

Ecclesiastes: Words of the Preacher

January 5, 2014



Synopsis: This book of the OT is included in the *Tanakh* (Ta for “Torah (Pentateuch)”, Na for “Nebaim (Prophets)”, and Kh for “Ketuvim (writings)” in the Scriptures of the Jews (Old Testament) as a part of *Ketuvim*. The “writings” include:

“The Writings (Wisdom Literature)”

<u>Books of Truth:</u>	<u>Five Megillot</u>	<u>Other Writings:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psalms• Proverbs• Job	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Song of Solomon• Ruth• Lamentations• Ecclesiastes• Esther	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daniel• Ezra/Nehemiah• Chronicles (1 &2)

Ecclesiastes is associated with the celebration of the Jewish “feast” of *Shemini Atzeret*, tacked on to *Sukkot*, the seven day harvest festival that follows the Day of Atonement in which the harvest is celebrated with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and booths are constructed (Feast of Booths) to remember the wilderness wanderings of Israel. Thus this book is a somber reminder of the ultimate futility of earthly blessings and the wisdom of preparation for the life to come and the Messianic kingdom. Zechariah (14.16-19) prophecies the feast of tabernacles would be someday universally celebrated by all nations in the age of the Messiah.

Authorship: As will be observed in the first chapter, there are hints of the authorship being Solomon, the son of David and king of Israel (reigned ~ 970 - 930 BC), which is the traditional attribution of the book. Modern scholarship places a number of arguments against this along with (of course) a much later date of composition of 3rd century B.C. The common attribution would consider Proverb and Song of Solomon (Song of Songs) are products of a younger Solomon and this work as that of a later Solomon, an old man who had applied his heart to wisdom, had become apostate from the faith through his idolatrous harem (1 Kings 11), and had returned with regret in his old age to the faith (??). Thus this is a warning to the youth from an old man who had come to understand his errors in light of God’s wisdom.

Goals:

- Learn the history of Solomon and the tragedies and blessings of his life.
- Understand life from a Biblical (God’s) perspective with respect to sinner whom he loves.
- See the relationship between natural law/wisdom and Godly wisdom.
- To love true wisdom and hate all that is true folly.
- To be guided by God’s Wisdom.
- To find all of our wisdom in Christ (1 Corinthians 1.27-31).