

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	9
Ecclesiastes' Contribution to Theology.....	10
'Vanity of Vanities'.....	12
The Purpose of Ecclesiastes.....	13
The Title of Ecclesiastes.....	14
The Canonicity of Ecclesiastes.....	15
The Authorship and Date of Ecclesiastes.....	17
Views.....	17
Linguistic Evidence.....	18
Internal and Contextual Evidence.....	20
Literary Description.....	23
The Message of Ecclesiastes.....	24
Outline of Ecclesiastes.....	26
Study Questions.....	27
<b>Chapter 1: A Disappointing Discovery</b> .....	29
Vanishing Vapors (1:2).....	31
Round and Round, and Round and Round ... (1:3-8).....	34
Nothing New (1:9-11).....	39
In Pursuit of Wisdom (1:12-18).....	42
Study Questions.....	47
<b>Chapter 2: A Disappointing Discovery (continued)</b> .....	49
In Pursuit of Pleasure (2:1-9).....	49
Still Pursuing the Wind (2:10-11).....	52
Solomon's Assessment of Life under the Sun (2:12-17).....	53
Solomon's Assessment of Labor under the Sun (2:18-23).....	56
The Search's Conclusion (2:24-26).....	58
Study Questions.....	59
<b>Chapter 3: The Hours, Days, and Years of Our Lives</b> .....	61
A Poem on Time (3:1-8).....	62
The Poem's Message (3:9-22).....	66
Study Questions.....	71
<b>Chapter 4: Two by Two</b> .....	73
Observing Oppression (4:1-3).....	74
Observing Jealousy (4:4-6).....	76
Observing Loneliness (4:7-12).....	78
Observing Politics (4:13-16).....	80
Conclusion.....	82
Study Questions.....	83

<b>Chapter 5: Beyond the Sun</b> .....	85
Approaching the Presence of God (5:1-3).....	86
Guarding Our Steps (5:1a).....	87
Drawing Near to Listen (5:1b).....	88
Avoiding Hastiness (5:2a).....	90
Limiting Our Words (5:2b-3).....	90
Apprehending Promises to God (5:4-7).....	91
Fulfilling Commitments (5:4-5).....	93
Meaning What We Say (5:6).....	93
Fearing God (5:7).....	94
Understanding the Role of Rulers (5:8-9).....	95
Dealing with the Pursuit of Wealth (5:10-17).....	97
Concluding Thoughts Regarding Wealth (5:18-20).....	99
Study Questions.....	101
<b>Chapter 6: Possessing Everything, But Enjoying Nothing</b> .....	103
Case History #1: A Full Treasury (6:1-2).....	103
Case History #2: A Full Quiver (6:3-5).....	105
Case History #3: A Full Life Span (6:6).....	106
The Elusiveness of Satisfaction and Rest (6:7-9).....	107
A Sovereign Lord (6:10-12).....	108
Study Questions.....	110
<b>Chapter 7: Life Is Complicated: Live with Care</b> .....	113
A Person's Present Conditions in the Light of Eternity (7:1-14).....	116
Death Is Good (7:1-4).....	117
The Superiority of Wisdom (7:5-12).....	121
The Sovereign God Is in Control (7:13-14).....	125
A Person's Character in the Light of Revelation (7:15-29).....	129
Balanced Living (7:15-18).....	129
Wisdom Rather Than Perfection (7:19-22).....	132
The Search for an Explanation (7:23-29).....	133
Study Questions.....	137
<b>Chapter 8: Wisdom Has Its Limits</b> .....	139
Wisdom in Situations beyond a Person's Control (8:1-9).....	139
Being Wise in a King's Throne Room (8:2-6).....	141
Being Wise through Life's Uncertainties (8:7-9).....	143
Being Wise in God's Throne Room (8:10-17).....	146
Study Questions.....	151
<b>Chapter 9: Imperatives for Living Wisely</b> .....	153
In God's Hand (9:1).....	153
The Reality of Death and the Urgency of Living (9:2-10).....	156
Life's Inescapable Ironies (9:11-12).....	164

A Lesson from History (9:13-18).....	166
Study Questions.....	168
<b>Chapter 10: A Final Reflection about Folly.....</b>	<b>169</b>
Recognizing Fools (10:1-4).....	169
An Upside-Down World (10:5-7).....	172
Proverbs from Everyday Life Settings (10:8-11).....	175
The Words and Work of a Fool (10:12-15).....	176
Due Diligence (10:16-20).....	177
Study Questions.....	182
<b>Chapter 11: Sowing in the Morning, Sowing in the Evening.....</b>	<b>183</b>
What a Person Does Not Know (11:1-6).....	184
Rejoice in the Light (11:7-8).....	189
Again, Rejoice (11:9-10).....	190
Study Questions.....	193
<b>Chapter 12: Life Under a Setting Sun.....</b>	<b>195</b>
Solomonic Advice (12:1-7).....	196
The Gathering Storm (12:2).....	198
The Household of the Deceased (12:3-4).....	199
Aging: The Ultimate Harbinger of Death (12:5).....	200
Death: Returning to God (12:6-7).....	201
Table of Interpretations.....	203
The Epilogue to Ecclesiastes (12:8-14).....	209
Study Questions.....	214
<b>An Epilogue: Further Thoughts on Ecclesiastes.....</b>	<b>215</b>
Study Questions.....	220
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>221</b>
Subject Index.....	230
Scripture Index.....	235