

Ecclesiastes

GOSPEL GROWTH | OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY |
MAY 10 2020 – JONATHAN JARRETT

Context

Who is the “Teacher?”

- We don't really know. It could be Solomon, but it could also be another descendant of David.

Setting within the narrative of salvation history

- Ecclesiastes is like a “how-to” guide for living in a fallen world. It doesn't advance the storyline of redemption, but instead sit on top of it as a timeless guide for the people of God.

Theme

Meaningful! Meaningful! All is meaningful because all is ordered by an eternal, sovereign, and purposeful God. Therefore, we should fear God and rejoice in what He has given us to do and to have.

Structure of the Book

Vanity of Vanities – Ecclesiastes 1:1-2:23

The Book's Thesis: Ecclesiastes 2:24-26

“There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.”

Ecclesiastes 3:12-14; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-10 Eating and drinking

Who can enjoy?

God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy

The Remainder of the Book

Objection: The Problem of Evil

Three Answers

1 - Who are you to question your creator (5:2)?

2 – Is lack of material things really a sign of God's curse? Perhaps there's a basic misunderstanding of what really is good (7:14).

3 – There are no good people (7:29)

Practical Application

Obey your king. Work hard. Enjoy your spouse. Seek wisdom. Remember your creator in the days of your youth.

A Study Outline for Ecclesiastes

- I. Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 – Antithesis: All is vain.
- II. Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:23 – All is vain apart from a sovereign Creator.
- III. Ecclesiastes 2:24-26 – Thesis: All is meaningful if a sovereign God rules the universe.
- IV. Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 – The sovereignty of God affirmed.
- V. Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:16 – Objection: If God is sovereign, why are there so many problems in the world?
- VI. Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 – First answer: Who are you, the created, to point your finger at the Creator; you should be silent and worship in reverence instead.
- VII. Ecclesiastes 5:8-7:14 – Second answer: What is good/prosperity? Those who have it don't necessarily have a blessing from God, nor do those without it necessarily have a curse from God.
- VIII. Ecclesiastes 7:15-29 – Third answer: "Bad" things happen to "good" people because no one is good.
- IX. Ecclesiastes 8:1-12:14 – Practical application stemming from chapters 1-7.