

Introduction to Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2

Purpose of the book: Ecclesiastes shows us the futility of life without God in order to show us the significance of life with God.

Structure of Ecclesiastes

Section 1 (vv. 1:1-2:26): Enjoy life as a gift from God

1. All good things must be received and understood as coming from the hand of God if they are to be used properly and joyfully.
2. Man lacks the ability to extract enjoyment from life. Only God can give that ability to those who come to Him in belief.

Section 2 (vv. 3:1-5:20): Understand the all-encompassing plan of God

1. Happiness is beyond man's natural reach, and so is understanding.
2. Life will remain an enigma and a frustration until men come to "fear" the living God whose purposes are unchangeable and remain forever.

Section 3 (6:1-8:15): Apply the all-encompassing plan of God (part 1)

- If enjoyment of life is to be seen as a gift of God and regulated by God, how do we reconcile that life is full of instances where God's providence seems unfair or cruel?
 - We properly assess and rest in the fairness and goodness of God's plan over all things.

Section 4 (8:16-12:14): Apply the all encompassing plan of God (part 2)

- Removing various discouragements and enforcing practical lessons.
 - **Enjoy life in light of judgment.**

Living What We Learn:

- Ecclesiastes: a guide to the Gospel
- Ecclesiastes: a message that needs to be passed on