

Ecclesiastes, Detailed Bible Study Outline

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Exciting Prelude to the Study!

1. Ecclesiastes is the record of Solomon's search for purpose, and his spiritual journey taken to that end in life.
2. The Book of Ecclesiastes is the fourth of the five poetry books in the Bible: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon. Solomon wrote the latter 3 books and penned Psalm 72, 127, and possibly 128, 129, and 130.
3. Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes (meaning "The Preacher"), for sure. In 1:1, he writes that he was "the son of David, king in Jerusalem." In 1:12, he writes that "was king over Israel in Jerusalem", something that was not true of any other ancient king in David's line, the kingdom was subsequently divided.
4. Date written: Probably late in life (around 935 BC), 11:9. Solomon reigned from 970 BC and 931 BC. In 1 Kings 3:3-14, Solomon asked for and received great wisdom at the beginning of his reign, yet he strayed from this at times of his life, due to spiritual carelessness and temptation.
5. Understanding the Framework of the Book of Ecclesiastes
 - a. "under the sun" (1:3,9, etc.), futility of operating from an earthly/worldly perspective rather than a heavenly one
 - b. Self-evident truths (3:11,14, 8:11), Divinely-revealed truths (5:4-5, 11:9-10, 12:7), and Experiential musings (2:24, 7:2,16-17)
 - c. A time for every purpose, a purpose for every time (3:1)
 - d. Solomon desired to impart the wisdom he acquired on his life journey to young and old alike (12:1,6)
 - e. Spiritual journey, how to get from 1:2 to 12:13, from an empty life with a "God-shaped hole" in it (Pascal) to a fulfilled life (of justification and peace)
 - f. The Greatest Theme, Jesus Christ, the End Goal of life, Rewarder of Good and Punisher of Evil (12:13-14)

Question, “What do Solomon and Johnny Lee have in common?”

... Well, I spent a lifetime lookin' for you

Single bars and good time lovers were never true
Playing a fools game, hopin' to win
And tellin' those sweet lies and losin' again

... I was lookin' for love in all the wrong places

Lookin' for love in too many faces
Searchin' their eyes
Lookin' for traces of what I'm dreaming of
Hoping to find a friend and a lover
I'll bless the day I discover another heart
Lookin' for love

... And I was alone then, no love in sight

And I did everything I could to get me through the night
Don't know where it started or where it might end
I turned to a stranger just like a friend

... I was lookin' for love in all the wrong places

Lookin' for love in too many faces
Searchin' their eyes
Lookin' for traces of what I'm dreaming of
Hoping to find a friend and a lover
I'll bless the day I discover another heart
Lookin' for love

... You came knockin' on my heart's door

You're everything I've been looking for

... No more lookin' for love in all the wrong places

Lookin' for love in too many faces
Searchin' their eyes
Lookin' for traces of what I'm dreaming of
Now that I found a friend and a lover
I bless the day I discover
You, oh you, lookin' for love

... In all the wrong places

(Lookin' for love) in too many faces
Searchin' their eyes
Lookin' for traces of what I'm dreaming of
Now that I found a friend and lover
I bless the day I discover
You, oh you, lookin' for love
In all the wrong places

Source: [LyricFind](#)

Songwriters: Bob Morrison / Patti Ryan / Wanda Mallette

Lookin' for Love lyrics © Bluewater Music Corp., Concord Music Publishing LLC, Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, 1980

Ecclesiastes Bible Study, Detailed Outline, Verse by Verse

1. 1:1-18, The Vanity of Life Without Purpose
 - a. 1:1,12, “Preacher”, the translation of the title “Ecclesiastes”, in Hebrew “Koheleth”, “the son of David, king in Jerusalem...over Israel” narrows it down to King Solomon
 - b. 1:2, footnote in Thompsons offers alternate translations based on context, “Absurdity, Frustration, Futility, Nonsense”, such is the end result of the search for purpose in life, most of us start there, God uses this to bring us to finding purpose in life
 - c. 1:3-4, Cf. Genesis 3:17-18, the natural man only sees the curse, not the blessings
 - d. 1:5-8, all of these are God’s revelation through creation, but the natural man takes them for granted and sees them as mundane
 - e. 1:9-10, these truths are self-evident when you think about it, history is fixed and continually repeats itself, man always strives for the latest and greatest, evil designs and false teachings recur (including Christian ones, e.g. Arianism is now JW)
 - f. 1:11, this is generally true on earth, not so in heaven (Daniel 12:2-3) so why not seek legacy there instead!
 - g. 1:13-14, “under heaven” is the problem, we save ourselves time by looking to heaven sooner than later
 - h. 1:15, man lacks power to create and to fix that which is broken
 - i. 1:16-18, Cf. 1 Kings 3:12, 4:30, even with this blessing Solomon began to get ahead of God in his thinking, the wisdom of the Bible is set before us yet we are prone to seek beyond it, the danger of wisdom is that we see Jeremiah 17:9 in action, and perceive much evil, which causes us to sorrow, someone said, “Ignorance is bliss.”

2. 2:1-26, The Vanity of Pleasure

- a. 2:1, Cf. 1 Kings 4:20-28, the children of Israel enjoyed prosperity in Solomon's reign, but where did it get them?
- b. 2:2, Cf. Revelation 18:11-14 applied, the end of worldly luxury is that it passes, suddenly
- c. 2:3, two mutually opposing goals, "gratify my flesh" and "guiding my heart with wisdom", Solomon was wondering if there was some balance of the best of both worlds (worldly and spiritual) that could be had, everyone who has ever followed this through has ended up, Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:14-21, Have you ever tried to thread the needle? Perhaps by going to an evil place for a good cause (like, a casino, for a charitable benefit).
- d. 2:4-8, Cf. 1 Kings 10:14-23
- e. 2:9-10, 1 Kings 10:24, Solomon's wisdom did remain, it was of the Lord, but it was compartmentalized, his life was more characterized by pursuit of material objects and pleasure, how Christians can become like this also
- f. 2:11, worldly labor without purpose is unsatisfying, with the Lord in your life, even your secular work has purpose, Cf. Ephesians 6:5-7
- g. 2:12, Cf. 1:9, the new king will have the same challenges as the old one, he will repeat many of the same mistakes and he will see things more clearly with wisdom when he is seasoned on the throne (apply to other scenarios)
- h. 2:13, Cf. Job 28:12-28
- i. 2:14-16, the universality of death, if death was the final end then what difference does life make, the folly of seeking help in finding purpose in life from secular sources is exposed!
- j. 2:17, the despondency of secular "experiential musings", how depression, despair, and psychological/psychiatric problems begin, not knowing the purpose for which one is created, these must be saved, or they will get stuck

- k. 2:18-20, riches are as fleeting as this life, we can take steps to leave a legacy (by drafting a will or gifting money while still alive) but there is no guarantee that it will go that way (you will not be here to see to it, as one child cheats the other of inheritance, or the ministry you left it to goes liberal)
 - l. 2:21-23, we do not always get to enjoy our earned worldly things, either we do not live to or far into retirement or our health does not permit us to enjoy them much, let us heed Luke 12:15-21, and find our riches in Christ Jesus!
 - m. 2:24-26, both the good and the evil get a measure of enjoyment of this world's goods, but what does it matter?
3. Self-Test, Ecclesiastes Prelude, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2
- a. Who wrote Ecclesiastes, and what two verses in Chapter 1 give us no other option of authorship?
 - b. What does “under the sun” refer to, and why is this focus not the right one?
 - c. Who is the Greatest Theme of Ecclesiastes? Provide a Scripture reference to support your answer.
 - d. What do Solomon and Johnny Lee have in common? Give a Bible reference to support your answer, from either 1 Kings or Ecclesiastes.
 - e. Give one self-evident truth from Chapters 1-2.
 - f. Give one divinely revealed truth from Chapters 1-2.
 - g. Give one experiential musing from Chapters 1-2.

4. 3:1-8, To Everything a Time

- a. There are seasons and times of each one of 28 categories in our lives
 - i. “A time to be born”, Galatians 4:4; John 3:3-6
 - ii. “And a time to die”, Psalm 139:16; Hebrews 9:27
 - iii. “A time to plant”, Genesis 8:22; Luke 8:11
 - iv. “And a time to pluck what is planted”, Luke 8:12-15; Galatians 6:9
 - v. “A time to kill”, Genesis 9:6; Colossians 3:1-5
 - vi. “And a time to heal”, Job 42:10; Psalm 41:4
 - vii. “time to break down”, Isaiah 43:18-19; 2 Corinthians 1:12
 - viii. “And a time to build up”, Colossians 2:2; Jude 1:20
 - ix. “A time to weep”, John 11:35; 2 Corinthians 7:10
 - x. “And a time to laugh”, Proverbs 17:22; Psalm 126:2
 - xi. “A time to mourn”, Genesis 50:1-3; Matthew 5:4
 - xii. “And a time to dance”, Psalm 149:3-4; Matthew 11:17
 - xiii. “A time to cast away stones”, Ephesians 4:31-32; Hebrews 12:1
 - xiv. “And a time to gather stones”, Proverbs 12:26; Matthew 6:20
 - xv. “A time to embrace”, Luke 15:20; Proverbs 3:5-6
 - xvi. “And a time to refrain from embracing”, 2 Samuel 11:3-4; Romans 16:17
 - xvii. “A time to gain”, Philippians 3:8; James 1:17
 - xviii. “And a time to lose”, Philippians 3:8; 1 Corinthians 10:23
 - xix. “A time to keep”, Proverbs 4:1-6; John 17:6
 - xx. “And a time to throw away”, Luke 12:15; 2 Timothy 2:16

- xxi. “A time to tear”, Genesis 37:29-30; Joel 2:13
- xxii. “And a time to sew”, Proverbs 31:19; Matthew 5:23-24
- xxiii. “A time to keep silence”, Amos 5:13; Matthew 26:62-63
- xxiv. “And a time to speak”, Esther 4:13-14; Acts 26:22-23
- xxv. “A time to love”, Mark 12:29-31; Ephesians 5:25
- xxvi. “And a time to hate”, Psalm 97:10; Romans 7:13-25
- xxvii. “A time of war”, 1 Samuel 17:9,29; Ephesians 6:10-18
- xxviii. “And a time of peace”, Judges 5:31; Colossians 3:12-15

b. 3:1-8, Spiritual Exercises for Old Youths and Young Youths

- i. 3:1, the four seasons
- ii. 3:2, the day of your birth
- iii. 3:2, have you ever planted anything, what happens when seeds are planted in the ground
- iv. 3:3, building and taking down Duplo/Lego blocks
- v. 3:4, what makes you cry
- vi. 3:4, what makes you laugh
- vii. 3:5, when is it appropriate to hug and when is it good to have personal space
- viii. 3:6, what do you collect
- ix. 3:6, do you have too much stuff, how can you throw it away
- x. 3:7, places to be silent
- xi. 3:7, time to speak up and say what’s on your mind and how you feel
- xii. 3:8, when it is right to oppose something even if it’s difficult to do that
- xiii. 3:8, what things do you do that are peaceful

5. 3:9-22, The God-Given Task

- a. 3:9, the question posed, Solomon's experiential musing
- b. 3:10, "the God-given task", those things which occupy men's time and energy, these have purpose insofar as man was created to work (Genesis 3:17-19), but this is only an "under the sun" perspective, with what are Christians to be occupied, Cf. Luke 19:13 (KJV) "Occupy till I come."
- c. 3:11, "beautiful in its time", different ways we might define beauty (when something is new, antique, young, or old, or simply beautiful in the eye of the beholder), God as the Beholder of His creation (Genesis 1:31)
- d. 3:11, "eternity in their hearts", an innate knowledge that this life is not all there is, so men of every time and place have sought religious explanation of it, but only one may be true, it is man's duty to seek out the truth, and it is the devil's scheme that he be preoccupied and not occupied with spiritual pursuits
- e. 3:11, nobody can find out God's work from beginning to end, a summation of Job 36:24 to 42:6 expounds on this
- f. 3:12, an incomplete answer, because it does not get the final point, one can seek small pleasures in life, and work for the betterment of society, but if he does not get from Ecclesiastes 3 to Ecclesiastes 12 he has wasted his life
- g. 3:13, these things are indeed "the gift of God" when accepted in moderation and with thanksgiving to he who gave them, but "every man" meets neither criteria
- h. 3:14, Immutability of God, Cf. Psalm 33:11, 102:27; Lamentations 5:19; Revelation 11:17, concerning the Word of God (His Counsel), the one who would challenge this statement will surely fail, Cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19
- i. 3:15, Cf. Ecclesiastes 1:9-10, "an account" is accountability, a judgment based on one's actions, belief vs. unbelief, works done for Christ vs. own agenda works

- j. 3:16-17, injustice seems to prevail on earth, but divine judgment will ultimately triumph and give perfect justice, this is a “self-evident truth” to nearly all men, also qualifies as an “experiential musing”
- k. 3:18, the testing of men produces all manner of evil and iniquity, “under the sun” (Cf. Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9)
- l. 3:19-21, death is universal to all living things, a result of the fall of man (Cf. Genesis 3:19; Romans 5:12), the difference between animals and mankind is that animals have both body and soul (Hebrew-“nephesh” used in Genesis 1, in the sense of having been breathed into life by God), whilst men have body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23), bear in mind that this Scripture is under the category of “experiential musings...under the sun” by Solomon, and not a doctrinal proof text, bad Bible “scholars” have used this text to teach soul sleep in humans, eternity of animal souls and other false doctrines
- m. 3:22, if this life is all there is, muses Solomon, then it would be noble to be the best person you can be, enjoy life, and leave a good lasting legacy

6. Self-Test, Ecclesiastes Chapter 3

- a. You will find listed the 28 times and seasons in only one word each.
- b. Group Exercise: Go around the room as each in turn explains the spiritual significance of each one, with biblical support.
- c. Personal Exercise: Do this on your own.

***The purpose of this exercise is to get you thinking in spiritual terms and perspective, and not “under the sun” only

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3, 28 times and seasons, exercise

- 1.born
- 2.die
- 3.plant
- 4.pluck
- 5.kill
- 6.heal
- 7.break
- 8.build
- 9.weep
- 10.laugh
- 11.mourn
- 12.dance
- 13.cast
- 14.gather
- 15.embrace
- 16.refrain
- 17.gain
- 18.lose
- 19.keep
- 20.throw
- 21.tear
- 22.sew
- 23.silence
- 24.speak
- 25.love
- 26.hate
- 27.war
- 28.peace

7. 4:1-3, Opression Rampant Under the Sun

- a. 4:1, there is no comforter on earth, and those who exercise power tyrannically have their supporters, this fact ought to cause men to look up for a Comforter, and those who seek Him will find Him (Isaiah 51:12, 66:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 7:6)
- b. 4:2-3, an earthly perspective of the futility of life on earth, that there is more evil than good in life here and therefore life is a net evil, whereas the unborn are net zero

8. 4:4-8, The Vanity of Toil

- a. 4:4, good work and a strong work ethic are envied by others, who are quick to put it down
- b. 4:5-6, it seems that the slothful “fool” gets by okay with a little less, minus the hard work, and the cares for what material things he has worked so hard to earn, Do not the generations of welfare recipients in the projects have their needs met, with little concern? These even seem to thrive.
- c. 4:7-8, the loner works hard to meet his own needs, but for what purpose, for he is lonely and has nobody to enjoy the fruits of his labor (and life in general) with, Cf. Genesis 2:18, without spouse, siblings, or children he is very alone

9. 4:9-12, Two Better Than One, Three Better Still

- a. 4:9, two can enjoy the fruits of hard labor together
- b. 4:10, companionship, applied to marriage, applied to brothers and sisters in the Chriatian faith, benefits accrued
- c. 4:11, this was in the days before central heat, they had only blankets and (if they could afford it) cloaks, families may sleep together in the cold so the body heat would keep them warm
- d. 4:12, physical unity, spiritual unity, unity within the local church, “threefold cord” of Christian marriage applied, Ephesians 5:22-32 may be applied to all four situations

10. 4:13-16, Earthly Standing is a Limited Edition
 - a. 4:13, experiential musings of Solomon continue, the value of a teachable spirit, which will receive wise counsel, the adage “you can’t teach an old dog to do new tricks”
 - b. 4:14, Cf. Genesis 41:14 as point of similarity
 - c. 4:15, “the second youth”, or ‘the prize youth’ (Judges 6:25, as example of etymology here), this is the youth who became king (in context)
 - d. 4:16, as great as worldly wisdom and honor may be, these too pass away

11. Ecclesiastes Chapter 4, Self-Test
 - a. Which of the three headers are preponderant of Solomon’s thoughts in this chapter: Divine Revelation, Self-Evident Truths, or Experiential Musings?

 - b. In what ways are two better than one?

 - c. Which verse in this chapter can be well applied to the marriage relationship and how so?

12. 5:1-7, Fear God, Keep Your Vows
 - a. This section, though it may be applied to any of the three headings, well accords with the divine revelation that Solomon had been taught from his youth, NOTE: A biblically foundational worldview from childhood will be an influence upon one’s thought for a lifetime (Galatians 6:9 applied).
 - b. 5:1, Cf. Leviticus 19:30; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Isaiah 1:10-20
 - c. 5:2, avoid rash oaths before God (Judges 11:30-40), do not be presumptuous in prayer (Job 38:1-3)
 - d. 5:3a, the origin of dreams are “through much activity” within the human brain, and forces both good and evil

making suggestions to the spirit of man, therefore let us be discreet concerning them and not elevate any perceived dreams or visions to the place of divine revelation equal to Scripture

- e. 5:3b, as those of “Talkative” in “The Pilgrim’s Progress”, the mouth is so busy moving that a word from the Lord cannot even get in edgewise to the heart, beware of such who come into the assembly with much ‘Christian talk and cliches’, receive such as humbly come with teachable spirit
 - f. 5:4-5, the most concise counsel concerning vows in all the Bible is here (based in Exodus 20:16), Cf. Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21; Job 22:27; Psalm 65:1, 76:11, 116:14; Matthew 5:33-37
 - g. 5:6-7, the discipline of restraining the tongue, listen thoughtfully and pause before speaking, especially in light of the fact that all is done before God, we do well to fear Him in holy reverence
13. 5:8-20, More Vanity Under the Sun
- a. 5:8, men always have and always will oppress other men, but God has set up human government as a mechanism to check such abuses
 - b. 5:9, “the land” grows its food for all, the oppressed as well as the oppressor, even the king, this verse helps us put verse 8 in proper perspective
 - c. 5:10-11, when one seeks to multiply riches, the appetite for more grows faster than the riches themselves, there will never be enough goods, only dissatisfaction, Cf. 1 Timothy 6:10; James 5:3 (James 5:1-6 operable within the context of these verses and those preceding)
 - d. 5:12, the “laboring man” has his needs met and has no more cares, the more one has, the more his anxieties are multiplied

- e. 5:13-15, the vanity of stinginess in this life, always saving more than you will ever need for a rainy day, “misfortune” may occur in the form of inflation, national depression, and/or very large unforeseen expenses, Job 1:20-22 is the spiritual application arising from this, as point of similarity
 - f. 5:16-17, the vanity of a drudge-filled life, without an eternal purpose everything done is for naught, “eats in (spiritual) darkness”, Cf. Job 5:4-7
 - g. 5:18-20, a conclusion borne of experiential musings and self-evident truths, James 1:17 is operable here, but Solomon does not lift his perspective above the sun here
14. Ecclesiastes Chapter 5, Self-Test
- a. Give two Bible examples of rash oaths, one from the OT and the other from the NT, with chapter/verse references.

 - b. How is a “fool’s voice known?”

 - c. What do we learn about dreams in Ecclesiastes 5:3 and 5:7?

 - d. Solomon muses that the laboring man has certain advantages over the rich man. What are they?
15. 6:1-12, Vanity of Short Life, Vanity of Long Life
- a. 6:1-2, this is the man who works hard or invests well and becomes wealthy, but he dies before he can enjoy it (his 401k savings, premature illness and death kills travel plans, the real estate empire is established now but he does not live to enjoy the fruits thereof (he sacrificed for what?))

- b. 6:3-6, even many children and great longevity do not fill the God-shaped hole in the heart and spirit of a man
 - i. 6:6b, “Do not all go to one place”, physically true, the grave, this is the self-evident truth, in the spiritual sense in OT days that is partially true but there were/are two compartments in Sheol/Hades
 - ii. SPECIAL STUDY: Individual Eschatology--In the OT, all the dead went to "Hades" which is in Hebrew "Sheol", which is a neutral term for the abode of the dead. That place has two compartments, a saved compartment and a lost compartment, as evidenced by Luke 16:19-31 (which is an actual circumstance, not a parable). The OT lost stay there and the NT lost go there to that compartment of torment as they await the Great White Throne Judgment and final consignment into the Lake of Fire. When Christ died, he proclaimed His victory to all those in both compartments in Sheol, and emptied the saved compartment of OT believers (the temporary paradise for saved OT souls), taking them to the third heaven with Him. See 1 Peter 3:18-22 concerning this, in addition to Ephesians 4:8-9. So the only ones today in Hades are unsaved of all dispensations. Today, the saved go directly to the third heaven to be with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8), so there is no more repopulation of saved Hades aka Abraham's bosom.
- c. 6:7, Such a self-evident truth! People are naturally unsatisfied and unfulfilled, ready spiritually, and must hear about the fact that they are great sinners that have been provided a great Savior, John 4:35-36 applied
- d. 6:8-9, on earth, no advantages exist, a fatalistic view
- e. 6:10-12, Cf. Ecclesiastes 1:9, 3:15
 - i. 6:12b, “under the sun” legacy is very short, but a heavenly perspective sees the building of godly legacy

16. Ecclesiastes Chapter 6, Self-Test
 - a. Solomon muses, “Do not all go to one place?” (Ecclesiastes 6:6). What is the biblical doctrine on that for people who died in the OT days? And what is the biblical doctrine for those who died in NT days? Give Scripture references.
 - i. OT

 - ii. NT

 - b. The unsaved “soul is not _____” (6:7).

 - c. What four things are considered vanity by Solomon in this chapter?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.

17. 7:1-29, The Value of Practical Wisdom (this is the longest chapter in the Book of Ecclesiastes)
 - a. 7:1a, the value of “a good name”, Cf. Proverbs 22:1, it takes a lifetime to earn it but a second to lose it
 - b. 7:1b, the believer’s death day is greater than his birthday in the sense of Luke 10:20, it is a homecoming, a man is born with foreboding (sin-in) but he dies with joy and with peace out (sin-out)
 - c. 7:2-4, the reminder of the universality of death has a sobering affect of making men consider spiritual things (for there is no way out of death, Cf. Ecclesiastes 8:8), men are more receptive of divine truth and eternal things than they

are at the wedding reception (when many are drunk, and all are focused on earthly joys), as Nabal (1 Samuel 25:36) and Belshazzar (Daniel Chapter 5), Are we feasting on the world or mourning for sin and rejoicing in the Lord for victories concerning this?, Consider Jesus who went to the Wedding at Cana in John 2 but the culmination of His work was not in that celebration but at the “house of mourning” in the Garden of Gethsemane

- d. 7:5-6, reproof has value, from men and even more so from the Lord Himself and His words (Hebrews 12:5-6), nonsensical conversation of fools is a waste of good air
- e. 7:7, “oppression” of others tends to pride and will to power, whilst “oppression” received makes the man bitter and feeds certain prejudices (as a result of experiences), so too “a bribe debases the heart” because it perverts judgment and destroys integrity
- f. 7:8a, a self-evident truth concerning good things, compare Mark 1:1 with John 19:30 and Matthew 28:9-10, salvation begins with a seed of faith and its end is eternal life, Philippians 1:6 applied, a project completed is not only more utilitarian but is a reward for our work
- g. 7:8b, one spirit is in line with the love of God, but the other is a rebellious spirit diametrically opposed to God
- h. 7:9, a warning against being quick to anger, self-control is enjoined as fruit of the spirit, “anger rests in the bosom of fools”, it finds a home there, and manifests itself as unrighteous anger almost always
- i. 7:10, nostalgia is good to a point insofar as we recall fond memories, past days always seem to be the ‘good old days’ but we tend to romanticize them too much, let us rather live in “these days” that the Lord graciously has given to us, for the past cannot be changed but today and the future course of days are within our ability to enjoy and influence

- j. Dissatisfaction manifested, Cf. Exodus 16:3; Numbers 11:5; Deuteronomy 32:32; Proverbs 19:3
- k. 7:11-12, both wisdom and money answer many problems, but one is fleeting and the other is not
- l. 7:13, “Consider the work of God”, a wise approach to experiential musing, because it will lead one to a better perspective than the “vanity under the sun”, it in fact can lead to worship, Cf. Job 36:24-26, 37:14-16
- m. 7:14, let us rejoice in “prosperity”, but also accept “adversity”, knowing that the Lord uses both to mature us, give specific examples of how this is so
- n. 7:15, concluded correctly in Ecclesiastes 12:14
- o. 7:16-18, moderation in life enjoined, extremes tend to get us into trouble and conflict, living a quiet life in the fear of the Lord is desirable, Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
- p. 7:19, the exceptional value of wisdom, Cf. Proverbs 3:14, 8:11, 14:24, “ten rulers of the city” is the ruling council which as a body strengthen the city
- q. 7:20, universality of sin is both divinely revealed (Romans 3:10-11,23, backdrop is Psalm 14 whose human author was David, Solomon’s father), also a self-evident truth, therefore we make this case to unbelievers (often on the basis of the Ten Commandments)
- r. 7:21-22, charitableness, the virtue of not being easily offended (especially in light of offenses you have made against others, by sins of the tongue, some have become known and some you think you have gotten away with)
- s. 7:23-25, having an understanding of the evil of sin, Solomon set out for wisdom, the same was received by him in 1 Kings 3:3-14 in the Spirit, but inferior varieties of wisdom under the sun yet exist, let us seek the highest wisdom first
- t. 7:26, the peril of the evil woman, by whom a great many foolish young men have been brought into bondage of sin
- u. 7:27-29, applied, No Helpmeet for the soul but Jesus!

18. Ecclesiastes Chapter 7, Self-Test
- a. Why is the death-day of the Christian better than his birthday? Give biblical support for your answer.

 - b. Fill in the blanks of 7:2—“Better to go to the house of _____ Than to go to the house of _____”
 - c. What will destroy “a wise man’s reason”? How so?

 - d. Where does anger rest?
 - e. Why is too much of living in nostalgia a bad thing?

 - f. What two things are a “defense”? Which one is greater?

 - g. What are some benefits of moderation in certain areas of our lives?

 - h. What does the phrase “ten rulers of the city” speak of?

 - i. Write out the verse in this chapter that is a divinely revealed statement about the universality of sin?

 - j. Write out the verse that is a theological statement bridging Genesis 1:31 to Romans 5:12?

19. 8:1-9, Obedience to Authority
 - a. 8:1, best understood as a summation statement of Ecclesiastes Chapter 7, Cf. 7:23, interpretive challenges in life situations, being in the presence of the Lord makes the face to shine, Cf. Exodus 34:29-35
 - b. 8:2, “oath to God” is that to submit to divine authority, and this includes those whom He has placed in human governance (Romans 13:1-2)
 - c. 8:3, be humble in the sight of governing authorities and allow them to recognize you and to excuse you, acting presumptuously is likely to raise his ire
 - d. 8:4-5, wisdom and discernment in making appeals to earthly authorities enjoined
 - e. 8:6-7, a time and judgment imminent for everything, and the future is hidden away, lest men who are thoroughly depraved prolong their evil days accordingly
 - f. 8:8, death in universal, one may survive to be discharged from military service in times of war on earth, but the battle to live forever is a losing battle, the search (Juan Ponce De Leon) to find the fountain of youth in Florida or any other place has forever eluded men and forever shall, we cannot be delivered from mortality by ourselves, any human institution, or by any wicked scheme, we can only prolong life (and even that is often unto inferior quality), Jesus Christ the only Antidote (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)
 - g. 8:9, “under the sun” sinful regimes sometimes gain power and the Christian is challenged to discern the times, submitting in the face of oppression is challenging, but absent direct command from God to the contrary we must give good testimony by patient obedient endurance, and plead our cause to God in prayer, James 5:4-8 applied

20. 8:10-17, Death Is Universal Among Men
- a. 8:10, “the wicked buried”, this is the churchgoing religious hypocrite, there is no legacy or lasting fruit on earth, and they are not missed, consider how many obituaries mention in passing that the decedent was a communicant at such and such a “place of holiness”, yet they died unsaved
 - b. 8:11, when the punishment for evil is delayed, men think they are getting away with it and are impenitent, Numbers 32:23 applied as the divine rule, see how David thought he had gotten away with adultery and murder in 1 Samuel 11 but he learned he was found out in 1 Samuel 12, evil and crime increase when sentences are light, cashless bail is given, and people are arrested multiple times for felonies and released, when life sentences are given and later commuted and people stay on death row for decades we violate the common sense self-evident truth of this verse, the Chinese “quick trial” is a more effective deterrent, as was Giuliani’s “broken windows policy” in NYC in which crime dropped as a result of minor offenses punished swiftly and vigorously, Cf. Proverbs 19:25, 26:3
 - c. 8:12-13, the prosperity of the wicked may be prolonged for awhile but not forever, fear of the Lord will prolong life and “it will be well” with the soul, Cf. Psalm 33:20-22
 - d. 8:14, experiential musing of Solomon, sometimes good things happen to evil people and evil things happen to good people, we are all mixed together in a world full of sin, chance (or better, providence) happens to all, at the end of this life though only one group gets out alive
 - e. 8:15, “under the sun” perspective in which there is no judgment, best to just party on! This is hedonism, the world’s philosophy
 - f. 8:16-17, a heart properly applied to seek divine wisdom sees the inferiority of human wisdom, the answers are not under the sun but above it

21. Ecclesiastes Chapter 8, Self-Test
- a. What happens to a man's face when he has been in the presence of God? And where do we find this very thing literally recorded in the Bible?
 - b. When the believer makes an "oath to God" by calling Him Lord, what two types of authority should he submit to?
 - c. What is the war in which there is no discharge or release?
 - d. Write out the verse in this chapter that deals with swift judicial punishment for evil. Give an example of when the principle is followed recently or today, and also an example of when the principle is not followed today.
 - e. The wise man realizes that the answers to life are not "under the sun" but _____ .
22. 9:1-18, More Experiential Musings: Life Under the Sun in the Face of Death, with Life Applications Derived
- a. 9:1, neither the approval (justification) nor wrath of God are visible things, faith required, Cf. Hebrews 11:1
 - b. 9:2-3, this is the logical thought of the unsaved man, it does not account for the two compartments of Sheol in OT personal eschatology (ibid.15b), Cf. Luke 16:19-31

- c. 9:4-6, “hope” in the sense that one is still alive, one can do something of purpose in the world though the other cannot, no matter even if the dead one may be far greater, “a share...under the sun” is fleeting, better to have a share in heaven, may our primary investment be there
- d. 9:7-8, Solomon lapses further back into Epicurean thinking (this philosophy, which is ancient but was formalized by Epicurus in 307 BC, teaches that pleasure is the highest good, that pain should be avoided, and that fear of death should be rationalized away)
- e. 9:9, enjoyment in the mutual expression of conjugal love, a simple pleasure in life that is less often attained in this day of distraction, technology, and complexity of life
- f. 9:10, the key applicational verse of the Book of Ecclesiastes (after those in its conclusion), though it is set within the context of a chapter of “under the sun” Epicureanism, its applications are myriad for the Christian:
 - i. The truth of this statement is re-stated in Christian context by Jesus Himself in John 9:4.
 - ii. There is always something to do.
 - iii. Nobody is without purpose or ability.
 - iv. What we do for the Lord ought to be done with zeal. There is no wasted expense of effort and labor in God’s service. Did not our Lord demonstrate this on many occasions?
 - v. The time to do positive spiritual works for the glory of God is now, for there will be no soul-winning work, reclamation of lost sinners, and “under the sun” work for the Lord after death. For this, there are eternal rewards, as we know from 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.
 - vi. The unbeliever should take advantage of the lifetime of opportunity to exercise faith and make peace with God before it is too late, as stated in Hebrews 9:27.

A Great Read: <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1119.pdf>

- g. 9:11-12, uncertainty of everything in this life, sudden events, sudden destruction, Luke 13:1-5 applied
 - h. 9:13-15, a historical reference to 2 Samuel 20:16-22, the spiritual application in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
 - i. 9:16-18a, wisdom excels brute physical strength, and in the long run will defeat it, thus keeping in check the evil “under the sun”, we ascribe this work to God the Holy Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:7), how many irrational tyrants have been brought down by their own lack of wisdom?
 - j. 9:18b, “But one sinner destroys much good”, on the individual level applied in 1 Corinthians 15:33-34, we also could consider how an ungodly government (proportionally, an executive in it) can undo law, order, and moral fabric of a society (elections have consequences), national application is seen in Joshua 7 with the defeat of the nation of Israel because of the sin of one man, Achan
23. Ecclesiastes Chapter 9, Self-Test
- a. What does the human logic of 9:2-3 not account for?
 - b. What, in this teacher’s opinion, is the key applicational verse, in the Book of Ecclesiastes (after those in it’s conclusion)? Write out the verse.
 - c. What verse records Jesus’ words re-stating in Christian context the truth of 9:10?
 - d. What is the spiritual application given by Jesus which correlates with 9:11-12? Give Bible reference of the passage.

24. 10:1-20, Wisdom Greater than Folly
- a. 10:1, as a contaminant in perfume, and too much baking soda in a batch of baked goods, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9), let us cast aside little follies
 - b. 10:2-3, folly revealed, Cf. 2 Timothy 3:8-9
 - c. 10:4, a warning to runners (apply to work situations), a man will be respected for his faithfulness and willingness to stand fast and deal with difficult situations, even receiving constructive criticism, even unwarranted criticism
 - d. 10:5-7, poor choices in promotion, let us be wary in who and what (by way of application) we promote
 - e. 10:8-9, wicked snared by his own works
 - f. 10:10, let us work smarter and not harder, “wisdom brings success” in every avenue of life—marriage, family, work, spiritual life, Proverbs 4:5-9, is not Jesus Christ “Wisdom” personified? “(Jesus Christ) brings success”
 - g. 10:11-13, the fool is as a serpent, he can be skillfully “charmed” for a little bit but he always reverts to his nature, and gets progressively worse as he drones on
 - h. 10:14, “A fool also multiplies words”, he talks too much, and thinks himself wise though his words are all nonsense, Cf. James 1:19-20
 - i. You talk too much, you worry me to death
You talk too much, you even worry my pet
You just talk, talk too much
You talk about people that you don't know
You talk about people wherever you go
You just talk, talk too much
You talk about people that you never seen
You talk about people, you can make me scream
You just talk, talk too much
Source: [Musixmatch](#)
Songwriters: Joe Jones / Reginald Hall

- i. 10:15, the fool cannot reach their destination (or achieve a basic goal) for lack of wisdom, therefore they are either frustrated or blissfully ignorant
 - j. 10:16, a land governed by inexperienced and foolish youth is in a bad state, Cf. 1 Kings 12:1-14, the same can be applied to the local churches, Cf. 1 Timothy 3:6, it worries me to hear how they are being turned over to youths, and the wisdom of the aged is discounted, we did not see revival in the USA in the last generation and if we ‘move with the times’ again we will likely not see it in this one
 - k. 10:17, temperance and understanding of the times, with experience and godliness, is the recipe for success, as in Solomon’s day, apply 1 Chronicles 12:32
 - l. 10:18, sins of neglect, physical slothfulness results in decay, spiritual slothfulness also results in decay
 - m. 10:19, two escapes from troubles presented here, revelry is temporary and tends to more trouble, money ‘solves problems’, and so Luke 16:9 is our application
 - n. 10:20, honor rulers (or supervisors, etc.) in heart and thought, and be wary of cursing them, word will likely get back to them somehow eventually and then you will have to answer for your sin
25. Ecclesiastes Chapter 10, Self-Test
- a. Explain the meaning of “wisdom brings success” (10:10).
 - b. What is a fool known by?
 - c. Where in the Bible do we find a historical example of 10:16? What are the applications of this verse for the church?

26. 11:1-10, Benevolence and Diligence
- a. 11:1-2, benevolence enjoined, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 makes corresponding application both physically and spiritually, Psalm 112:9-10 is both quoted in this Cf. and alluded to in the latter part of verse 2 in our text
 - b. 11:3-6, in light of the fact that natural events occur randomly (from “under the sun” perspective) and regularly, let us be industrious in all our doings (especially spiritual ones, like soul winning—Cf. Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3; Matthew 4:19), and not making excuses as some do as a cloak for their laziness (too early, late, tired to pray...too crowded, sparse, cold, hot, wet, snowy, damp to attend the church house)
 - c. 11:7-8, the simple beauty and blessing ‘just to be alive’, yet dark trials come increasingly as we age, we can see them as “vanity” in our flesh or as purposeful for the glory of God as in Job 5:6-11 (and following)
 - d. 11:9-10, though arguably properly belong to the concluding Chapter 12 from a topical standpoint, these verses bridge from the previous thought that the young person be happy to be alive (11:7), and to live rejoicing in the natural blessings of life, but with an eye to accountability to God (“judgment” and works as evidence of spiritual state, and also in the sense of sowing and reaping, Galatians 6:7-10 make this connection and also reference the theme of benevolence that we find earlier in Ecclesiastes 11), let worldly sorrows and evils pass away as childish things, that the young might grow to the full measure of adulthood, Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:11 applied)
 - e. ***Summarize Ecclesiastes Chapter 11 in two sentences.

27. 12:1-14, Solomon's Good Conclusion
- a. 12:1, "Remember **now**", Cf. 2 Corinthians 6:2; Proverbs 27:1, lest death comes to visit suddenly as in Luke 12:20
 - b. "your Creator", because He as Creator has a claim on you
 - c. "in the days of your youth", it is always better to do this sooner than later, that we might enjoy Him in this life for a greater number of years, Blessed is the one who lives a lifetime in fellowship with God, and his trials of own making are relatively few
 - d. In old age we become more limited mentally and physically, and it is harder to enjoy life as clearly as in youth
 - e. 12:2-4, life is fleeting, Cf. Isaiah 40:6-8, it is winding down, the second law of thermodynamics applied to human life
 - f. 12:5, from gray hairs and dulled senses to the grave, "to his eternal home" (Daniel 12:2)
 - g. 12:6, again we are enjoined to make peace with our Creator to Whom we must be accountable, before it is too late, Solomon knew this from his youth yet in his life journey he went away from the divine wisdom and leaned upon his own "under the sun" musings (Proverbs 3:5-8)
 - h. "silver cord loosed...bowl broken...pitcher shattered" are references to death in old age
 - i. 12:7, Cf. Genesis 2:7, 3:19, for the believer 2 Corinthians 5:6,8, for the unbeliever Hebrews 9:27, Luke 16:25, awaiting the judgment—the claim on the spirit of the unsaved dead is God's claim alone (He is Creator)
 - j. 12:8, on that latter thought of verse 7, "vanity" of a life lived without ever acknowledging the Creator (and, as we know from NT revelation, His Son), Matthew 10:33
 - k. 12:9, Solomon the "Preacher" is referred to in the third person, it is common literary form in antiquity to do this rather than commending oneself (Cf. John 13:23)
 - l. "many proverbs", Cf. 1 Kings 4:32 "three thousand", 800+ of which are recorded in the Book of Proverbs

- m. 12:10, Cf. Proverbs 10:31-32, 22:17-21, these words that Solomon had sought were divinely sought and received, that they might be written down for our profit
 - n. 12:11, Cf. Hebrews 4:12, God's words, when expressed through gifted teachers, Cf. Ephesians 4:11-12, "given by one Shepherd", Guess who that is!, Jesus Christ, Cf. Hebrews 13:20-21; John 5:39-40, Are you willing to come to the Lord?
 - o. 12:12, there are many human books and much human philosophy contained therein (some good, some bad), but there is only one Book, the Bible, which is 100% trustworthy
 - p. 12:13-14, "the conclusion of the whole matter" of those things which Solomon wrote, Cf. John 5:24-29
28. Reviewing Ecclesiastes, Full Circle Reinforcement, The Six Main themes of the Book
- a. "under the sun" (1:3,9, etc.), futility of operating from an earthly/worldly perspective rather than a heavenly one
 - b. Self-evident truths (3:11,14, 8:11), Divinely-revealed truths (5:4-5, 11:9-10, 12:7), and Experiential musings (2:24, 7:2,16-17)
 - c. A time for every purpose, a purpose for every time (3:1)
 - d. Solomon desired to impart the wisdom he acquired on his life journey to young and old alike (12:1,6)
 - e. Spiritual journey, how to get from 1:2 to 12:13, from an empty life with a "God-shaped hole" in it (Pascal) to a fulfilled life (of justification and peace)
 - f. The Greatest Theme, Jesus Christ, the End Goal of life, Rewarder of Good and Punisher of Evil (12:13-14)

***May the Lord drive these things that we have learned home in our hearts. I hope you have profited as much from this study as I have.