

ECCLESIASTES

WISDOM FOR DEVELOPING A GOD-CENTERED
PHILOSOPHY FOR LIFE

Dr. William J. Senn, III
Tri-City Baptist Church, April 19, 2009

PULPIT SCHEDULE FOR 2009

The Wisdom Literature

Wisdom for the Family: The Life of Solomon – I Kings
completed

Wisdom for Daily Living: The Proverbs – in process

Wisdom for Developing a God-Centered Philosophy for Life:
Ecclesiastes - now starting

Wisdom for Marriage: The Song of Songs – starting in the fall
on Wednesday nights

Wisdom for Suffering: Job – starting this fall in SS

Wisdom for Worship: The Psalms – Next year



Quote from the message, ‘Surviving an Economic Collapse’ – source?

“I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around the banks will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered.”

Thomas Jefferson (1802)



I. THE TITLE OF THE BOOK

- ▶ The Hebrew title is Qoheleth which means “one who assembles a group” – the Preacher.
- ▶ The Latin translation of the word Qoheleth is Ecclesiastes.
- ▶ The Qoheleth/Preacher has assembled a group to hear his sermons – lessons.



II. THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK

Ecclesiastes 1:1, The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

- ▶ The Preacher – Qoheleth is a collector of sentences, a preacher, a public speaker, teacher, etc.
- ▶ The Hebrew word “Preacher” is found seven times in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 1:1, 1:2, 1:12; 7:27; 12:8, 12:9, 12:10)



The Time Line of Solomon's Life

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|---------|---|
| 1000 BC | The birth of Solomon |
| 970 BC | Anointed as king over all Israel (age 30) |
| 966 BC | Begins to build the temple (age 34) |
| 959 BC | Completes the temple, begins to build his own palace (age 41) |
| 946 BC | Completes his palace, Second appearance of God (age 54) |
| 930 BC | The death of Solomon (age 70) |

“when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods:” (age 54-70)



The Time Line of Solomon's Writings

1000 to 930 BC

- ▶ **Song of Songs – Written as a young man**
 - ▶ Probably in his thirties or forties
- ▶ **Proverbs – Written in his prime, middle age**
 - ▶ Probably in his forties, early fifties before the age of 54
- ▶ **Ecclesiastes – Written in his old age**
 - ▶ Probably in his sixties and nearer to his death at the age of 70



Reasons Solomon is the Author

1. The internal evidence explicitly states it in Ecclesiastes 1:1.
 2. The book is Solomon's statement of repentance for his apostasy (2:1-11).
 3. The author is described as having unrivaled wisdom (Ecclesiastes 1:16 and 1 Kings 3:12).
 4. The author is described as having unsurpassed wealth (Ecclesiastes 2:4-10 and 1 Kings 7:1-8).
 5. The author is described as having a large number of servants (Ecclesiastes 2 and 1 Kings 9:17-19).
 6. The author is described as being involved in extensive building projects (Ecclesiastes 2 and 1 Kings 10:14-29).
 7. The author is described as an arranger of proverbs (Ecclesiastes 12:9 and 1 Kings 4:32).
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III. THE CANONICITY OF THE BOOK

- ▶ The Hebrew Old Testament includes it.
- ▶ The Greek Old Testament (LXX) includes it. (c. 250 B.C.).
- ▶ The Dead Sea Scrolls confirms it.
- ▶ The Jewish council of Jamnia (A.D. 70) declared it was part of the Old Testament.
- ▶ The early church fathers explicitly declared it as canonical (i.e. Melito of Sardis, Eiphanium, Origen, Jerome, etc.)



Dead Sea Scrolls Discovered in 1947

Qumran Cave #4



Fragments of Ecclesiastes (c.100 BC) found in Qumran Cave #4



THE LENINGRAD CODEX

- ▶ The codex (a book bound with a cover) replaced the scroll.
- ▶ The Leningrad Codex was copied in Cairo, the product of the Ben-Asher scriptorium.
- ▶ Since 1863, the Codex or Book has been preserved in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg.
- ▶ St. Petersburg was formerly called Leningrad. After the Russian Revolution the St. Petersburg Codex was called the “Leningrad Codex.” The library requested that this name be retained even after the city’s original name was restored.



THE LENINGRAD CODEX- A.D. 1000



THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE

- ▶ Fragments of the Book of Ecclesiastes (chapters 5-7) were found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. These partial copies of Ecclesiastes dated back to at least 100 BC.
- ▶ Prior to these finds the oldest copy of the Hebrew Bible was Codex Leningrad, dated at A.D. 1000. This copy was one of the surviving Masoretic Texts (MT).
- ▶ The Masoretic Text was compiled by the Masorites around 700 AD. This was an attempt at standardizing the text and pronunciation by comparing all of the then known copies of the Hebrew Bible to form one complete text that represented the original writings. The vowel pointings were also added to the text to standardize the pronunciation of the words.
- ▶ The fragments of the Book of Ecclesiastes found in the Dead Sea Scrolls did not differ from the Masoretic Text.

**“When we read Ecclesiastes, we read a book in the form
in which it left the author’s hand.”**



IV. THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

I. THE PROLOGUE (1:1-11)

The Preacher's Introduction

II. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY (1:12-12:7)

The Preacher's Sermons – Points

III. THE EPILOGUE (12:8-14)

The Preacher's Conclusion



V. THE THEME OF THE BOOK

THE VANITY OF LIFE APART FROM GOD

- ▶ **Ecclesiastes 1:2, Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.**
 - ▶ Hebrew word for “vanity” is *hebel*
 - ▶ Greek word in LXX for “vanity” is *mataiotes*

 - ▶ **Genesis 4:8, And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.**
 - ▶ Hebrew name Abel is *hebel* = “vanity”

 - ▶ **Romans 8:20, For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same in hope,***
 - Greek word for “vanity” is *mataiotes*
 - Same Greek word used in the LXX, the Greek Old Testament for “vanity”
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VI. THE AIM OF THE BOOK

- ▶ TO PROVIDE WISDOM FOR DEVELOPING A GOD-CENTERED PHILOSOPHY FOR LIFE
- ▶ What is your philosophy for life?
- ▶ Assignment: write out your philosophy for life in fifty or less words.



THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER


44 English Words

- ▶ Ecclesiastes 12:13, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.
- ▶ Ecclesiastes 12:14, For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.



INVITATION

TO FEAR GOD

1. Involves believing in God
 2. Involves submitting to God
 3. Involves respecting/revering God
 4. Involves obeying God
 5. Involves loving God
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THE SINNER'S PRAYER

“Today, I place my faith in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and ask Him to be my Lord and my God. I submit to His Word and Person. By God’s grace my philosophy for life will be to fear and to love God. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.”



THE SAINT'S PRAYER

“Oh Lord, by your grace, I desire to have a God-centered, Bible-centered philosophy that permeates every area of my life. Please fill my life with eternal purpose and perspective. May my life have meaning and bring glory to your name! Please purge from my life all worldly, temporal philosophies and wrong thinking. May I develop the right philosophy for life. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.”

