

# Ecclesiastes

## LESSON 01

### Introduction

#### 1. Purpose of Studying Ecclesiastes

- a. To gain experience from OT wisdom books and Solomon
- b. 'All scripture is profitable' and Solomon asks 'what profit is there?' – 2Ti 2:16
- c. Our culture is one that prizes life "under the sun"; Ecc is a needed lesson
- d. If the church supposes "gain is godliness", 1 Tim 6:20 and Ecclesiastes is needed

#### 2. What to Expect

- a. Details – 12 ch. 222 vs. 5,579 words – Wisdom, 'Writings' - Lk 24:44; "The Preacher"
  - i. God's name is never used as LORD (Jehovah), like Acts 17:23-28
  - ii. Ecc as a journey of thought; unique; labeled pessimistic; 1,2,3 authors?
- b. Author – Solomon - Ecc 1:1, 1:12, 16; almost all 'scholars' deny this for "Qoholeth"
  - i. Solomon predated Greek philosophers by 5 c. - 1Kings 2:12, 3:12, 4:20-34
  - ii. Solomon walked with God, and then away – Deu 17:14-19; 1Ki 10:24-11:6
  - iii. We read about some acts (and thoughts) of Solomon in Ecc – 1Ki 11:41
- c. Dispensational Context – 10<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.; under the law, pre-Babylon, autobiographical
  - i. Solomon had divinely gifted wisdom, riches, wealth, fame, etc – Matt 12:42
  - ii. No knowledge of the mystery of Christ – 1 Cor 2:6-8; 1 Cor 15:58; Col 2:2-4
- d. Purpose – If philosopher = "lover of wisdom" then Christians ought to be, but Col 2:8
  - i. To discover what profit man has "under the sun" (29x) – Ecc 1:3, Mk 8:36
  - ii. God takes the wise in their own craftiness - 1 Cor 1:19-22; 3:19-20; Ps 39:5
  - iii. Prov = wisdom of God from heaven; Ecc = wisdom of man by observation
  - iv. If 1 Tim 6:6 is great gain, then Ecclesiastes will point toward contentment
  - v. Looking at death and vanity helps us to apply our hearts wisely – Ps 90:12
- e. Themes – "under the sun" (29x); "vanity" (37x), "vexation of spirit" (9x); travail (8x)
  - i. "work" (21x) starts studying the work of man, then the work of God – 8:17
  - ii. "I communed with my own heart" (7x); "I gave my heart to..."
  - iii. What he sees vs. what he can't; what he observes vs. what he counsels
  - iv. Monotony of life; vanity of wisdom; futility of wealth; certainty of death
  - v. Contradictions, uncertainty, unpredictability, evil, folly, anti-, no answer
  - vi. Our life as vanity, vapor, and smoke – Jam 4:14
  - vii. God as the Creator, maker of all things; Genesis 1-3; Abel = vanity
  - viii. Eat, drink, and enjoy is recurrent – 2:24; 3:12; 5:18; 8:15; 9:7; 11:9
  - ix. Ecclesiastes tears down, and so requires other books to build up
- f. Structure - Williams – What is the chief good? 1-6 what it is not; 7-12 what it is
  - i. (1) introduction; (2-11) search for the answer; (12) conclusion
  - ii. Turning points in Ecc 7:11, 7:29; 8:15-9:1
- g. What Solomon does not know, we now know – Eph 3:10
  - i. There is still vanity to life in the world under the sun, but we joy in Christ