

THE WORDS OF THE PREACHER

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-11

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

I. The Author

Solomon is the author. There is some disagreement about this amongst scholars, but this has been the traditional view and is supported by Scripture.

The author is identified as “the son of David, king in Jerusalem.”

While this could mean that the author was simply a descendant of David, other internal evidence would indicate that he was literally David's son, Solomon.

**Ecclesiastes 1:12 I the
Preacher was king over Israel
in Jerusalem.**

After Solomon, Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. The capital of Israel was Samaria and the capital of Judah was Jerusalem.

David made Jerusalem Israel's
capital and reigned there.
Solomon followed him.

**Kings who came after Solomon
would not have reigned over
Israel from Jerusalem.**

**Ecclesiastes 1:12 I the
Preacher was king over Israel
in Jerusalem.**

**Ecclesiastes 2:9 So I was
great, and increased more than
all that were before me in
Jerusalem: also my wisdom
remained with me.**

Solomon was certainly greater than any great man that had come before him in Jerusalem. He had greater wisdom and greater riches. He also had greater power.

**The internal evidence would
point to Solomon as the author
and scholars generally agree
with this.**

II. The Method

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

**Solomon identifies himself as a
preacher, and Ecclesiastes is
his sermon.**

“The title of this book is in Hebrew, Koheleth, signifying one who speaks publicly in an assembly.”

(Smith’s Bible Dictionary)

Ecclesiastes is delivered as a series of wise discourses about life, to be received by an assembled congregation.

III. The Theme

**Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of
vanities, saith the Preacher,
vanity of vanities; all is vanity.**

**Ecclesiastes 1:3 What profit
hath a man of all his labour
which he taketh under the sun?**

“THE CHOCOLATE bunny lies in the basket, surrounded by green paper "grass." With Easter morning eyes wide with anticipation, the little boy carefully lifts the candy figure and bites into one of the long ears. But the sweet taste fades quickly, and the child looks again at the candy in his hand. It's hollow!

“Empty, futile, hollow, nothing—the words have a ring of disappointment and disillusionment. Yet this is the life experience of many. Grasping the sweet things—possessions, experience, power, and pleasure—they find nothing inside. Life is empty, meaningless—and they sink into despair.” (LASB)

**So the theme is that all of life
(without God) is vanity.**

**The word “vanity” means
“vapour, breath” (BDB) It is like
your breath on a cold winter
day. It is like chasing the wind.
Life is fleeting, empty, void of
meaning (without God).**

IV. How Should We View Ecclesiastes?

**A. These are “the words of the
preacher.”**

**In any sermon you listen to,
some things that are said are
right and other things may be
wrong. Many times, the
preacher's mood affects what
he says.**

**Solomon appears to have
preached the sermon of
Ecclesiastes when he was in a
state of depression.**

It is generally thought that Ecclesiastes was written when Solomon was older. The Bible teaches that in his old age, Solomon sinned against God through idolatry.

**1 Kings 11:4 For it came to pass,
when Solomon was old, that his
wives turned away his heart after
other gods: and his heart was not
perfect with the LORD his God, as
was the heart of David his father.**

**1 Kings 11:5 For Solomon
went after Ashtoreth the
goddess of the Zidonians, and
after Milcom the abomination
of the Ammonites.**

1 Kings 11:6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father.

1 Kings 11:7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

1 Kings 11:8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

**We can see how Solomon,
having sinned against God,
could decide that everything in
life was vanity. He was
backslidden, and in a state of
depression.**

**B. The book of Ecclesiastes is
the Word of God.**

2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Inspiration simply means that the Scripture is God-breathed. The Holy Spirit gave the words to man and made sure that what they wrote was a faithful record of exactly what God wanted written.

**Therefore, the Bible is inerrant,
meaning “without error.” But
the Bible flawlessly records
several things.**

- 1. The Bible records, without error, the direct commands of God.**
- 2. The Bible records, without error, statements from unsaved or unspiritual men.**
- 3. The Bible records, without error, statements from the Devil that are obviously lies.**
- 4. The Bible records, without error, statements from men that are true, but are not direct commands of God.**

Ecclesiastes accurately records the words of Solomon, a man who was backslidden in his old age and who had grown disillusioned with life.

So, Ecclesiastes can best be viewed as a book of philosophy. It is a record of the thoughts and teachings of the wisest, richest and most powerful man on earth at that time.

**It gives us a unique,
philosophical insight into
humanity, work and life.**

And, after all of the vanity of life is presented, the preacher ends his sermon by telling us to look to God for true meaning and purpose.

V. General Proofs of the Vanity of Life. (4-11)

A. The world is in constant motion.

**Ecclesiastes 1:4 One
generation passeth away, and
another generation cometh:
but the earth abideth for ever.**

**Ecclesiastes 1:5 The sun also
ariseeth, and the sun goeth
down, and hasteth to his place
where he arose.**

**Ecclesiastes 1:6 The wind
goeth toward the south, and
turneth about unto the north; it
whirleth about continually, and
the wind returneth again
according to his circuits.**

**Ecclesiastes 1:7 All the rivers
run into the sea; yet the sea is
not full; unto the place from
whence the rivers come, thither
they return again.**

B. We are never satisfied with anything.

Ecclesiastes 1:8 All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

Everything is constantly working, moving. The world is moving and mankind, internally is moving. He is never satisfied with anything. He wants more, different, better. When he gets what he wants, he will not be satisfied.

**C. We don't create anything
new.**

Ecclesiastes 1:9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

**Ecclesiastes 1:10 Is there any
thing whereof it may be said,
See, this is new? it hath been
already of old time, which was
before us.**

Perhaps one of the greatest
joys of life is being creative;
Creating books, art, music,
businesses, jobs, crafts,
hobbies.

Yet, the preacher throws a wet blanket on the joy of creation.

He says, “everything you’re making that you think is unique and new has been done before!

And guess what?”

**D. We die and our work is
forgotten.**

**Ecclesiastes 1:11 There is no
remembrance of former things;
neither shall there be any
remembrance of things that are
to come with those that shall
come after.**

**What a sad note! Life is
meaningless and empty. Life
without God, that is.**