

**Study of Ecclesiastes: Lesson 1 - Introduction**  
**Bellevue Church of Christ / Fall-Winter 2020 - 2021**

**Key Words and Phrases:**

<b>Word or Phrase</b>	<b>Original Language</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Preacher (Teacher)		
Vanity (Meaningless)		
Under the Sun		

1. Why is the book entitled “Ecclesiastes?” What does it mean?
  
2. Who is the “traditional” Author of the book? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. What evidence supports this author? (vv. 1:1,12, 16)
  
  - b. What argument do opponents use? (vv. 4:1; 5:8-9; 8:2-5; 9:1-2; 10:20)
  
3. What is the value in studying this book? What are the difficulties? (Phil 4:10-13)
  
4. What is the thesis statement found in 1:2? (Theme of the book - Matt 16:26)
  
5. What is the conclusion found in 12:13-14?

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***Notes and Answers***

**Key Words and Phrases:**

<b>Word or Phrase</b>	<b>Original Language</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Preacher (Teacher)	Koheleth or Qohelet	One who assembles a group for the purpose of teaching / instructing
Vanity (Meaningless)	Hebel	Vapor or Breath
Under the Sun		Within the realm of the earth, without regard for a creator.

**Preacher:**

Hebrew NASB Number: 6953

**Hebrew Word:** קֹהֵלֵת

**Transliterated Word:** *Qoheleth* (875a)

**Root:** from the same as [6951](#);

**Definition:** "a collector (of sentences)," "a preacher," a son of David:--

**List of English Words and Number of Times Used**

Preacher (7).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

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**Vanity:**

Hebrew NASB Number: 1892

**Hebrew Word:** הֶבֶל

**Transliterated Word:** *hebel* (210c)

**Root:** a prim. root;

**Definition:** *vapor, breath:--*

**List of English Words and Number of Times Used**

breath (5),  
delusion (2),  
emptily (1),  
emptiness (2),  
fleeting (2),  
fraud (1),  
futile (1),  
futility (13),  
idols (7),  
mere breath (2),  
nothing (1),  
useless (1),  
vain (3),  
vainly (1),  
vanity (19),  
vanity of vanities (3),  
vapor (1),  
worthless (2).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

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**1. Why is the book entitled “Ecclesiastes?” What does it mean?**

The name “Ecclesiastes” comes from the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament.

Hebrew / Qahal = assembly / assemble

Greek (LXX) = ekklesia (assembly) / ekklesiastes (member of the assembly)

**Qahal** - Hebrew NASB Number: 6951

**Hebrew Word:** קָהָל

**Transliterated Word:** *qahal* (874c)

**Root:** from an unused word;

**Definition:** *assembly, convocation, congregation:--*<sup>3</sup>

**Ekklesia** - Greek NASB Number: 1577

**Greek Word:** ἐκκλησία

**Transliterated Word:** *ekklêsia*

**Root:** from [1537](#) and [2564](#);

**Definition:** an assembly, a (religious) *congregation:--*<sup>4</sup>

**2. Who is the “traditional” Author of the book?**

Solomon

***2a. What evidence supports this author? (vv. 1:1,12, 16)***

**Ecclesiastes 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

**Ecclesiastes 1:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup>I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.

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<sup>3</sup> New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

<sup>4</sup> New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

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**Ecclesiastes 1:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup>I said in my heart, "I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge."

**2b. What argument do opponents use? (vv. 4:1; 5:8-9; 8:2-5; 9:1-2; 10:20)**

*Say he would never say things such as these....*

**Ecclesiastes 4:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them.

**Ecclesiastes 5:8-9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup>If you see in a province the oppression of the poor and the violation of justice and righteousness, do not be amazed at the matter, for the high official is watched by a higher, and there are yet higher ones over them. <sup>9</sup>But this is gain for a land in every way: a king committed to cultivated fields.

**Ecclesiastes 8:2-5 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him. <sup>3</sup>Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases. <sup>4</sup>For the word of the king is supreme, and who may say to him, "What are you doing?" <sup>5</sup>Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing, and the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way.

**Ecclesiastes 9:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>But all this I laid to heart, examining it all, how the righteous and the wise and their deeds are in the hand of God. Whether it is love or hate, man does not know; both are before him. <sup>2</sup>It is the same for all, since the same event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil, to the clean and the unclean, to him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As the good one is, so is the sinner, and he who swears is as he who shuns an oath.

**Ecclesiastes 10:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup>Even in your thoughts, do not curse the king, nor in your bedroom curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter.

- *Hebrew language style belongs to a time much later than Solomon*
- *Various styles in the book could be the result of multiple authors (narrative / proverbs)*

*Knowledge of the author is really not required for understanding of the book*

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**3. What is the value in studying this book? What are the difficulties? (Phil 4:10-13)**

*Ecclesiastes dramatically shows that the attempt to manipulate life's circumstances to bring about happiness, contentment, fulfillment, etc...is a fruitless endeavor. To the Christian, this should be liberating to know that it is possible to find these things regardless of life's circumstances*

**Philippians 4:10–13 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

The difficulty comes from the perspective of “under the sun,” which is required for understanding the sentiments of the author.

**4. What is the thesis statement found in 1:2? (Theme of the book - Matt 16:26)**

**Ecclesiastes 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

**Matthew 16:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

**5. What is the conclusion found in 12:13-14?**

**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup> For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.