

GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME THREE
POETS, PROPHETS, AND PROMISES—A SURVEY OF JOB–DANIEL
ECCLESIASTES: SEARCHING FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE
A SURVEY OF ECCLESIASTES



The Heart of the Matter

The book of Ecclesiastes, as short as it is, is one of the most mysterious works in the Bible. It looms before us as the sphinx of Hebrew literature, with its knotty, unresolved struggles intermingled with its unanswered arguments and cynical observations of life. All this is compounded by the fact that the writer, Solomon, referred to himself throughout the book as “the Preacher.” Its content marks a decided departure from the orthodox, a bold and even imprudent alienation from Jehovah . . . and yet in a few verses, we read strong words in defense of a life devoted to the living Lord. In this study, we’ll attempt to unravel the riddle and understand the message of Ecclesiastes.



Discovering the Way

1. Some Essentials Worth Knowing

Let’s answer a few questions. Who wrote Ecclesiastes? What does its title mean? What is unique about it? What is the theme of the book?

2. A Survey of the Book

Solomon’s introduction occurs in 1:1–11. His investigation of a life dissatisfied appears in 1:12–6:9. His conclusions about life lived apart from God are in 6:10–11:6. His contrastive warning between youth and old age is in 11:7–12:8. And his epilogue is in 12:9–14.

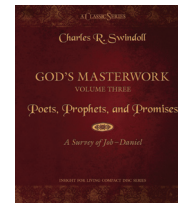


Starting Your Journey

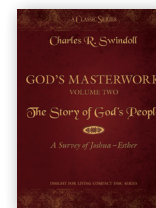
For all of Solomon’s wisdom . . . and folly, he concluded with a simple but profound truth: “Fear God and keep His commandments. . . . For God will bring every act to judgment” (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14).



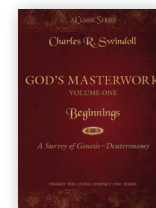
Tools for Digging Deeper



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ECCLESIASTES

	Introduction	Investigation and Discoveries <i>I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom. (1:13)</i>				Admonition	Conclusion
	<u>Writer</u> <u>Theme</u> <u>Questions and illustrations</u>	PERSONAL PURSUITS	V A N I T Y	CONCLUSIONS	A warning to the young	THE END OF THE SEARCH	
		Knowledge		Without God's help: Humans cannot discover what is good for them to do.	A picture of old age	Fear God!	
		Amusements		Without God's revelation: Humans do not know what will come after them.	A final admission	Obey Him!	
		Possessions				Someday you will face Him!	
		Madness and folly					
		Labor					
		Philosophy					
		Riches					
	CHAPTER 1:1–11	CHAPTERS 1:12–6:12		CHAPTERS 7:1–11:6	CHAPTERS 11:7–12:8	CHAPTERS 12:9–14	
Search	Nature	Philosophy	Materialism	Fatalism	Relationships	Theology	
Style	Proverbial		Personal		Poetical		
Theme	The meaninglessness of life apart from God						
Key Verses	2:11; 12:13–14						
Christ in Ecclesiastes	The “one Shepherd” (12:11) who offers abundant life						

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