

Insights From Ecclesiastes

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Insights From Ecclesiastes

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Introduction

One of the ways I've been studying the Word of God is by making a list of everything that each book of the Bible teaches. This has resulted in more than a thousand pages of material. Although it's interesting and I've learned a lot from writing it, that's a lot of bullet points to read through!

The purpose of this book is to extract the most interesting insights from that massive list. This isn't intended to summarize each book of the Bible because that's what my "Chapter Summary of the Bible" is for. It's also not intended to list the major points of each book because you're probably already familiar with them. Finally, it's not intended to offer in-depth commentary because that's what my regular commentary is for. This book is simply a collection of points that I found interesting.

I hope there's some material here that you find edifying.

Jon Cooper
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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Ecclesiastes.....	7

Ecclesiastes

- This book was written by a king (Ecclesiastes 1:1).
- The first person in the Bible to call himself a preacher was a king (Ecclesiastes 1:1).
- The things of this world are empty and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 1:2).
- Generations come and go, over and over again. This is empty and unsatisfying because it's the endless repetition of the same thing (Ecclesiastes 1:4).
- The sun rises and sets, over again over again. This is empty and unsatisfying because it's the endless repetition of the same thing (Ecclesiastes 1:5).
- The wind travels in a cycle, over and over again. This is empty and unsatisfying because it's the endless repetition of the same thing (Ecclesiastes 1:6).
- Water travels in a cycle, over and over again. This is empty and unsatisfying because it's the endless repetition of the same thing (Ecclesiastes 1:7).
- There's no way to even list all the work that needs to be done, much less accomplish it (Ecclesiastes 1:8). Trying to get work done is unsatisfying because there will always be an infinite amount of work left to do.
- Our desires can't be satisfied. The more we give in to them, the more they'll grow (Ecclesiastes 1:8). Trying to satisfy our desires is an impossible task.
- Life in this world is unsatisfying because history repeats itself in an endless cycle. The things people did in the past will be done again. This is empty and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

- People may think that something is new, but that's just because of their ignorance of history (Ecclesiastes 1:10).
- Doing things in life is empty and unsatisfying, because the things that we do won't be remembered. All will be forgotten in time (Ecclesiastes 1:11).
- The author of this book dedicated himself to using wisdom to understand the things that are done in this world. He wanted to understand life (Ecclesiastes 1:13).
- This life is sore travail. It's painful and empty and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 1:13).
- The reason life is painful and empty and unsatisfying is because God made it that way. This is a curse that He placed upon mankind (Ecclesiastes 1:13).
- If you're looking for something in this world that's satisfying, you won't find it (Ecclesiastes 1:14).
- The things of this world frustrate the spirit (Ecclesiastes 1:14).
- This world has an infinite number of problems, and none of them can be solved (Ecclesiastes 1:15).
- This is a book of wisdom, written by someone who was wise. It's not a book of foolishness (Ecclesiastes 1:16).
- Those who increase their wisdom or knowledge also increase their sorrow (Ecclesiastes 1:18).
- Mirth is empty and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 2:1).
- Pleasure is empty and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 2:1).
- The author had everything this world had to offer, and all of it was empty and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 2:11).

- The only things we can do in life are the same things that were done by those who came before us. This is empty and unsatisfying. Instead of making progress, we're going in a cycle (Ecclesiastes 2:12).
- Light is better than darkness (Ecclesiastes 2:13).
- Wisdom is better than folly, but wisdom can't save us. Those who are wise will one day die, just like everyone else (Ecclesiastes 2:15).
- Wisdom is unsatisfying because the wise aren't remembered (Ecclesiastes 2:16).
- The things of this world can't bring meaning to your life or satisfy you (Ecclesiastes 2:17).
- Wisdom can't bring meaning to your life or satisfy you (Ecclesiastes 2:17).
- The author of this book hated the labor that he had done, because one day he would be forced to leave it to those who came after him (Ecclesiastes 2:18).
- The fact that we lose our possessions at the end of our life is frustrating (Ecclesiastes 2:18).
- When we labor for the things of this world, we're laboring for things that will one day be taken from us (Ecclesiastes 2:18).
- The thing that makes life immensely frustrating and unsatisfying is death. The root of the problems is death (Ecclesiastes 2:18).
- It's pointless to have days that are filled with sorrow and grief, because in the end all that sorrow and grief won't help you (Ecclesiastes 2:23).

- It's pointless to lose sleep at night, because in the end those sleepless nights won't accomplish anything (Ecclesiastes 2:23).
- The best thing we can do in life is eat and drink with joy, and enjoy the fruits of our labor (Ecclesiastes 2:24). That's the portion God has given us in this life.
- It's possible for our soul to enjoy the fruits of our labor (Ecclesiastes 2:24).
- God gives wisdom to those who are good in His sight (Ecclesiastes 2:26). This means wisdom is a gift from God.
- God gives knowledge to those who are good in His sight (Ecclesiastes 2:26). This means knowledge is a gift from God.
- God gives joy to those who are good in His sight (Ecclesiastes 2:26). This means joy is a gift from God.
- God gives pain and suffering to sinners (Ecclesiastes 2:26).
- God has sinners work to gather up wealth so that He can give it to those who please Him (Ecclesiastes 2:26). This means that in the end, God will give the wealth of the wicked to the righteous.
- God treats the righteous differently than He treats the wicked (Ecclesiastes 2:26).
- Everything that a sinner does is empty and unsatisfying, because God won't give him wisdom and He won't allow them to keep their works (Ecclesiastes 2:26).
- There are different seasons in life (Ecclesiastes 3:1).
- Dying is part of life (Ecclesiastes 3:2).

- Life doesn't consist only of planting things. There's also a season for uprooting things (Ecclesiastes 3:2).
- There's a time to break things down (Ecclesiastes 3:3).
- It's not always a time of peace. There are also times of war (Ecclesiastes 3:3).
- Weeping is part of life (Ecclesiastes 3:4).
- Mourning is part of life (Ecclesiastes 3:4)
- Dancing is part of life (Ecclesiastes 3:4).
- Life isn't only joy. There are also moments of sorrow (Ecclesiastes 3:4).
- Sometimes casting things away is the right thing to do (Ecclesiastes 3:5).
- Life isn't only about gaining things. There are also seasons of loss (Ecclesiastes 3:6).
- There's a time to remain silent (Ecclesiastes 3:7).
- It's not always wrong to hate. There's a time and a place for that (Ecclesiastes 3:8).
- God is the one who has filled our lives with pain and frustration (Ecclesiastes 3:10).
- God has made everything beautiful in His time (Ecclesiastes 3:11).
- It's impossible to find out what God is doing in this world. He has hidden it from us and it can't be known (Ecclesiastes 3:11).
- In spite of how frustrating and unsatisfying life is, we must still rejoice and do good (Ecclesiastes 3:12).

- Our response to life must not be despair and hopelessness. Instead it must be to rejoice (Ecclesiastes 3:12).
- The author of this book didn't believe that "all is vanity" gave us an excuse to either sin or fall into despair. Instead we must seek to do good (Ecclesiastes 3:12).
- It's entirely good for us to enjoy the fruits of our labor. That's a gift from God, and it's how things should be (Ecclesiastes 3:13).
- We don't need to feel guilty about enjoying the fruits of our labor. That's not a sin (Ecclesiastes 3:13).
- There are things in this life that God has given us to enjoy (Ecclesiastes 3:13).
- Everything that God does is forever (Ecclesiastes 3:14).
- The things that God does are so that people would fear Him (Ecclesiastes 3:14).
- God will bring into judgment things that were done in the past (Ecclesiastes 3:15).
- God will judge the righteous (Ecclesiastes 3:17).
- God will judge the wicked (Ecclesiastes 3:17).
- God seeks to humble mankind (Ecclesiastes 3:18).
- People and animals share the same breath of life. Animals are as alive as we are (Ecclesiastes 3:19). There isn't one type of life in people and a different one in animals. We're both alive in the same way, and we both die.
- God created both animals and people from the dust of the ground (Ecclesiastes 3:20).

- People have a spirit that lives on after death (Ecclesiastes 3:21). This means people aren't just flesh; they have a spirit as well.
- Animals have a spirit that lives on after death (Ecclesiastes 3:21). This means animals aren't just flesh; they have a spirit as well.
- When people die, their spirit goes upward (Ecclesiastes 3:21).
- When animals die, their spirit goes downward (Ecclesiastes 3:21). That means what happens to the spirit of people when they die is different from what happens to the spirit of animals when they die.
- The knowledge that we're like animals in some ways is intended to humble us (Ecclesiastes 3:18-21).
- We should rejoice in our labor (Ecclesiastes 3:22). Our portion in this life is to rejoice in what we've done, and enjoy the fruits of our labor. That's the gift God has given us.
- It's impossible for us to know what will happen after we're gone. All we can do is rejoice in what we have now (Ecclesiastes 3:22).
- Since there's much oppression in this world, it's better to be dead than alive (Ecclesiastes 4:2). This is because those who are dead in Christ aren't being oppressed, which means the dead have it easier than those who are alive.
- Even though the author praised the dead and said it was better to be dead than alive, he never hinted that suicide was an option (Ecclesiastes 4:2).

- Since there's so much oppression in this world, the people who have it best are those who haven't been born. This is because they've never been oppressed (Ecclesiastes 4:3).
- Envy is empty and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 4:4).
- Envy frustrates the spirit (Ecclesiastes 4:4).
- Having great wealth isn't worth it if it fills your life with pain and frustration (Ecclesiastes 4:6).
- If a person is alone in life, it doesn't make sense for him to work endless hours in order to gain wealth. This is because his wealth doesn't help him (because he's too busy working), and it doesn't help anyone else because there's no one else in his life (Ecclesiastes 4:8).
- It's empty and unsatisfying to accumulate wealth that no one enjoys (Ecclesiastes 4:8).
- It's not good for a person to go through life alone (Ecclesiastes 4:9).
- It's better to be poor and wise than rich and foolish (Ecclesiastes 4:13).
- There are some people who sin in the house of the Lord because they don't consider what they're doing, and because they don't listen (Ecclesiastes 5:1).
- When you enter into the house of the Lord, be very careful what you promise God (Ecclesiastes 5:2-4). If you make a vow to God then you must make sure that you keep it.
- People dream when there's a lot going on in their life (Ecclesiastes 5:3).

- Fools are identified when they speak, because their multitude of words reveals their foolish nature (Ecclesiastes 5:3).
- It's best not to speak a multitude of words to God and reveal that you're a fool (Ecclesiastes 5:3).
- It's better to never make a vow at all, than to make a vow to God and not keep it (Ecclesiastes 5:5).
- You can't speak a vow and not pay it, and then claim the vow was a mistake. If you make a vow to God then you must keep it, because breaking your vow is a serious sin in God's sight (Ecclesiastes 5:6). God punishes those who make vows and don't keep them.
- Don't be surprised when judgment is violently perverted (Ecclesiastes 5:8).
- Those who pervert judgment will one day be brought into judgment by a higher authority (Ecclesiastes 5:8).
- Ultimately the lives of everyone depend on the fruit of the field (Ecclesiastes 5:9).
- Those who love wealth won't be satisfied with wealth (Ecclesiastes 5:10). If you desire wealth then no amount of wealth will ever satisfy you.
- When a person become wealthy, the number of people who consume his wealth also increases (Ecclesiastes 5:11).
- When a person becomes wealthy, all he can really do is look at his wealth. This isn't very satisfying (Ecclesiastes 5:11).
- The sleep of laborers is sweet. However, the rich can't

sleep because their wealth weighs upon them and fills them with worry (Ecclesiastes 5:12).

- There are times when wealth makes a person's life much worse (Ecclesiastes 5:13).
- Wealth is frustrating and empty because you can't keep it (Ecclesiastes 5:15).
- In the end there's no profit in the work that we do in this life, because anything that we earn can't be taken with us when we die (Ecclesiastes 5:16).
- The author compares labor to striving after the wind. You can't grasp the wind or possess it (Ecclesiastes 5:16).
- We can't take the fruits of our labor with us into the next life, but we can enjoy them in this life (Ecclesiastes 5:18).
- If a rich person can enjoy his wealth, that's a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 5:19).
- It's not a sin to enjoy your wealth (Ecclesiastes 5:19).
- It's not a sin to enjoy the fruits of your labor (Ecclesiastes 5:19).
- Those who rejoice in the fruits of their labor won't much remember their painful and frustrating lives (Ecclesiastes 5:20).
- God gives some people joy (Ecclesiastes 5:20).
- It's a terrible thing for a person to have riches and honor, but for someone else to take it and enjoy it (Ecclesiastes 6:2).
- Having the things that we desire isn't beneficial if we can't enjoy them (Ecclesiastes 6:2).

- God is the one who gives us the power to enjoy our blessings (Ecclesiastes 6:2).
- Children are a blessing (Ecclesiastes 6:3)
- The author thought it would be a tremendous blessing to have 100 children (Ecclesiastes 6:3).
- If a man lives a long life, but that life is filled with pain, then his long life is empty and frustrating (Ecclesiastes 6:3).
- It's a horrible thing to never be buried (Ecclesiastes 6:3).
- God cares about whether we've been buried (Ecclesiastes 6:3).
- If a person has many blessings in life but is unable to enjoy them, it's better for him to die in childbirth. That way the pain of life is avoided (Ecclesiastes 6:3).
- Although the author taught that in some cases it was better to die than to live a long life, he never suggested that suicide or abortion was an option. The expectation was that if we had a life full of pain, we had to live it until the end. We couldn't cut it short through suicide (Ecclesiastes 6:3).
- Everything that a person does is to satisfy his desires, but his desires are never satisfied (Ecclesiastes 6:7).
- It's impossible to know what the right choices are in life because we can't see the future. Since we can't see the future, we can't plan for it. Instead we make choices that may prove to be very wrong, once future events take place (Ecclesiastes 6:12). This is frustrating and unsatisfying.

- Your character matters more than your appearance (Ecclesiastes 7:1).
- The day that we die is better than the day we're born (Ecclesiastes 7:1). This is because when we're born we begin a life of suffering, and when we die in Christ our suffering ends.
- Although the day that we die is better than the day we're born, suicide is never presented as an option (Ecclesiastes 7:1).
- The reason it's better to be sad than to laugh is because sorrow is how the heart is made better (Ecclesiastes 7:3). Sorrow helps the heart in a way that laughter doesn't.
- It's better to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools (Ecclesiastes 7:5).
- The author compares the laughter of fools to the noise that thorns make when they're set on fire (Ecclesiastes 7:6).
- Oppression can make wise men go crazy (Ecclesiastes 7:7).
- Bribes can destroy a person's heart (Ecclesiastes 7:7).
- It's better to finish something than to start it (Ecclesiastes 7:8).
- It's better to be patient than to be proud (Ecclesiastes 7:8).
- It's not wise to ask why earlier times were better than the times we have today (Ecclesiastes 7:10). This is because they weren't. This world is an endless cycle, where the same things happen again and again.

- There are some questions we shouldn't ask (Ecclesiastes 7:10).
- Wisdom combined with an inheritance is a good thing (Ecclesiastes 7:11).
- It's impossible to fix something that God has broken (Ecclesiastes 7:13).
- We should be joyful in times of prosperity (Ecclesiastes 7:14).
- We should be thoughtful in times of adversity (Ecclesiastes 7:14).
- The reason God has created both times of prosperity and times of adversity is so that we can't know what will happen once we're gone (Ecclesiastes 7:14).
- God doesn't want us to know the future (Ecclesiastes 7:14).
- There are wicked people who prolong their life through wickedness (Ecclesiastes 7:15).
- It's possible to die before our time. For example, being wicked or foolish can kill you before your time (Ecclesiastes 7:17).
- We should learn what this book has to say and take it to heart, because it's a book of wisdom (Ecclesiastes 7:18).
- There's no one who doesn't sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20).
- We shouldn't take the bad things that other people say about us to heart. This is because there have been times when we've said bad things about others (Ecclesiastes 7:22).

- Some wisdom is beyond us and can't be obtained (Ecclesiastes 7:24).
- Foolishness is actually sinful (Ecclesiastes 7:25).
- There's something more bitter than death (Ecclesiastes 7:26).
- When God initially created mankind, the human race was sinless (Ecclesiastes 7:29).
- People want to sin. They desire it and seek it out (Ecclesiastes 7:29).
- A person's wisdom makes his face shine (Ecclesiastes 8:1). This means there's some sort of visible difference between those who are wise and those who aren't.
- Obey the commandments of the king (Ecclesiastes 8:2).
- Don't be quick to leave the presence of the king (Ecclesiastes 8:3).
- Those who are wise can discern the proper time for things (Ecclesiastes 8:5).
- The reason this life is so miserable is because there's a time for every purpose (both good and evil) (Ecclesiastes 8:6).
- One of the reasons life is miserable is because no one can tell us what the future will hold (Ecclesiastes 8:7).
- Death is when our spirit leaves our body (Ecclesiastes 8:8).
- Even if the wicked prolong their life through wickedness, they still can't escape death (Ecclesiastes 8:8).
- Being a ruler doesn't always make life better. Sometimes

it makes life worse (Ecclesiastes 8:9).

- The fact that the wicked are forgotten after they die is empty and unsatisfying. Their wickedness isn't remembered (Ecclesiastes 8:10).
- The reason people do evil is because the sentence against evil isn't carried out quickly (Ecclesiastes 8:11). In order for punishments to be a deterrent they must not be delayed.
- Even if a wicked person does a hundred terrible things and prolongs his days, it's still not going to be well with him in the end (Ecclesiastes 8:12-13).
- It's better to fear God and live a short life than to prolong your life through wickedness (Ecclesiastes 8:12). The length of our life isn't as important as whether we feared God.
- This world isn't fair (Ecclesiastes 8:14).
- It's unsatisfying and frustrating that righteous people may be persecuted and punished, while wicked people are rewarded and praised (Ecclesiastes 8:14).
- Mirth is a good thing (Ecclesiastes 8:15).
- The works of the righteous are in the hand of God (Ecclesiastes 9:1).
- It's impossible to look at what's going on in your life and tell if God loves you or is angry with you. This is because there are times when good things happen to the wicked, and bad things happen to the righteous (Ecclesiastes 9:1).
- The fact that sometimes good things happen to evil people doesn't mean God loves them or approves of

what they're doing (Ecclesiastes 9:2).

- Mankind is inherently evil (Ecclesiastes 9:3).
- Those who are still alive, even if they're very small, can accomplish more than all of the powerful people of the past who are now dead (Ecclesiastes 9:4). This is because the dead have no part in this world and can do nothing.
- Rewards can only be earned in this life (Ecclesiastes 9:5).
- Our response to the teachings of this book shouldn't be depression and despair. Instead we should rejoice in our blessings, because that's the portion God has given us (Ecclesiastes 9:9).
- Whatever we do, we should do with all our might (Ecclesiastes 9:10). This means we should make the most of our life while we have it.
- Whether we win or lose may be determined by things that are outside of our control (Ecclesiastes 9:11).
- People don't always know when they'll die. Death can come suddenly and unexpectedly (Ecclesiastes 9:12).
- Wisdom is better than strength (Ecclesiastes 9:16).
- People care more about a person's wealth than they do about his wisdom. If a person is poor then he won't be heard (Ecclesiastes 9:16).
- A wise person who engages in foolishness is like ointment that contains dead flies (Ecclesiastes 10:1).
- Yielding pacifies great offenses (Ecclesiastes 10:4).
- Rulers shouldn't take honor away from someone who deserves it, and give it to someone who doesn't deserve

it (Ecclesiastes 10:7).

- Those who do evil to others will one day be bitten by evil themselves (Ecclesiastes 10:8).
- Those who babble foolishly are like a dangerous serpent (Ecclesiastes 10:11). If that fool isn't enchanted into being silent then he'll injure someone.
- The words of the wise are gracious (Ecclesiastes 10:12).
- The words of a fool become worse the longer he talks (Ecclesiastes 10:13).
- Fools have a lot to say (Ecclesiastes 10:14).
- Nations must not be ruled over by children (Ecclesiastes 10:16).
- The reason buildings fall into ruin is because of laziness (Ecclesiastes 10:18).
- Wine makes people merry (Ecclesiastes 10:19).
- Don't curse the king (Ecclesiastes 10:20).
- Don't curse the rich (Ecclesiastes 10:20).
- Give food and other necessities to seven or eight people who are in need (Ecclesiastes 11:2). By giving to others, you may find that they'll help you when you're in need.
- Since the future is uncertain, we need to prepare for it. The way to do this is by giving to those who are in need (Ecclesiastes 11:2).
- Those who observe weather conditions will never sow their seed (Ecclesiastes 11:4). In other words, those who are too cautious will never sow seed or reap a harvest. We need to move forward in spite of the risks.

- The unborn life that is present in the womb of a woman is a *child* (a human being) (Ecclesiastes 11:5).
- There's no way to tell in advance whether something will succeed (Ecclesiastes 11:6). Since it's impossible to know, we should sow our seed and see what God does. We might reap a harvest, even when circumstances are against it.
- Sunlight is sweet (Ecclesiastes 11:7).
- Don't let a long and joyous life make you forget that death is coming (Ecclesiastes 11:8).
- Those who are young should rejoice in their youth (Ecclesiastes 11:9).
- Those who are young shouldn't have a sorrowful heart (Ecclesiastes 11:10).
- Those who are young shouldn't do evil (Ecclesiastes 11:10).
- God is our Creator. He is the one who created us (Ecclesiastes 12:1).
- Old age is very difficult (Ecclesiastes 12:1).
- Although old age is difficult, the Bible never presents suicide as an option. Instead it teaches that the difficulties of old age as something we must endure (Ecclesiastes 12:1).
- Since old age is difficult, we should remember God while we're young, before life gets harder (Ecclesiastes 12:1).
- When we die, our spirit will return to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

- God is the one who gave us our spirit (Ecclesiastes 12:7).
- God is the one who gave us life (Ecclesiastes 12:7).
- The author of this book searched for acceptable words. He wanted to make sure that the things he wrote were acceptable to God (Ecclesiastes 12:10).
- The words of the wise come from one shepherd (the Lord Jesus Christ) (Ecclesiastes 12:11).
- It's always possible to write more books (Ecclesiastes 12:12).
- The conclusion of this book is that we must fear God and keep His commandments. That's the point behind everything it says (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
- The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
- God will bring every work into judgment, both good and evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14).