

ECCLESIASTES

**The God Who Shepherds
through Life's Enigmas**

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Structure and Overview

- ◆ Prologue (1:1)
- ◆ Qoheleth's Queries (1:2–12:8)
 - ❖ A: Indicative Motto (1:2)
 - ❖ B: Introductory Poem (1:3–11)
 - ❖ C: Qoheleth's Investigation of Life (1:12–6:9)
 - ❖ C': Qoheleth's Conclusions of Life (6:10–11:6)
 - ❖ B': Concluding Poem (11:7–12:7)
 - ❖ A': Indicative Motto (12:8)
- ◆ Epilogue (12:9–14)

Prologue (1:1)

Qoheleth's Queries (1:2–12:8)

- ◆ **A: Indicative Motto (1:2)**
- ◆ **B: Introductory Poem (1:3–11)**
- ◆ **C: Qoheleth's Investigation of Life (1:12–6:9)**
 - ❖ 1:12–14
 - ❖ 2:11–14
 - ❖ 3:1–8
 - ❖ 3:9–14
 - ❖ 5:18–6:2

◆ C': Qoheleth's Conclusions of Life (6:10–11:6)

❖ 6:10–12

❖ 7:11–12

❖ 7:13–14

❖ 7:15–20

❖ 8:12–13

❖ 8:14–17

❖ 9:7–10

❖ 9:17–10:2

❖ 11:5

◆ B': Concluding Poem (11:7–12:7)

❖ 11:7–8

❖ 11:9–12:7

◆ A': Indicative Motto (12:8)

❖ Negative views of *hebel*: Vanity, meaningless (Kidner, Longman); Absurd (Fox, Garrett)

❖ Positive views of *hebel*: Temporary, fleeting (Federicks); Enigmatic (Ogden, McCain)

Epilogue (12:9–14)

Synthesis

◆ **Life under the sun is enigmatic, even for those who see light.**

- ❖ All that happens under the sun God does (11:5).
- ❖ The result is that all is *hebel* (1:2; 12:8).

◆ **The revealed purpose of such ignorance is this: that we would fear and follow God (3:14; 12:13), our One Shepherd (12:11), so that ...**

- ❖ We may have lasting gain (2:13; 7:11–12; 8:12–13);
- ❖ We may enjoy God's approval (9:7);
- ❖ We may delight in this life (3:12–13, 2; 5:18–20; 9:7–10), even through the many days of darkness (11:7–8)

Summary of Ecclesiastes

In the midst of the enigmatic pleasures and pains of life in this crooked world under the sun, the wise, who recognize that life is like shepherding wind (1:14; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6; 6:9) and who have eyes to see the light and recall the light even in the darkness (2:13–14; 7:11–12; 11:7–8), must fear and follow (3:14; 12:13) the One Shepherd (12:11; cf. Ezek 34:23; 37:24; John 10:16) by living in light of the judgment (11:9; 12:14) and by trusting that he will preserve his own to the end (8:12–13; John 10:27–30).