

Ecclesiastes: *What's It All About*

Introduction

Ecclesiastes 1:1 is the title of the book in Hebrew. The Hebrew term for the author is *Qohelet* (1:1-2, 12; 7:27; 12:8-10). The precise meaning of this term is unknown since it is not used elsewhere in the OT. The Septuagint uses the Greek term *Ekklesiastes* (“one who calls an assembly”). This title was brought over into English.

I. The Author—The author is called the “son of David” and “king of Jerusalem.” He possessed wisdom “more than all who were over Jerusalem before me” (1:16). He built great projects (2:4-6), owned many slaves (2:7), accumulated great herds (2:7), amassed great wealth (2:8), and gathered a large harem (2:8). He claimed to be greater than anyone before him in Jerusalem. All these facts point to Solomon as the human author.

II. The Audience—The wise men and teachers in Jerusalem as well as the people of Israel.

III. The Aim—To show from personal experience life is empty and meaningless apart from a right relationship with God. Earthly attainments when pursued as ends in themselves wind up in emptiness and dissatisfaction.

IV. The Arrangement

ECCLESIASTES

	Introduction	Investigation and Discoveries <i>I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom. (1:13)</i>			Admonition	Conclusion
	<u>Writer</u> <u>Theme</u> <u>Questions and illustrations</u>	PERSONAL PURSUITS Knowledge Amusements Possessions Madness and folly Labor Philosophy Riches	V A N I T Y	CONCLUSIONS Without God's help: Humans cannot discover what is good for them to do. Without God's revelation: Humans do not know what will come after them.	A warning to the young A picture of old age A final admission	THE END OF THE SEARCH Fear God! Obey Him! Someday you will face Him!
	CHAPTER 1:1-11	CHAPTERS 1:12-6:12		CHAPTERS 7:1-11:6	CHAPTERS 11:7-12:8	CHAPTERS 12:9-14
Search	Nature	Philosophy	Materialism	Fatalism	Relationships	Theology
Style	Proverbial		Personal		Poetical	
Theme	The meaninglessness of life apart from God					
Key Verses	2:11; 12:13-14					
Christ in Ecclesiastes	The "one Shepherd" (12:11) who offers abundant life					

- I. Prologue (1:1-11)
- II. Monologue (1:12—12:8)
- III. Epilogue (12:9-14)

Key Words: “vanity” (*hebel*) means mist or vapor 37 times
“under the sun” 29 times (entirely horizontal, earthly perspective on life)

Key Verse: 3:11

V. The Analysis

Proverbs is written to people who want success; *Ecclesiastes* is written to people who have success. *Job* learned the vanity of this world by losing it all; *Solomon* learned the vanity of this world by having it all.

VI. The Application

Life without God is meaningless.

Man needs a divine dimension. Satisfaction is found beyond this world.

Judgment is coming.

The key to life is to enjoy life in the Fear of God—to enjoy life with wisdom. This is “*life’s bottom line.*”