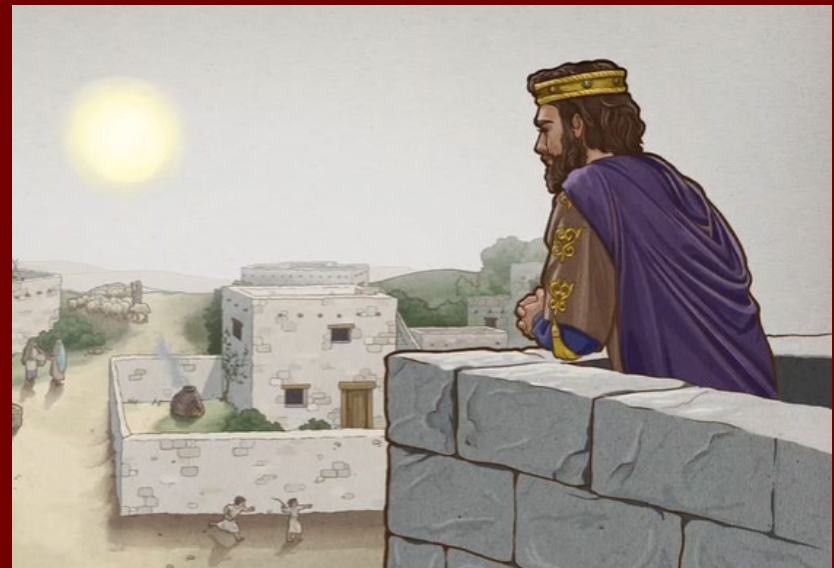
- **Solomon (1:1)** Despite some alleged inconsistencies, the internal evidence of the book points to Solomon. The life of the author coincides with the life of Solomon—great wisdom (1:16), extensive building projects (2:4-6), incomparable wealth (2:7-9), and his many proverbs (12:9).
- **I Kings 3:3-5, 7-15**
- **I Kings 4:29-30, 32-34**



Bible Study: Ecclesiastes

■ Date

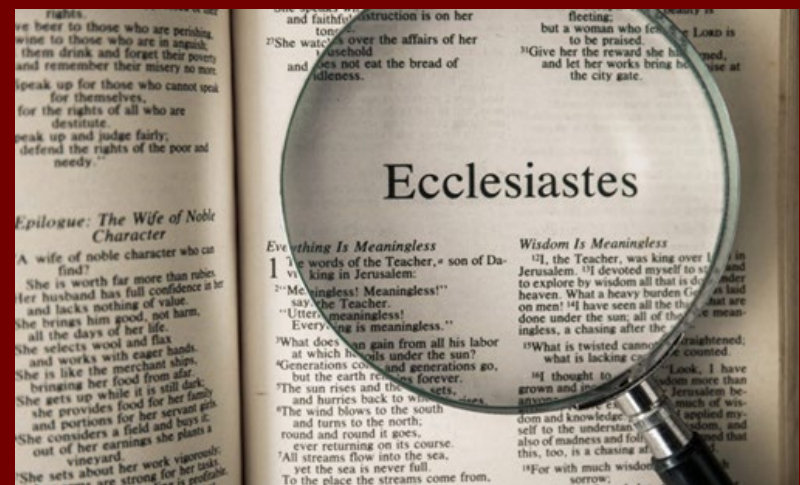
- 940 BC. These are the words of a tired man looking back over his lifelong search for meaning and purpose. He made many mistakes and pours out his heart to guide the young who stand at the same crossroad (11:9-12:7).



Bible Study: Ecclesiastes

■ Name of the Book

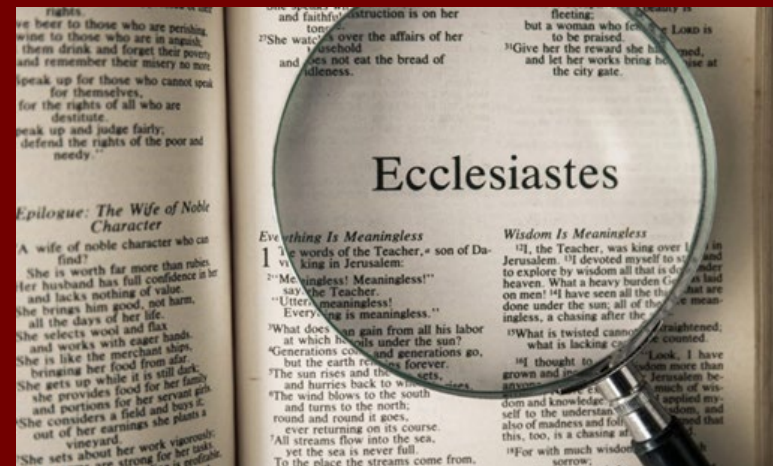
- “Ecclesiastes” derives its name from the Preacher named in the book (1:1,2,12; 7:27;12:8,9,10). The Hebrew title is “Qoheleth” (a ‘qoheleth’ was an official speaker to an assembly of people).



Bible Study: Ecclesiastes

■ Name of the Book

- When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, this book was given the name “Ekklesiastes.” In our English Bibles, the title was transliterated and called “Ecclesiastes.” The name of the book translated literally into English would be “The Preacher.”



Bible Study: Ecclesiastes

■ Message of the Book

- **Life apart from God is meaningless. All of man's pursuits and efforts are futile when God is excluded from them. And since the works of God cannot be thwarted, then it is only a life of service to Him that can impart value and purpose to our lives.**



Bible Study: Ecclesiastes

■ Solomon's 3 Probing Questions

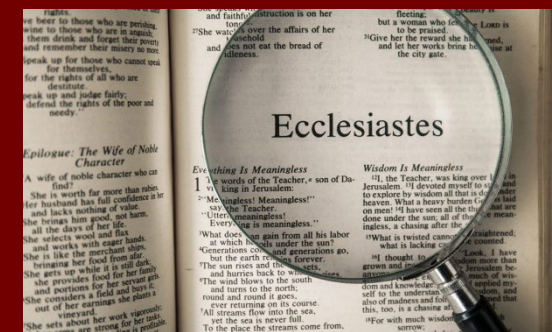
- Question—What profit does a man have under the sun (1:3; 3:9)?
 - Answer—None. He labors for the wind (2:11; 5:16)
- Question—What is it good for man to do in life (2:3)?
 - Answer—Eat, drink, and enjoy the fruit of his labor (2:10,24; 3:22; 5:18)
- Question—What is my purpose for existing?
 - Answer—To serve God (12:13-14)

Ecclesiastes 10

■ Chapter 10

– Key Take Aways:

- Wisdom is Superior to Folly (10:1-4)
- Rulers Take Unfair Advantage of Their Position (10:5-7)
- How You Deal with this Situation (10:8-15)
- Wisdom Brings Success (10:8-10)
- Foolish Words Destroy (10:11-15)
- Folly of the Morally Foolish King (10:16-19)
- Deal Wisely with Such Rulers (10:20-11:8)
- Proper Response to a Foolish King (10:20)



Outline of Content

Chapter 11

- Seize the opportunity (1-8)
 - Cast your bread on the waters (1)
 - Sow seed from morning till evening (6)
- Enjoy youth responsibly (9, 10)



Ecclesiastes 11

■ Chapter 11

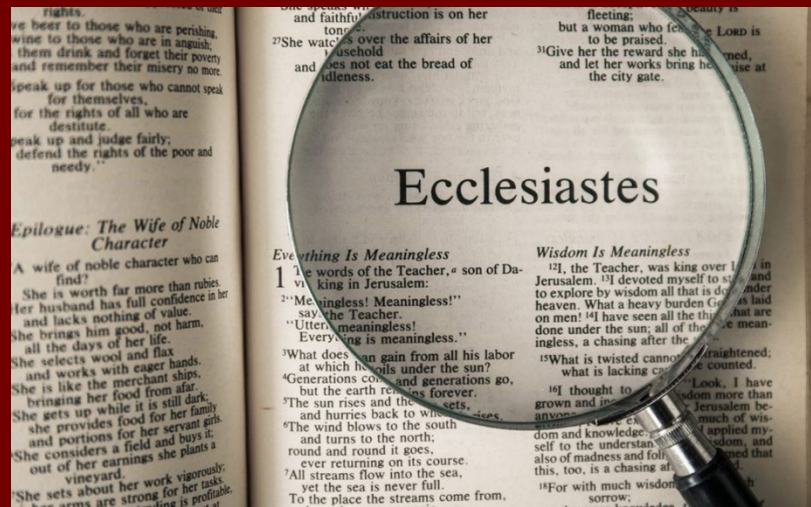
- Don't let this inequity stop you from doing what wisdom dictates regarding those who are in need (11:1-2) or your work (11:3-4). Remember that all this is in God's hands anyway, not the king's (11:5-6).
- Therefore, do not withhold good when you can do it. Even though you get to experience the good that God bestows, don't forget that these "days of darkness will be many" (11:7-8). In each of these selections the conclusion is that you "reap what you sow."
- In his reminders to young people, Solomon tells them rejoice in your youth (11:9) and remove sorrow from your heart (11:10).

Ecclesiastes 11

■ Chapter 11

– Key Take Aways:

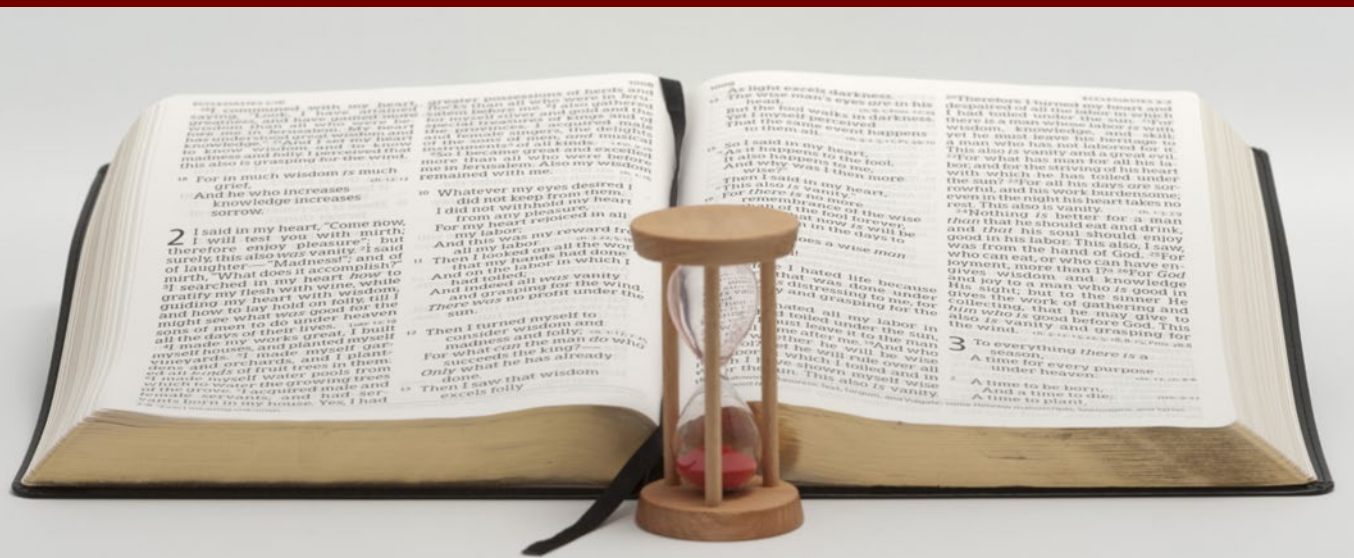
- Encouragement to be Giving (11:1-2)
- Encouragement to be Diligent (11:3-8)
- Advice to Young People (11:9-10)
 - Rejoice in Your Youth
 - Don't Lose Sight of The Judgment
 - Remove Sorry and Evil



Outline of Content

Chapter 12

- Remember the Creator before old age sets in (1-8)
- The congregator's conclusion (9-14)
 - Wise words like oxgoads (11)
 - Fear the true God (13)



Ecclesiastes 12

■ Chapter 12

- The final chapter begins with a continuation of advice directed to the young. They are told to remember God in their youth, before difficult days come in which there will be found little pleasure. Such days are described through a series of illustrations that depict the feebleness of old age and eventual death. When the inevitable happens, the body will decay back to dust, and the spirit will return to God who gave it (1-7).
- Because of Solomon's wisdom, he still taught the people and sought to set in order many proverbs. He wanted to find acceptable and upright words of truth. Such words of the wise and scholarly are described as goads and well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. A person is be advised by these words, yet be aware that there is no end to the making of many books, and much study is wearisome to the flesh (8-12).
- The book is concluded with the whole purpose for man's existence is to fear God and keep His commandments. That is because God will bring into judgment everything we have done (13-14).

Ecclesiastes 12

■ Chapter 12

– Key Take Aways:

- Remember God in Your Youth (12:1-2)
- Reflect on What Is Coming (12:3-7)
- Value the Words of Truth (12:8-12)
- The Conclusion of the Whole Matter (12:13-14)
 - Fear God
 - Keep His Commandments
 - Every Secret Thing Will Be Brought to Judgment
 - Good
 - Evil



Concluding Thoughts: Ecclesiastes

■ Meaning of Life

- Presuming there is no God nor life after death, many have concluded there is no purpose for living, and fallen into despair. If what we see in this life is all there is, then truly "vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"
- Solomon, with his personal experiences and God-given wisdom, has demonstrated that, yes, life from an earthly perspective alone ("life under the sun") is truly vanity. But he has also declared that by fearing God and keeping His commandments, one can endure the many vanities and perplexities of life, all the while enjoying the good things in life that God give us.



Concluding Thoughts: Ecclesiastes

■ Meaning of Life

" What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God."

Ecclesiastes 3:9-13



Concluding Thoughts: Ecclesiastes

■ As We Live This Life

- **As Solomon, we should continue to seek out "acceptable words", "words of truth" (12:10) that will serve as goads to direct us, and as well-driven nails with which to build our lives.**
- **"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."**
- **"...if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."**

Matthew 19:17

Matthew 7:24-25



Group Discussion

