

Focus	Thesis: “All is Vanity”		Proof: “Life is Vain”		Counsel: “Fear God”		
	1:1	1:11	1:12	6:12	7:1	12:14	
Divisions	Introduction of Vanity		Proof from Scripture		Coping in a Wicked World		Conclusion: Fear & Obey God
	Illustration of Vanity		Proof from Observations		Counsel for Uncertainty		
Topics	Declaration Of Vanity		Demonstration Of Vanity		Deliverance From Vanity		
	Subject		Sermons		Summary		
Place	Universe (“Under the Sun”)						
Time	c. 935BC						

Ecclesiastes

Ἐκκλησιαστής

קהלת

Ecclesiastes is the Book of Emptiness. “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.” Living a life without Christ, and without the clear direction of the Word of God, is an empty life. Solomon, as he forsakes his wisdom, attempts to find meaning in life though human viewpoint, and finds only emptiness.

Believers should find a great warning in this Book. If the wisest man in history can depart from Divine wisdom, any believer is vulnerable to such apostasy.

Title: The English title “Ecclesiastes” comes from the Greek Septuagint title, meaning *preacher* (related to *ekklesia*: church/assembly). This translation comes from the Hebrew title, *Qoheleth*, meaning collector, or preacher.

Author: Universal tradition ascribes Ecclesiastes to Solomon. Of all the sons of David, who became King in Jerusalem (Ecc. 1:1), Solomon best fits the picture of the pursuit of pleasure (Ecc. 2:1-3), impressive accomplishments (Ecc. 2:4-6), and unparalleled wealth (Ecc. 2:7-10). The order of Solomon’s works appears to be Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, although this cannot be proved with certainty.

This Week’s Scripture Reading:	
Sunday:	Prov. 31; Eccl. 1,2
Monday:	Eccl. 3-5
Tuesday:	Eccl. 6-8
Wednesday:	Eccl. 9-11
Thursday:	Eccl. 12; Song 1,2
Friday:	Song 3-5
Saturday:	Song 6-8

Chapter Titles:	
Ecclesiastes	
1	Nothing Satisfies the Carnal Believer
2	Pleasures & Materialism Do Not Satisfy
3-4	Egotism Does Not Satisfy
5-6	Empty Religion and Wealth Do Not Satisfy
7-12	Humanitarian Works Do Not Satisfy
12:13,14	Get Back in Fellowship & Walk with the Lord

Ecclesiastes 1

1. The theme for the Book is immediately established (Eccl. 1:2).
 - a. “Vanity of vanities” = the ultimate vanity (emptiness).
 - b. “All is vanity” is the great confession of human viewpoint.
 - 1) Unbelievers are limited to this viewpoint in life.
 - 2) Believers limit themselves to this viewpoint when they abandon the Divine viewpoint of God’s Word.
 - c. The context for this viewpoint is established—“under the sun” (Eccl. 1:3).
2. Physical sciences, such as genealogy (Ecc. 1:4a), geology (v.4b), astronomy (v.5), meteorology (v.6), & hydrology (v.7), fail to provide spiritual peace (v.8a) as the experimental process falls short (v.8b). This process leads the natural mind (1st Cor. 2:14), and the carnal mind (1st Cor. 3:1), to a uniformitarian, evolutionist world view (Eccl. 1:9,10), and a cyclic view of human history (Ecc. 1:11).
3. Chapter One concludes with Solomon’s testimonial concerning his human viewpoint efforts, and where it took him—providing the theme for the remainder of the Book (Eccl. 1:12-18).
 - a. Rather than guarding his heart (Prov. 4:23), Solomon set his heart to the “exploration” by means of philosophy (Eccl. 1:13a).
 - b. Philosophy proves just as ineffective as science, as it grapples with the concept of evil (Eccl. 1:13b), fails to identify any purpose in life (v.14), proves ineffective for human criminal rehabilitation (v.15a), & makes no real provision for the physical needs of man (v.15b).
 - c. Solomon’s efforts to find happiness in life apart from God found no solutions in either secular education (Eccl. 1:16), or psychology (Eccl. 1:17).

Ecclesiastes 2

1. Solomon’s next effort to find meaning in life apart from God was an experiment in hedonism (Eccl. 2:1-11).
 - a. Entertainment cannot replace reality (v.2).
 - b. Chemical stimulation cannot replace reality (v.3).
 - c. The domestic pursuits of architecture (v.4a), viticulture (v.4b), horticulture (v.5), aquaculture (v.6a), & forestry (v.6b) provided no spiritual meaning (vv.4-6).
 - d. The accumulation of wealth provided no happiness (vv.7,8a), and neither did engagement in sexual extravagance (v.8b).
 - e. The only reward hedonism offered was the immediate gratification it provided: the passing pleasures of sin (Eccl. 2:9-11).
2. Solomon even considered that wisdom was better than folly in the short-term, but both were equal in the long-term, so why bother with wisdom? (Eccl. 2:12-17).
3. Solomon’s conclusion that life was empty produced anger and despair, that his legacy would be left to one who had not labored as he had done (Eccl. 2:18-23).
4. After these forays into carnality, Solomon came to appreciate the simplicity of the Christian Way of Life (Eccl. 2:24-26).
 - a. The Christian Way of Life is a simple life of satisfaction with the Lord’s provision (vv.24,25).
 - b. The Lord takes uses the achievements of the wicked to meet the needs of the righteous (v.26; Job 27:16,17; Prov. 13:22).

Ecclesiastes 3

1. Divine viewpoint recognizes the Father’s purpose and timing for every activity in God’s plan (Eccl. 3:1-8).
2. Divine viewpoint recognizes that man’s profit is an eternal profit (Eccl. 3:9-11), and such thinking provides for a spiritual walk in time (Eccl. 3:12-15).
3. Human viewpoint rejects the eternal judgment, and chooses to view man on a plane with the animals (Eccl. 3:16-22).

Ecclesiastes 4

1. Human viewpoint sees the world as a cruel, violent place (Eccl. 4:1-3).

One Year Through the Bible

Week 21: May 19th through 25th

2. Human viewpoint sees the world as a competitive, ambitious place (Eccl. 4:4-6).
3. Human viewpoint sees the world as a selfish place (Eccl. 4:7,8).
4. Human viewpoint sees cooperation only as a means of mutual self-benefit (Eccl. 4:9-12).
5. Human viewpoint sees value in people, only so long as they remain useful (Eccl. 4:13-16).

Ecclesiastes 5

1. Human viewpoint is often quite opinionated when it comes to religion (Eccl. 5:1-7).
 - a. Human viewpoint doesn't guard the heart (Prov. 4:23)—it guards the steps (Eccl. 5:1).
 - b. "Draw near to listen" and "let your words be few" (Eccl. 5:1,2) have the appearance of wisdom (Jms. 1:19), but are actually a human viewpoint warning against getting too religious.
 - 1) Listening is o.k., because you may learn something profitable.
 - 2) Sacrificing is foolish because you're wasting your wealth.
 - c. God is in heaven, and you're on earth, so don't worry about it (Eccl. 5:2b).
 - d. Prayers are "answered" as you work hard for your wealth, and frequent prayer is only for the foolish (Eccl. 5:3).
 - e. Since you're accountable for spoken vows, don't make any vows, and avoid all accountability (Eccl. 5:4-6).
 - f. Human viewpoint sees organized religion as empty, and personal "spirituality" as the solution (Eccl. 5:7).
2. Human viewpoint sees corruption at all levels of human government (Eccl. 5:8), and is willing to tolerate that corruption so long as the nation is advantaged (Eccl. 5:9).
3. Solomon's human viewpoint perspective on riches is then detailed (Eccl. 5:10-20).

Ecclesiastes 6

1. Human viewpoint resents the application of Divine sovereignty for human happiness (Eccl. 6:1-6).
 - a. Happiness in career success (v.2).
 - b. Happiness in family blessings (v.3).
 - c. Happiness in lifespan (v.6).

2. Human viewpoint resents the eternal perspective of God (Eccl. 6:7-9).
3. Human viewpoint resents God's eternal Sovereignty (Eccl. 6:10-12).

Ecclesiastes 7

1. Solomon composes a proverbial psalm of human viewpoint thoughts concerning physical death (Eccl. 7:1-14).
2. Human viewpoint makes a person think that they've seen it all (Eccl. 7:15a).
 - a. Human viewpoint thinks that there's really no profit to Godliness, and there are even rewards for wickedness (Eccl. 7:15b).
 - b. Human viewpoint thinks that some kind of balance should be achieved between righteousness and wickedness (Eccl. 7:16-18).
3. Wisdom is a needed in temporal life (Eccl. 7:19-23), but cannot be attained through human means (Eccl. 7:23,24).
 - a. Wisdom turns to folly and madness when the believer no longer pleases God, but is ensnared by sin (Eccl. 7:25,26).
 - b. Solomon speculates that one out of a thousand men & women might have such upright Godliness, but he hasn't found that one yet (Eccl. 7:27-29; cf. Ps. 14:1-3).

Ecclesiastes 8

1. Human viewpoint finds meaning in patriotism and civic ethics (Eccl. 8:1-9).
2. Human viewpoint minimizes morality, and prioritizes self-pleasure (Eccl. 8:10-15).
3. Human viewpoint views God and His works as unknowable (Eccl. 8:16,17).

Ecclesiastes 9

1. Human viewpoint becomes fatalistic with respect to physical life, physical death, and eternal rewards (Eccl. 9:1-6).
2. Human viewpoint emphasizes living physical life for the immediate pleasures of physical life (Eccl. 9:7-9).
3. Human viewpoint becomes fatalistic with respect to time and chance (Eccl. 9:10-12).

One Year Through the Bible

Week 21: May 19th through 25th

4. Human viewpoint is impressed by earthly wisdom (Eccl. 9:13-18; Jms. 3:15,16).

Ecclesiastes 10

1. Chapter ten consists of more human viewpoint proverbs.
2. A little bit of foolishness outweighs a whole lot of wisdom (Eccl. 10:1).
3. Human viewpoint attempts to substitute composure for love (Eccl. 10:4; cf. Prov. 10:12).
4. Human viewpoint becomes cynical when it observes the inequities of life (Eccl. 10:5-7).
5. Human viewpoint can see the difference between a good king and a bad king (Eccl. 10:16,17).
6. Human viewpoint thinks money can solve all our problems (Eccl. 10:19).

Ecclesiastes 11

1. The human viewpoint proverbs continue from chapter ten.
2. Human viewpoint puts forth some practical business investment principles (Eccl. 11:1-6; Lk. 16:8).

3. Human viewpoint strives to enjoy life when it can (Eccl. 11:7-10).

Ecclesiastes 12

1. Solomon urges his audience to learn from the Lord in youth (Eccl. 12:1; Prov. 22:6).
2. Old age is a difficult test, and must be faced with the Word of God, in order to glorify the Lord through the testing (Eccl. 12:1b-8).
3. Solomon concludes his essay on human viewpoint with some summary statements (Eccl. 12:9-14).
 - a. Gather wisdom from many sources, and handle the Word of God accurately (Eccl. 12:9,10; 2nd Tim. 2:15b).
 - b. All wisdom comes from one source, and so the believer should be humble to focus on one book—the Bible (Eccl. 12:11,12).
 - c. Wisdom urges the believer to live a Godly life, in the fear of the Lord, and in view of the eternal judgment (Eccl. 12:13,14).

Song of Solomon

Ἀίσμα ἄσματων

שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים

Song of Solomon is the Book of Sex and Marriage. Other wisdom Books, such as Job, Proverbs, and even Ecclesiastes address the issues of sexual immorality and sexual purity. It is the Song of Solomon, however, which portrays the subject in a vivid drama.

Christians today try to find a parallel with Christ and the Church, but that reads New Testament mystery doctrine back into an Old Testament context. In terms of wisdom literature, Song of Solomon doesn't need to be allegorized—it communicates a message of holiness in itself.

Title: The song of songs (best song) which is Solomon's. The Hebrew title, *Shiyr Hashiyriym*, and the Greek Septuagint title, *Aisma asmaton*, say the same thing. This Book is the song of songs. The alternate English title, *Canticles*, comes from the Latin vulgate title: *Canticum Canticorum*.

Author: Modern, skeptical “scholarship” has rejected the traditional authorship of Solomon, but there is no reasonable cause for this. Song. 1:1 identifies Solomon as the author, and he is referenced numerous times in the Book.

One Year Through the Bible

Week 21: May 19th through 25th

Introductory Notes: There are two competing understandings of Song of Solomon: the two character view, and the three character view. Viewed as a drama with only two characters, Solomon is identified as both the king and the shepherd, and is the “good guy” of the text. Viewed as a drama with three characters, Solomon is the king, and the shepherd lover is a separate character, making Solomon the “bad guy” of the text. The chapter titles below, from Ralph Braun’s categorical notebook, reflect the three character interpretation, as does this chapter by chapter study guide by Bob Bolender. The chart from Bruce Wilkinson’s *Talk Through the Bible* reflects the two character interpretation, and has been omitted from this study guide.

Bible Chapter Titles:	
Song of Solomon	
1	Conversation Between Shulamite Woman and the Daughters of Jerusalem
2	The Shulamite’s Thoughts of Her Shepherd Lover
3	The Woman’s Search for Her Lover, Her Desire to Marry Him, Glimpses of Rival Lover Solomon in all His Glory
4	The Wooing of King Solomon, She Says No
5	The Woman’s Thoughts Concerning Her Shepherd Lover
6	Solomon Woos, She Refuses
7	The Shulamite Woman Escapes
8	Shulamite Lover and Shepherd Lover Together Again in their Home Town

Song of Solomon

1

1. The song begins with Shulamith’s (Song. 6:13) expression of love, and her plea for rescue (Song. 1:2-4a).
2. The love expressed is physical, sexual love that is confined to the marriage union of husband and wife. דָּוִד ^{#1730}: *beloved, love*. David = “beloved.”

3. Shulamith praises her lover for his integrity (Song. 1:3).
4. The king’s harem celebrates the love of this man of integrity (Song. 1:4b).
5. Shulamith explains her darkened skin to the women of Solomon’s court as the result of her life’s hard work (Song. 1:5,6).
6. Shulamith laments that she does not know where her shepherd lover is, and anticipates the imminent danger she’s in, at being separated from him forever (Song. 1:7).
7. The King’s harem (wives, concubines, and maidens) invites Shulamith to leave Jerusalem, and return to her life as a shepherdess (Song. 1:8).
8. Solomon woos Shulamith with compliments of her physical beauty (Song. 1:9-11,15).
 - a. Solomon hosts a great feast, and Shulamith’s perfume brought about memories of her shepherd lover (Song. 1:12-14).
 - b. The shepherd may not have riches, but in Shulamith’s eyes (“to me”) he is all the perfume she could ever desire (vv.13,14), and their time together in the woodlands is all the palace she could ever want (vv.16,17).

Week 21: May 19th through 25th

Song of Solomon 2

1. Shulamith delights in the shepherd's pet names for her (Song. 2:1,2).
2. Shulamith reflects back to the romance she enjoyed with her shepherd lover (Song. 2:3-6).
 - a. Physical intimacy to some extent (v.3) led to a more private setting (v.4).
 - b. The shepherd's "banner" indicates the claim he has over her soul, and their intentions to be married (v.4).
 - c. Wining and dining left her "lovesick" ("faint with love" NIV) (v.5). חֹלֵת אֶהְבֶּהָ.
 - d. The passion of the romance culminated with a desire for sexual intercourse (v.6).
3. Shulamith solemnly warns the daughters of Jerusalem about the dangers of premarital sexual activity (Song. 2:7,8).
 - a. Arousing love = petting; amorous embracing, caressing, and kissing.
 - b. Awakening love = sexual activity.
 - c. This warning is repeated twice more (Song. 3:5; 8:4).
4. The shepherd sneaks to the harem, and pleads with Shulamith to come with him back to Galilee (Song. 2:8-17).
 - a. The shepherd's climbing and leaping gets him into the palace grounds (vv.8,9).
 - b. The shepherd's plea is for Shulamith to return to "their" land and enjoy the new spring with him (vv.10-13).
 - c. The shepherd's anguish at her hidden condition indicates that he is unsuccessful in seeing her & freeing her (v.14).
 - d. The king's harem sounds the alarm—there are foxes in the vineyard (v.15), and the shepherd must escape (vv.16,17).

Song of Solomon 3

1. Shulamith is troubled by a dream of her shepherd lover, reflecting the fear that she will never see him again (Song. 3:1-4).
2. Shulamith again solemnly warns the daughters of Jerusalem how dangerous premarital emotional entanglements become (Song. 3:5).

3. Shulamith arrives for Solomon's wedding day with great fanfare (Song. 3:6-11). "Who is this?" is the first of three rhetorical questions posed when Shulamith arrives, when she is prepared for the wedding, and when she flees (cf. Song. 6:10; 8:5).

Song of Solomon 4

1. Solomon praises the physical beauty of his soon-to-be 141st wife (Song. 4:1-7; cf. 6:8).
2. Solomon's marriage proposal is recorded (Song. 4:8-15).
3. Shulamith pleads with the winds to carry her (locked to Solomon) garden's fragrance to her shepherd lover, and imagines him coming into her garden (making love) (Song. 4:16-5:1).

Song of Solomon 5

1. Shulamith has her second nightmare of losing her shepherd lover (Song. 5:2-7).
2. Shulamith solemnly charges the daughters of Jerusalem to help her find her shepherd lover (Song. 5:8,9).
3. In response to the daughters of Jerusalem not being familiar with her lover's appearance, Shulamith praises his beauty, and his friendship to them (Song. 5:10-16).

Song of Solomon 6

1. In response to the daughters of Jerusalem not being familiar with her lover's location, Shulamith describes where he has gone (Song. 6:1-3).
2. Solomon sings Shulamith's praises once again for her physical beauty (Song. 6:4-9).
3. "Who is this?" is the second of three rhetorical questions posed when Shulamith arrives, when she is prepared for the wedding, and when she flees (cf. 3:6; 8:5).
4. Shulamith goes for a walk, and the king's orchard reminded her of what she had left behind (Song. 6:11). Her soul then makes the decision to leave (Song. 6:12).
5. The chorus pleads with Shulamith to return, but she has made up her mind (Song. 6:13).

One Year Through the Bible

Week 21: May 19th through 25th

Song of Solomon 7

1. The shepherd lover praises Shulamith for her beauty, seeing her for the first time in the royal garments (Song. 7:1-9a).
2. Shulamith anticipates a wonderful honeymoon with her shepherd lover, and rejoices in that she has saved herself for her husband (Song. 7:10-13).

Song of Solomon 8

1. Shulamith anticipates the return to her hometown, and her upcoming wedding night in her mother's house (Song. 8:1-3).
2. For the third time, Shulamith speaks on the danger of premarital sexual activity (Song. 8:4).
3. "Who is this?" is the third time that the rhetorical question is posed: when Shulamith arrives in Jerusalem, when she is prepared for her wedding to Solomon, and when she flees (Song. 8:5a; cf. 3:6; 6:10).
4. Shulamith and the shepherd arrive at the very apple tree where they awakened their love (Song. 8:5b; cf. 2:3) (and also apparently where the shepherd was born? Song. 8:5c), and Shulamith sings a psalm of unquenchable love (Song. 8:6,7).
5. In Shulamith's youth ("no breasts") her brothers had been the guardians of her virginity (Song. 8:8,9). Virginity was a matter of family and even community business (Deut. 22:12-21).
 - a. Shulamith had been a virgin and Solomon's dowry to her brothers was a profitable vineyard (Song. 8:10,11).
 - b. The dowry is returned, as Shulamith's own vineyard (body, Song. 1:6) is being given to another.
6. The Song concludes with Shulamith's invitation to her lover to consummate their long-delayed marriage (Song. 8:13,14).

Note:

This material is provided on a grace basis, free of charge. It may not be sold in any form or for any reason. Neither Austin Bible Church, nor Pastor Bob are profiting from these study guides. They

are intended strictly as an assistance to the verse-by-verse isogogical, categorical, and exegetical Bible teaching ministry of Austin Bible Church.

Sources:

The Bible reading schedule is from a long-forgotten, and uncertain source.

Chapter Titles are from The Categorical Notebook, Vol. 3 / Ralph G. Braun—Brookings, OR: Berean Fundamental Church, 1974.

Book Charts are from Talk thru the Bible [computer file] / Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa.—electronic ed.—Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1983.

Scripture Citations come from the New American Standard Bible : 1995 update [computer file] / The Lockman Foundation.—LaHabra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, c 1995.

Hebrew and Greek vocabulary words, and Strong's Exhaustive Concordance numbers are from the Libronix Digital Library System 2.0 / Logos Research Systems.