

The Scriptures Summarized / Book 21 – Ecclesiastes

Solomon apparently wrote this next piece of wisdom literature near the end of his life, for it is a book filled with regrets. Whereas, Proverbs was parental, this book is personal. Ecclesiastes is much more philosophical, while Proverbs is practical. Solomon's personal testimony was that although he was granted by God, every human advantage of pedigree, position, power, prestige and prosperity, he still fell prey to human depravity. Even though incredibly wise, he acted foolishly.

The key phrase, "under the Sun," is found 27 times. It is of interpretive significance. This indicates that Solomon was writing from a strictly secular viewpoint. Although he had sought God early in his reign as King, he soon lost that dedication. The wise obedience of his youth was replaced with foolish indulgence in his middle age. He now writes as one who wants to spare others of his own discontentment.

Eccl. 1:13 I applied my mind to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind!
14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 15 What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.

Thus he writes as a "preacher" which is where the book gets its Greek title. His message is an important conclusion he shares about the meaning of life. His evaluation is that life without a vibrant relationship to God is "vanity" or "meaningless," which is another key to the book being used 37 times. Life on earth is messed up; neither does it add up.

Nothing in Solomon's wealth, or accomplishments gave lasting satisfaction. In fact, rather than making him happy, he is haunted by the reality of death. Death is the common destiny of all people with few

exclusions. Beyond death is accountability to the Creator, which provides the ultimate motivation for righteous living.

Solomon's summary is that the soul's search for significance is satisfied in that which is spiritual not in that which is secular. Reflecting on the realities of the rat race, revealed the relevance of a right religion.

I. The Preacher's Proposition— The secular life we must live while on Earth will not satisfy us. It is just a tedious cycle. This is witnessed...

A. In Creation

B. In Culture

II. The Preacher's Proof — Solomon recounts his personal quest for lasting joy and fulfillment. He records the emptiness of ...

A. His Pursuit of Pleasure

B. His Pursuit of Projects

C. His Pursuit of Possessions

D. His Pursuit of Philosophy

Solomon gained plenty of information and insight from these pursuits, but even these benefits didn't guarantee a better or lasting distinction from those who lacked these benefits.

III. The Preacher's Point — Death is the greatest equalizer of all classes of people that no one can evade on their own. So...

A. Don't Forget God — Remember your Creator while you are young and physically able to serve Him, for you will certainly die

B. Do Fear God — Keep His commandments, for this is your duty and He will judge every deed of your life