

Key to ECCLESIASTES

1. STATISTICS:

The title "Ecclesiastes" means the Preacher, or the Words of the Preacher. Writer, Solomon (1:1); time of writing, about 975 B.C. key verse, 2:11; key thought, emptiness of earthly things; key word, vanity.

2. THEME:

Although Solomon was an unusual and gifted king, he allowed sin to have dominion. His marital alliances turned his heart from the sincere worship of GOD and resulted in emptiness of life and leanness of soul. We have no record of his repentance from such sin, and possibly this monologue was his repentance.

3. OUTLINE:

Introduction of writer (1)
Vanity the result of experiment (2, 3)
Vanity the result of observation (3-8)
Mysteries and a conclusion (9-12)

4. SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS:

It is a book of human philosophy on: "Is Life Worth Living?"

Gloomiest outlook of any book in the Bible; no mention of term "JEHOVAH," a name of GOD associated with the covenant of redemption.

5. OUTSTANDING TEACHINGS:

Although both Job and Ecclesiastes are philosophical treatises on life's problems, the former closes on a happy note while the latter ends on a mournful one. The difference is - no philosophy is complete without GOD. How exceedingly frightful it is to exclude GOD's truth about Heaven and eternity.

The solution to life's problem is hinted at: there is a divine providence if you will seek it; when you remember GOD and acknowledge Him, vanity is turned into verity, and vexation into satisfaction. Under the sun there is no profit, but why not look beyond the sun?

6. INTERESTING FEATURES:

The "conclusion" (12:13, 14) is still an "under the sun" conclusion.

This book was read at the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles.

Our LORD's commentary on the matter for which Solomon had no answer is found in Luke 12:15: **"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."**

7. KEY TO UNDERSTANDING:

Use the material in Ecclesiastes only after remembering that it is "under the sun" (human, limited) wisdom.

Actually the truth in this book should always be supplemented by other (divine truth).

~ end of Ecclesiastes ~

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