

Wycliffe Associates

Bible Translation Reviewers' Guide

Ecclesiastes

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1:1-11

Background: Ecclesiastes is a group of short teachings that try to answer questions such as "What do people gain from all their labor?" Ecclesiastes is a series of thoughts about a variety of subjects, all of them about the purpose and worth of various actions and events. The author concludes that all the work we perform and all the knowledge and skill we gain is like a vapor that disappears, and that we must fear Yahweh and keep his commandments.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ The words of this book were from a person called "the Teacher." [1:1]
- ☐ The Teacher considered everything to be meaningless. [1:2]
- ☐ Nothing man did changed the cycle of things on earth. Nothing was new under the sun. [1:3-11]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Who was the Teacher? [1:1]
The Teacher was the descendant of David and king in Jerusalem.
2. What did the Teacher say about everything? [1:2]
The Teacher said that everything was meaningless.
3. What do you think the Teacher meant by saying everything was meaningless? [1:2-3]
Perhaps he meant that all the work done by people seemed to be futile.
4. What question did the Teacher ask about work? [1:3]
The Teacher asked what profit a man gained from all his work.
5. What did the Teacher say remained forever? [1:4]
The earth remains forever.
6. What did the Teacher see in the world around him? [1:5-7]
Many things in nature seem to cycle around and end up where they started.
7. How did the Teacher feel about what he observed? [1:8]
What he observed made him weary and did not satisfy or fulfill him.
8. Why do you think the Teacher felt weary and not satisfied or fulfilled? [1:8]
Perhaps because no one could explain to him what he observed.
9. What did the Teacher say about things that seemed new? [1:9-10]
The Teacher said that anything called new had already existed long ago.

Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 continued

10. What do you think the Teacher meant by saying “There is nothing new under the sun”? [1:9]

Perhaps he meant that he did not find anything in this world that was really new.

11. What did the Teacher say about the things that happened long ago and things that will happen in the future? [1:11]

The Teacher said that people did not seem to remember the things that happened long ago, and what happens in the future will likely be forgotten also.

Comment Section:

1:12-14

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ The Teacher told who he was. [1:12]
- ☐ The Teacher said he had studied all things done in the world. [1:13]
- ☐ The Teacher concluded that everything people did was as futile as chasing the wind. [1:14]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Who was the Teacher? [1:12]
The Teacher was the king over Israel.
2. What did the Teacher do, and how did he feel about it? [1:13]
He searched out and studied everything done under heaven, and it was a burdensome task.
3. What did the Teacher conclude about all the deeds done on earth? [1:14]
He said they had no meaning and were chasing the wind.

Comment Section:

3:1-8

Background: The teacher said that he detested life because all the work under the sun was meaningless. He also said that there was nothing better for a person than to simply eat and drink and find enjoyment in his labor. He saw that this truth came from the hand of God.

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ The Teacher said there is a right time for everything. [3:1]
- ☐ The Teacher listed many examples of things having appointed times in life. [3:2-8]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What did the Teacher say there was a right time for? [3:1]
He said there is a right time for every matter under heaven.
2. What did the Teacher say there was a right time for in verse 2?
He said there is a time to be born, die, plant, and pull up plants.
3. What did the Teacher say there was a right time for in verse 8?
He said there is a time to love and to hate, and a time for war and for peace.
4. Do you think the Teacher listed all of the things that have appointed times?
The Teacher included just a few of the many things that have appointed times.

Comment Section:

3:9-15

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ God gave people work to complete. [3:9-10]
- ☐ God made everything suitable for its time and gave people a sense of eternity even though they do not understand the deeds of God. [3:11]
- ☐ God's gift to people was that they should rejoice, do good, eat, drink, and enjoy their work. [3:12-13]
- ☐ Whatever God does lasts forever and cannot be changed because God has done it so people will honor him. [3:14]
- ☐ Whatever exists and will exist has already existed, but God causes people to seek the hidden things. [3:15]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. Who gave people work to do? [3:10]
God gave people work to complete.
2. How did God make things? [3:11]
God made things suitable for their time.
3. What do you think the Teacher meant by saying that God has placed eternity in our hearts? [3:11]
Perhaps he meant that God has made us aware that there is more to life beyond our current existence.
4. What can people not understand? [3:11]
People cannot understand the deeds that God has done.
5. What is the best thing a person can do? [3:12]
Rejoice and do good all their lives.
6. What did the Teacher say was God's gift to humanity? [3:13]
God's gift was for everyone to be able to eat, drink, and find enjoyment in their labor.
7. What did God allow to be added to or taken away from his work and why? [3:14]
God did not allow anything to be added to or taken away from his work, so that people would honor him.
8. What did God make human beings seek? [3:15]
God made human beings seek hidden things.

Comment Section:

5:1-7

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ A person should go to the house of God to listen, not to offer up foolish words or deeds. [5:1]
- ☐ People should think carefully before speaking in God's presence. [5:2-3]
- ☐ Before making a vow to God, it should be deeply thought through and, if made, it should be quickly fulfilled. [5:4-7]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What should a person do when going to God's house? [5:1]
They should go there carefully to listen and not to offer up foolish words or deeds.
2. Why do you think a person should be slow to speak or bring a matter to God? [5:2-3]
The more words a person speaks, the more likely they are to say something foolish to God.
3. What does a person need to do when they make a vow to God? [5:4]
They need to fulfill their vow quickly by doing what they promised to do.
4. Why do you think it is better not to make a vow than to make one and not keep it? [5:5-6]
Not fulfilling a vow would be a sin that would anger God.
5. The Teacher said that many dreams and words were meaningless. What did he say to do? [5:7]
He said to fear God.

Comment Section:

8:10-13

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ The Teacher saw that wicked people were not being treated as their wicked deeds deserved. [8:10-11]
- ☐ A crime that was not quickly punished tempted others to do evil. [8:11]
- ☐ The Teacher said he knew that people who respect God will fare better than sinners and wicked people, even if they live a long time. [8:12-13]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. By whom were wicked people praised? [8:10]
When they died, they were praised by people in the city where they had done their wicked deeds.
2. What happens when authorities do not quickly punish a criminal? [8:11]
Other people are tempted to do evil.
3. What did the Teacher say was better to do: Do evil, or respect God? [8:12-13]
It is better to respect God.

Comment Section:

12:1-8

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ People should call to mind their Creator when they are young, before difficult days and years of displeasure come. [12:1-5]
- ☐ A person should call to mind their Creator before their spirit returns to God. [12:6-8]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What should a person do when they are young? [12:1]
They should call to mind their Creator.
2. What do you think it means to call to mind your Creator? [12:1, 6]
Perhaps it means to remember and think about God who created you.
3. What returns after the rain? [12:2]
Dark clouds return after the rain.
4. Why will women stop grinding? [12:3]
Because they are few.
5. What will startle men? [12:4]
The voice of a bird will startle men.
6. Where will people go at the time that is described here? [12:5]
They will go to their eternal home.
7. What should a person do before his spirit returns to God? [12:6-7]
He should call to mind his Creator.
8. What did the Teacher say everything is? [12:8]
The Teacher said that everything is meaningless.

Comment Section:

12:9-14

Part 1

Tell in your own words what you just read in these verses.

- ☐ The Teacher was wise, taught people knowledge, and wrote proverbs and words of truth. [12:9-10]
- ☐ The words of wise people and masters are like goads or nails driven in deeply. [12:11]
- ☐ The Teacher warned about too much book-writing and studying. [12:12]
- ☐ The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep his commandments. [12:13]
- ☐ God will judge every deed and every hidden thing, whether good or evil. [12:14]

Part 2

Answer the following questions.

1. What was the Teacher like? [12:9]
The Teacher was wise.
2. What did the teacher do? [12:9-10]
He taught knowledge, studied and set in order many proverbs, and sought to write words of truth.
3. Why do you think the Teacher said that the words of wise people are like goads? [12:11]
Perhaps because their words help motivate people to do the right things, and sometimes their words can annoy people who do not want to hear them.
4. Who were the masters and wise men taught by? [12:11]
Ultimately, such wisdom is given by one shepherd.
5. What two things did the Teacher warn about? [12:12]
He said that there is no end to the making of books and that too much study makes the body weary.
6. What did the Teacher say was the end of the matter? [12:13]
He concluded that people must fear God and keep his commandments.
7. What does verse 14 say that God is going to do?
God will judge every deed and every hidden thing, both good and evil.

Comment Section: