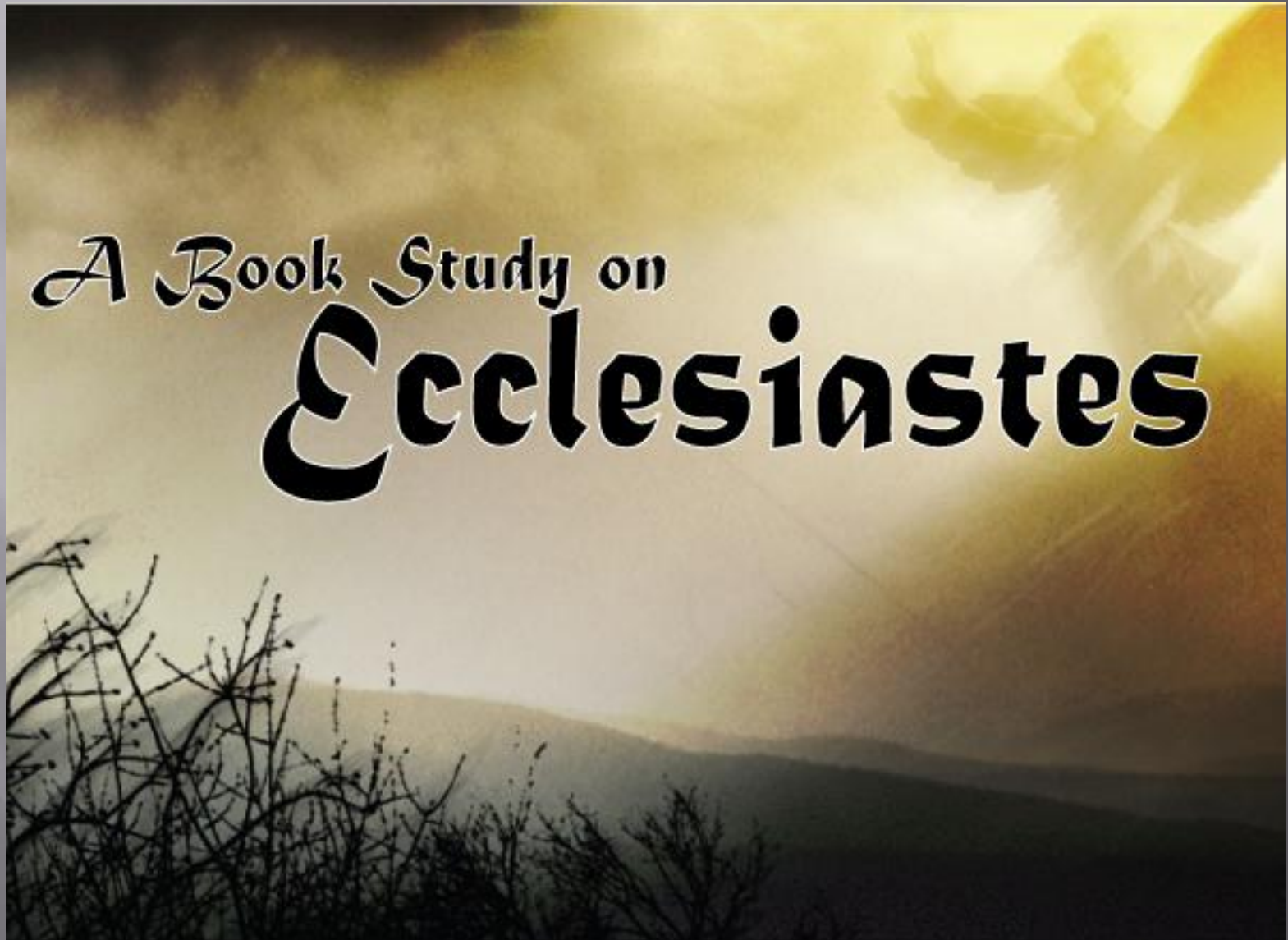


THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

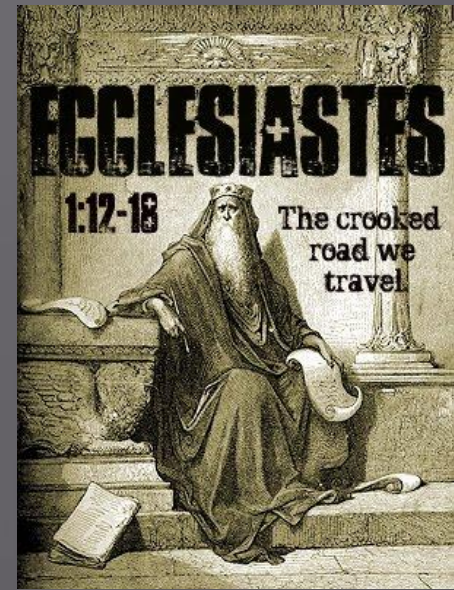
A Book Study on

Ecclesiastes



AUTHOR

- ▣ Solomon:
 - He is "King David's son, who ruled in Jerusalem" (Eccles. 1:1).
 - The description of the author's wealth and variety of experiences fits what we know of Solomon.
 - The book's great wisdom fits Solomon, who received wisdom as a gift from God (see 1 Kings 3:1-13) and authored numerous proverbs (see 1 Kings 4:29-34).



DATE AND LOCATION

- Ecclesiastes was likely written in the latter years of Solomon's life, c. 935 B.C, *in* Jerusalem (Eccles. 1:1).



UNIQUE FEATURES

- Because of its focus on the meaning of life, Ecclesiastes has a unique appeal to people of all religions.
- The repetitions of *vanity and under the sun* constitute the most prominent emphasis of a single word or phrase in any biblical book.



TIMELINE

- ▣ c. 971 B.C.: Solomon granted wisdom
- ▣ 960 B.C.: Solomon completes Temple
- ▣ c. 935? B.C.: Solomon writes Ecclesiastes
- ▣ 931 B.C.: Death of Solomon



BACKGROUND

- ▣ The wise King Solomon *who shared his God-given wisdom in Proverbs, focused in Ecclesiastes* on the meaning of life in an imperfect, fallen world.

Know Your Bible

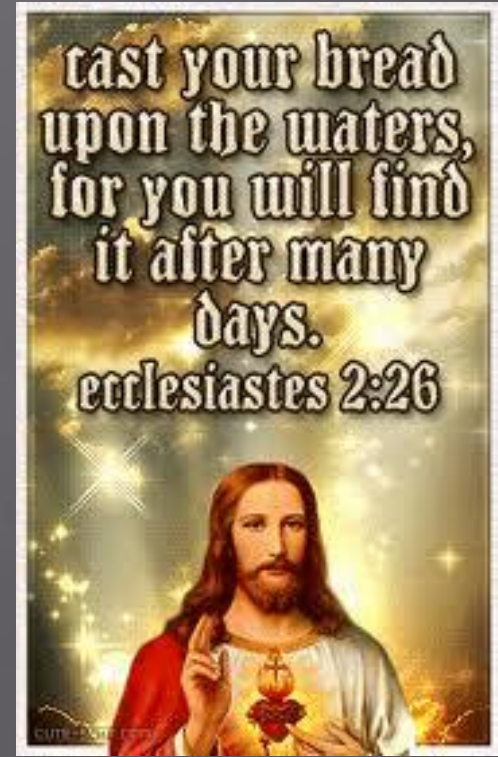
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ECCLESIASTES 3:19

Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless.

- ▣ Though Solomon's faith in God shows through at key places (see Eccles. 3:14; Eccles. 5:7; Eccles. 8:12; Eccles. 12:8, 13), he seems for the most part to leave God out of the equation, declaring again and again that life is meaningless.
- ▣ A thorough reading of the book suggests, however, that Solomon's purpose was to show how utterly meaningless life is *apart from God*.



- ▣ The word *vanity*, appears 29 times and sets the tone of despair that pervades Ecclesiastes. The phrase "under the sun" appears 27 times and suggests that Solomon was making his case for despair based only on evidence from the natural world.



- ▣ Solomon dealt with the problem of life's apparent meaninglessness in four stages:
 - He stated his "belief" that life is meaningless (Eccles. 1:1-11).
 - He offered evidence for that belief, showing how his and other people's efforts to find meaning in life yielded only despair (Eccles. 1:12-6:12).
 - He offered advice about how to cope with a meaningless world (Eccles. 7:1-12:8).
 - Having hinted at his own belief in God, he concluded by stating that meaning *can be* found through faith in and obedience to God (Eccles. 12:9-14).

Fear God, and keep his commandments...



*This is the whole
duty of man.*

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Examples of the wisdom in Ecclesiastes

Eccles. 7:5-26 The fruits of the fool and the way of the wise. Much of Solomon's advice in Eccles 7-11 is in the form of proverbs:

- "It is better to be criticized by a wise person than to be praised by a fool" (Eccles. 7:5).
- Wisdom is better than wealth (Eccles. 7:11-12).
- The wise person avoids extremes (Eccles. 7:16-17).
- Wisdom is better than military power (Eccles. 7:19).
- The wise person avoids sexual immorality (Eccles. 7:26).

Eccles. 9:1-8 "Better a live dog than a dead lion!"

Even though life seems unfair, and the righteous die just as quickly as the wicked (Eccles. 9:1-3), in the final analysis life has tremendous advantages over death. Only the living can hope, aspire, plan, and enjoy life's many rewards.

- ▣ Solomon's statement that "the dead know nothing" (Eccles. 9:5) should be interpreted in light of his later statement that "the spirit will return to God" (Eccles. 12:7).
- ▣ To Christians who understand eternal life in light of Christ's resurrection, OT statements about the afterlife often seem inadequate. However, the OT saints were not without hope of life beyond the grave.

Conclusion

- ▣ Ecclesiastes appears to be the work of a Solomon made older and wiser by the unforeseeable misfortunes of life and by his own serious mistakes in spite of his great wisdom

LET US ALL LEARN AND LIVE BY KING
SOLOMON'S WISDOM IN OUR DAY TO DAY
LIVES

