

2019 Through the Bible Reading: Bible Study Support

The Book of Ecclesiastes	
<p>Background (Who, what, why, when)</p>	<p>The title Ecclesiastes comes from a Greek word indicating a person who calls an assembly, so it makes sense that the author identified himself in Ecclesiastes 1:1 by the Hebrew word <i>qoheleth</i>, which is translated as “Preacher.” Despite only giving us this name in the text for his identity, evidence in the book, along with most Jewish and Christian tradition suggest that King Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. The preacher went on to call himself “the son of David, king of Jerusalem.” Solomon followed David on the throne in Jerusalem as his only son to rule over all Israel from that city (Ecc. 1:12). He was the wisest man in the world during that time (1 Kings 4:29-30) and wrote most of the books of Proverbs. Therefore, we can safely identify Solomon as the <i>qoheleth</i> of the opening verse. Solomon’s reign as king of Israel lasted from around 970 B.C to around 930 B.C. The book of Ecclesiastes was likely written towards the end of his reign, approximately 935 B.C.</p> <p>Two phrases are repeated in Ecclesiastes. The word translated as “vanity” in the KJV, and “meaningless” in the NIV appears often, and is used to emphasize the temporary nature of worldly things. In the end, even the most spectacular human achievements will be left behind. The phrase “under the sun” occurs twenty-eight times, and refers to the mortal world. When the Preacher refers to “all things under the sun,” he is talking about earthly, temporary, human things.</p> <p>The first seven chapters of the book of Ecclesiastes describe all of the worldly things “under the sun” that the Preacher tries to find fulfillment in. He tries scientific discovery (1:10-11), wisdom and philosophy (1:13-18), amusement (2:1), alcohol (2:3), architecture (2:4), property (2:7-8), and luxury (2:8). The Preacher turned his mind towards different philosophies to find meaning, such as materialism (2:19-20), and even moral codes (including chapters 8-9). He found that everything was meaningless, a temporary diversion that, without God, had no purpose or longevity.</p> <p>Ecclesiastes is a book that exposes a reality that we rarely like to engage in our lives. It forces us to see the urgency in the tones of the author to see that life is more than just the things we see and accomplish. Solomon encourages us to live a life of reverence to God and to appreciate the simple things in life, through the satisfaction of hard work (Work ethic), eating (quality time with family and friends), drinking (laughter, being truly happy). 1 Timothy 6:6-7 says, “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world and we take nothing out of it” (NKJV). Ecclesiastes is a book of reflection. So, as you dive into this book of wisdom ask God for His wisdom to guide you in the fear of the Lord as this is the conclusion of the book of Ecclesiastes.</p> <p>Key phrases: Vanity of vanities.</p>
<p>Interesting Facts in Ecclesiastes and the Bible</p>	<p>With Solomon as the author of the book, we know it had to have been written sometime before his death in 931 BC. The content of Ecclesiastes reflects someone looking back on a life that was long on experience but short on lasting rewards. As king, he had the opportunity and resources to pursue the rewards of wisdom, pleasure, and hard work. Yet the weary tone of the writing suggests that late in life, he looked back on his foolishness with regret, pointing us to a better, simpler life lived in light of God’s direction.</p>
<p>Reasonable Defense for the faith in</p>	<p>The book of Ecclesiastes shares about real life issues we face from day-to-</p>

Ecclesiastes	<p>day. We read about the author (Solomon) attaining the highest status any person could possibly gain in life. Just imagine having everything your heart could desire. Solomon had it! Jesus says in Mark 8:36, <i>“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul”</i> (NKJV). As is expected, there are many connections between the wisdom Jesus shares in the New Testament and the wisdom God speaks through Solomon in the Old Testament.</p>
Memory Verse	<p><i>“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all”</i> (Ecclesiastes 12:13 NKJV).</p>
Practical Application to memory verse	<p>We all face different seasons in life, some good, some bad and some of us have had some pretty painful things that have happened to us as well. As you read through Ecclesiastes allow the wisdom that comes from these pages to encourage you to go through every season that comes your way knowing that God makes everything beautiful in its time. Make it a priority to make a place for solitude as you reflect upon an older leader’s regrets. Write down some things that you relate to that Solomon sought after in his life that led him to being unsatisfied. After doing this pray and ask God to help you surrender those things that may be distracting you from experiencing God’s abundant plan for your everyday life.</p>
Life Application from Biblical Themes in Ecclesiastes	<p>What’s encouraging is that we know there is life after this physical existence and that every single person will have the opportunity to receive God’s everlasting life. As you read you will be invited to take on the mindset of Solomon and to learn from all of his life experiences. You will see that the key to fulfillment and satisfaction lies in living within God’s commands. Another key point in this book is the value of hard work as a gift in God. We should appreciate the job we have and to look for God in the small moments each day. Each day slow down and enjoy your friends, family and faith.</p>