

# Ecclesiastes

FEAR GOD AND ENJOY HIS GIFTS

**To understand and internalize the message of Ecclesiastes and learn how we fear God and enjoy the life that he gives us.**

**Question: What have you learned in your journey of Ecclesiastes? Something that has stuck with you that you didn't see before.**

# Wisdom Literature Overview

**What is wisdom literature?** - A genre of ancient literature characterized by an emphasis on teaching its audience the things necessary to attain virtue and obtain divine favor.

- Primarily: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job.
- Song of Songs (Sometimes)
- **Hebrew Bible (TaNaKh), aka The Old Testament**
- Threefold: law, prophets, writings
- A meditation and faithful reflection - the story from Genesis to now.

# Title and Authorship

## Authorship of the Book: 2 Parts

**Title in English:** ἐκκλησιαστής (Ecclesiastes) - a member of the “ἐκκλησία” (gathering)

- ἐκκλησία is where we get the word Church

**Title in Hebrew:** קהלת (Qoheleth) “the one who gathers” = Translated as a teacher.

- **Qoheleth** - the prominent voice in the book.
  - King Solomon, son of David
  - A later unknown king in Israel.
  - An Israelite teacher with a Solomonic persona
    - For this class, we'll refer to him as Qoheleth.
- **The Author** - who compiles the teachings. He writes verses 1:1 and Chapter 12:9-14.

הבל

**HEVEL (ABEL)**

Smoke, Vapor

Enigma, Conundrum, Absurdity

**“First, reading the book as an examination of the “Abelness” of life (when the relationship between actions and expected results is turned upside down) helps us see that Ecclesiastes is not the rumblings of a discontented sage. Rather, it’s a book written from the wrestling of a faithful follower of God. Second, if Qohelet is indeed using hebel as a symbol to refer to Abel’s life—and all that went wrong in it—then Ecclesiastes is not at all about the “meaninglessness” or “vanity” of life. Rather, it’s a book that guides us through the vagaries of life in this fallen world, offering the solution for how to navigate such a dark and twisted place. The solution is to be faithfully obedient to God and enjoy his gifts.”**

***Russel Meek Ecclesiastes : Life in an Upside-down World***

# **7 Seize the Day's (Carpe Diem)**

Surrounding the things that can cause us  
the most pain.

*(Ecc. 2:24–26; 3:10–15, 16–22; 5:18–20; 8:10–15; 9:7–10; 11:8–10).*

# A Paradigm for understanding Ecclesiastes

הָבֵל HEVEL “Vanity, Meaningless, Futile” (Vapor) (Abel) - The Puzzle/Conundrum/Enigma

“Life Under the Sun” - The pattern of the life we build outside God.

“There is nothing better” (Seize the Day) - The way back to God’s presence and power. Enjoy life instead of commiserating over its brokenness.

# Our Journey

Work and Pleasure - Chapter 2

The Sabotage of Time - Chapter 3

Oppression and Community - Chapter 4

Fearing God - Chapter 5

The Ethics of Money - Chapter 5

Death and Dying - Chapter 9

# **Ecclesiastes Chapter 6:1-6**

# **Ecclesiastes Chapter 7:15-18**

# **Ecclesiastes Chapter 12:9-14**

**Question:** Analyze the pictures of the Oxgoad and the nails and shepherd. Why these pictures for wisdom?

- 1. Wisdom is to be consumed in moderation.**
- 2. Wisdom is gained and followed often by paying attention to where it has wounded us.**
- 3. Wisdom binds us to God's world**

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