



Anchored in Christ

ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Introduction to Ecclesiastes

OVERVIEW

Author: King Solomon

Date: 931 B.C.

Words: 4,537

Purpose:

Life without God (i.e., life under the sun) is empty; the only rescue from such emptiness comes from God as He brings us to fear, love, and trust Him and His Word.*

Law Theme:

For natural man, life and success have no real significance; foolishness hastens destruction; life is dissatisfying.*

Gospel Theme:

Favoring us on account of Christ, the Creator graciously provides for us in every season and time; by bringing us to fear, love, and trust in Him, He gives us true wisdom.*

*The Lutheran Study Bible (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 1048.

Life Under The Sun?

Kingdom of God; God-centered Perspective; Reign of Grace; the Age to Come

Life Under the Sun



Dominion of Darkness; Limited to Human Perspective without God; Reign of Death

Pastor's Notes

1. Jewish tradition and the context of Ecclesiastes indicate that the book of Ecclesiastes was written when Solomon was an older man. Therefore, we can think of this book as reflections of an old man who has lived life and experienced much under the sun. He understands because he has walked-the-walk.
2. As we will see in the upcoming chapters, Solomon undertakes a careful investigation of everything that life under the sun has to offer. (Note graphic above regarding the term, "Life Under the Sun.")
3. Solomon's basic thesis is that life under the sun is vanity. Life under the sun is futile—like chasing the wind.
4. So, if life under the sun is meaningless, it means that any worldview that is derived from this life is inadequate as well. Indeed, only a God-centered worldview is sufficient, for only a God-centered worldview understands this life in light of the age to come and in light of what Christ has done for us in the here and now.
5. Ecclesiastes is not a pessimistic book, as many like to say. But instead, it offers a healthy realism about life.
6. The reader of Ecclesiastes will encounter the term 'wisdom' some 28 times. With that said; one must be careful to understand what kind of wisdom Solomon is talking about. If it is a wisdom from this life under the sun, it is empty wisdom. However, there is another kind of wisdom that Solomon speaks of in Proverbs 9:10. That wisdom (found in Ecclesiastes as well) is a wisdom that is ultimately embodied in Christ. Yes, Christ embodies everything that is good and is the source of goodness and wisdom to the Christian who lives life under the sun alongside pagans. Frankly stated, wisdom is not an 'it' but is a "He." Wisdom is Christ (See 1 Corinthians 1:22-24,30 & Colossians 2:8).
7. When Ecclesiastes and the Bible speak of wisdom, we must understand that it is not a 'how to' type of wisdom or grey beard wisdom. Faith cannot be replaced by reason. But rather, as we will see in upcoming chapters, Godly wisdom is best seen via faith. Yes, wisdom is receiving, listening, and trusting in the Lord's Word—being mindful and receptive to the Lord in this life under the sun.

I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold all is vanity... - Solomon