

Outline of Ecclesiastes	
Solomon's...	
1-2	Personal Experiences of His Life
3-5	Explanations and Observations
6-8	Advice to Have a Meaningful Life
9-12	Conclusion That Clears up the Book

**Author**

The writer is nameless but calls himself a “Preacher” or “Teacher”. He identifies himself as the current king of Israel, and as a son of David. There are some clues in the context that may suggest a different person wrote the book after Solomon’s death, possibly several hundred years later. Still, the conventional belief is that the author is indeed Solomon.

**Summary**

The Teacher opens with the exclamation, “Vanity of vanities... all is vanity” (1:2). He laments that everything in life is endless and meaningless especially human toil and the cycles of nature. Nothing is ever truly new on earth. Ecclesiastes’ contribution to the canon of Scripture is important: it balances the wisdom of Proverbs and elsewhere which emphasizes the order of creation, by reminding us of the disorder of a fallen creation, and the frustration produced by that disorder.

**Analysis**

The book is confusing to many and the writer himself seems uncertain. The Teacher's comments are certainly not systematic. He laments of “vanity.” “Vanity” is a translation of the Hebrew

**ECCLESIASTES**

WISDOM

BOOK 21  
**Ec.**  
 ECCLESIASTES  
 12 CHAPTERS

*The author uses his powers of wisdom to examine the human experience and assess the human situation. His perspective is limited to what happens “under the sun”. He considers life only by what he observes outwardly.*


word *hebel*, which means, “breath of the wind” connoting uselessness and transience. The Teacher's confusing writing style reinforces his argument that human wisdom is limited or vain. The simple division of good and evil, peace and war, clean and unclean are absolute opposites we see taught in the Old Testament. However, the Teacher is skeptical of such binary opposites. He implies that defining life within such simplistic terms

disobedience is so subtle that humans cannot confidently differentiate between them. The Teacher studies human pleasure in an empirical way. He forms conclusions only on the basis of observations. He refers to what he sees or finds in life rather than what he thinks. The inward matter of the heart seems to be left out altogether. Also he remains bothered by the fact that both good and

LIFE IS MEANINGLESS APART FROM GOD							
1:1 — 11		1:12 — 6:9		6:10 — 11:6		11:7 — 12:14	
“Everything is meaningless”		“Hard work is futile”		“Wisdom is limited”		“Fear God”	
1:1-3	1:4-11	1:12-2:17	2:18-6:9	6:10-8:17	9:1-11:6	11:7-12:7	12:8-14
Hypothesis Statement	Hypothesis Poem	Personal Observation	General Observation	God is Sovereign	Man is Ignorant	Joyous Responsible Living	Be Ready for Judgment
<b>Ecclesiastes</b> “Under the Sun” i.e., the observable universe				= Humanity's Fruitless Search for Contentment			
<b>Perspective:</b> “Vanity” i.e., empty or fleeting							

may not be an effective way for man to understand it. He suggests the tension between positive and negative experiences is fundamental to human life, and that only God can truly judge when a situation is either good or evil. Yet he affirms that time and chance are the only determining factors in the race between good and evil. The premise of this point of view is that the difference between good and evil, obedience or

evil people meet the same fate. The inward matter of faith is not really considered till the end of the book (12:13).

 **CHRIST IN ECCLESIASTES**

- Christ is not clearly seen in the book. But it does show what life is like without God. The judgment mentioned in the book will be by Christ (Jn.5:22).