

COMMENTARY

ECCLESIASTES:

BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK:

This book was written by Solomon about 970-930 B.C. This is attested to by the fact that Ecclesiastes 1:1 records this fact for us. Solomons life can be studied in I Kings 3-11; II Chronicles 1-9 and his writings.

The book is a study of the meaning of life and Solomon's conclusions concerning what he had seen and witnessed. Apart from God, life is meaningless. Serving God and fearing Him, is our true purpose and will lead to a fulfilling life (Ecc. 12:13,14)

CHAPTER 1:

Solomon states his theme: Everything is meaningless. Nothing is lasting, nothing new can be found, man continues to make the same mistakes.

CHAPTER 2:

Man will find that life is empty; all his efforts to obtain riches and enjoy pleasure are meaningless. Wisdom is a better course to follow than folly, but death comes to all anyway. All that has been obtained will be left behind. Apart from God, man will not find the joy and satisfaction that he seeks.

CHAPTER 3:

Here is a classic passage; reminding us that there is a time and place for everything. Man fails to understand God's ways and so should stand in awe of Him. Even though injustice and corruption is prevalent, God has set a time for justice.

CHAPTER 4:

Because of the difficulties encountered in life, one might be better off never having been born. Men will work themselves to death; trying to outdo one another and never try to determine the meaning of it all. This taken into consideration, Solomon still feels that wisdom is the way to go and intends to encourage others to feel likewise.

CHAPTER 5:

Solomon gives advice about making promises to God and attitudes toward money. With the uncertainties that man may face, it is best to enjoy work and prosperity (if & when prosperity comes) for these are gifts of God.

CHAPTER 6:

Solomon puts forth the idea that long life is meaningless if one can't enjoy what they have labored so diligently for. He also teaches that those with no self-control will never find satisfaction for their desires.

CHAPTER 7:

The wise man will realize that death is a reality. He will enjoy the good times and try to learn from the bad times. Even though things appear not to make sense or appear not to be fair, it doesn't change anything. We still have to deal with it. Mans troubles are usually the result of his own doing.

CHAPTER 8:

Even though it appears that there is no profit or advantage in righteous living, the man of God must continue to have faith and believe in what God has taught. Enjoyment of life is a blessing of God. Solomon continues to strive for wisdom, even though God has concealed from man the answer to many of life's questions.

CHAPTER 9:

Since death will be faced by all, work hard and enjoy the life God has granted while you can, for once you die, those opportunities will be lost. Wisdom is beneficial, no matter what it might appear,

CHAPTER 10:

This chapter contains many proverbs concerning wisdom, folly, wise sayings and practical advice. This line of writing is continued into the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11 & 12:

The practical advice leads to Solomon's conclusion. One should enjoy life as long as they can, for it always seems too brief. Fear God & keep His commandments for in that one will find the purpose and fulfillment that will bring joy.

STUDY GUIDE

Ecclesiastes:

CHAPTER 1:

1. What is meaningless?
2. What is there under the sun?
3. What did the Teacher devote himself to?
4. What comes with wisdom and knowledge?

CHAPTER 2:

5. What did Solomon want to see?
6. What did Solomon find meaningless, when he stopped and surveyed?
7. What will happen to both the wise and the fool, according to vs. 16?
8. What does God give to the man that pleases Him?

CHAPTER 3:

9. For what, is there a time and season?
10. According to verse 7 & 8, what is the time for?
11. What does Solomon say about, "everything God does"?
12. What will God bring to both, the righteous and the wicked?

CHAPTER 4:

13. What does all labor and achievement spring from?
14. What is better than 2 handfuls with toil & chasing after the wind?
15. Why are 2 better than one?
16. What is better than an old foolish king who no longer knows how to take advice?

CHAPTER 5:

17. What should you do, when you make a vow to God?
18. What do we learn about the lover of money & wealth?
19. How does a person depart from this earth?
20. What is a gift from God, according to verse 19?

CHAPTER 6:

21. Who, is a stillborn child, better off than?
22. What, of mans, is never satisfied?
23. What is better than the roving of the appetite?
24. What has been known, according to verse 10?

CHAPTER 7:

25. What is better than: listening to the song of fools?
26. What question should not be asked?
27. What makes one man more powerful than 10 rulers in a city?
28. How did God make mankind?

CHAPTER 8:

29. Who's command are we to obey?
30. What does no one have the power over?
31. What is the result of a crime sentence not being quickly carried out?
32. What did Solomon commend, according to verse 15?

CHAPTER 9:

33. Who has hope?
34. How are we to eat and drink?

STUDY GUIDE

Ecclesiastes:

Chapter 9: contd.

35. What should we do with all our might; and why?
36. What is better than strength?

CHAPTER 10:

37. What can outweigh wisdom and honor?
38. How can one gain success with a dull ax?
39. What does the fool multiply?
40. For what purpose, do the princes of the blessed land, eat?

CHAPTER 11:

41. What can one not understand?
42. What is a man to enjoy, all of?
43. For what, will God bring people to judgement?

CHAPTER 12:

44. What are we to do in the days of our youth?
45. What did the Teacher impart to the people?
46. What is the conclusion of the matter?