|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |

 | ago) |  |  |
|

|  |
| --- |
|  |

 |

**ECCLESIASTES**
**Purpose**: To spare future generations the bitterness of learning through their own experiences that life is meaningless apart from God.
**Key term**: Futility (uselessness or absurdity)
The Hebrew term for Ecclesiastes is Qoheleth, which means preacher or teacher. Ecclesiastes means one who assembles people.
**The key Text is 1:2 which is the same as 12:8\***
This book does not follow modern standards of setting topics in a hierarchy. But a careful reading shows that Ecclesiastes carefully moves among a group of selected subjects. These include wealth, politics, wisdom, death, and aging. As the book moves to and fro among these and other topics, a complete statement gradually emerges.
**A. Time**:.... (1:3-11;3:1-15a; 11:7-12:7)
All of nature is in constant motion in yet is going nowhere. This is a parable of human life; it is a long flurry of activity that accomplishes nothing permanent. Not only that, but there is nothing new in this world. Our existence in this world is a mixture of joy and sorrow, harmony and conflict, in life and death. Each has its own proper moment, and we, as creatures of time must conform to the temporal limitations that are built into the cycle of life.
**B. Wisdom** (1:12-18; 2:12-17; 6; 7:11-29)
Education and intellectual pursuits fail to satisfy our deepest needs. The task of the intellectual, the quest to understand life, is itself a hopeless endeavor. Both the wise man and the fool will die. Of course, the wise go through life with better understanding of what lies ahead then do fools, but neither can escape death. Still it is better to go through life with sobriety and understanding than in inane pleasure seeking. Qoheleth compares wisdom to wealth and considers wisdom better because it does not disappear in hard times.
**C. Wealth**:(2:1-11, 18-26; 4:4-8;5:10-6:9;7:11-14; 10:18-20; 11:1-6)
-while Ecclesiastes discourages the pursuit of wealth , it favors wise investment and diligent work. Better to recognize that all things are in gods hands and proceed with our work with an eye toward all possible contingencies.
**D. Politics**:( 3:15b-17; 4:1-3, 13-16; 5:8-9;7:7-10; 8:1-9:6; 9:13-10:20)
-Ecclesiastes voices dismay at the widespread corruption and places of political power, but it asserts that someday God will judge. Political power and the popularity that accompanies it are short-lived. Those who have long help power tend to become inflexible and thus Vulnerable but the entire struggle, and an endless game of king of the hill, is pointless. Corruption of government officials is a universal occurrence and should not surprise anyone. But anarchy is not the answer. Many who have power use it ruthlessly for their own game. That they often seem to go unpunished aggravated the situation. This is perhaps, the most troubling power of life.
**E. Death**: (3:18-22; 8:1-9:6)
Ecclesiastes States that no one, by comparing the carcass of an animal to a human corpse, can find any evidence that the human, unlike the animal, is immortal. The thought that persons have no advantage over the animals astonishes many readers. But it does not mean we are in all respects like the animals, nor does it contradict the rest of the Bible. It means humans can no more claim to have the power to beat death than can any other animal. For Christians this should only drive us closer to Christ, who did conquer death in his resurrection. (3:18-22)
**F. Friendship** (4:9-12)
In all the hardships and disappointments of life, few things give more real, lasting satisfaction than true friendship. A friend is a comfort in need any help in trouble. Verse 11 does not refer to sexual relationship but to shared warmth between two traveling companions on a cold desert night. At the same time, it may imply that the best friend for life ought to be one’s spouse.
**G. Religion:** (5:1-7;7:15-29)
Fools assume They know all about God and are able to please him. True piety and wisdom recognize the limitations of both our understanding of God and our ability to please him with our deeds. The attitude of awe toward God that Ecclesiastes recommends (5:7) is in reality dependence on God’s grace and recognition that the benefits we have from him are only by his mercy.
**H. On Evil:** (8:1-9:6)
One of life‘s most troubling observations is that the good and the bad suffer the same fate. This, however, should not lead to cynicisms instead, it should provoke deeper faith that only God knows the end from the beginning and only he can finally set all things right.
**I. Contentment**: (9:7-12; 11:7-12:7) this section is in two parts: Counsel to youth and a poem on aging and death. To the young, Ecclesiastes advises that their brief time of youthful vigor be spent in joy rather than in anxiety. But they are not free to pursue folly and immoral behavior. Awareness of divine judgment in the fleeting nature of youth should always govern their decisions.
**J. Conclusion** (12:8-14)
True wisdom comes from God and is worth acquiring. But one should be wary of endless academic pursuits. Some readers feel the concluding called to fear God does not follow from all of that has gone before, but it is in fact the perfect conclusion. The pursuit of wealth, knowledge, and political power is ultimately unsatisfactory and leads to divine judgment. Life is short and full of mystery. All our attempts to make a life meaningful fail. The wise response, therefore is to cling to God and his grace.

**Song of Songs**
Song of Solomon (The Hebrew title is Shir Hashirim, Song of Songs, meaning
‘The finest song” Because 1:1 mentions Solomon, English Bibles have often included his name in the title.
**Key Text: 6:3**...... I am my love’s and my love is mine; he feeds among the lilies.
**One sentence summary**:
A bride and groom (or wife and husband) celebrate with exuberant passion God’s wonderful gift of the love they share by describing the intimate dimensions of their love -physical, emotional, and spiritual.
**Author and date of Writing**:
Solomon, probably written early in Solomon’s reign around 965 BC
**Setting**: Israel- the Shulammite woman’s garden and the king’s palace.
**The Blueprint**
-**The wedding day** (1:1-2:7)
- **Memories of courtship** (2:8-3:5)
-**Memories of engagement (3:6-5:1)**
-**A troubling dream** (5:2-6:3)
**-Praise in the brides beauty(6:4-7:9a)
-The brides tender appeal(7:9b-8:4)
-The power of love (8:5-14)**

 **Overview**Song of songs is a wedding song honoring marriage. The most explicit statements on sex in the Bible can be found in this book. It has often being criticized down through the centuries because of its sensuous language. The purity and sacredness of love represented here, however, are greatly needed in our day in which distorted attitudes about love and marriage are commonplace. God created sex and intimacy, and they are holy and good win enjoyed within marriage. A husband and wife honor God when they love and enjoy each other.

**MEGATHEMES;**
**Sex**...... sex is gods gift to his creatures. He endorses sex but restricts it’s expression to a man and
a woman who are committed to each other in marriage.

**Love.....** As the relationship developed. The beauty and wonder of a romance unfolding between Solomon and his bride. The intense power of love affected the hearts, minds, and bodies of the two lovers.

**Commitmen**t: The power of love requires more than the language of feeling to protect it. Sexual expression is such an Integral part of our selfhood that we need the boundary of marriage to safeguard our love. Marriage is the celebration of daily commitment between a husband and a wife.
**Beauty**

: The two lovers praise the beauty they see in each other. The language they use shows the spontaneity and mystery of love. Praise should not be limited to physical beauty; beautiful personality and moral purity should also be praised.

**Problems**: Overtime, feelings of loneliness, indifference, and isolation came between Solomon and his bride. During those times, love grew cold, and barriers were raised.