

- b. Claim...in an extended statement the following is what the book of Ecclesiastes claims for itself...

It claims to be an:

--empirical analysis (1:13, 17; 2:1-8, 12; 4:1, 7:15, etc)

--of the affairs of life (1:17, 2:1-8, 4:1, etc)

--that most interest man in general as executed by one

--thoroughly capable (1:16, 2:9-10, etc)

--of full indulgence and who was guided in the process

--by the wisdom of God. (3:14, 12:11)

- c. Material content will show the book to be comprised of poetic forms, prose statements, aphorisms, rhetorical questions, spiritual allusions, etc. Everything is here except the detailed narrative and the short story!

8. The theme:

The essential theme is simply this: "nothing is meaningful if God is not in it." This is expressed definitively in chapter 12 with the statement.. "fear God and keep his commandments" for this is the way His presence and power are known in the realm of our lives. This theme is emphasized by three phrases:

--"vanity of vanities"...a superlative way of saying nothing could be more empty than what is being discussed.

--"under the sun" a locative expression that denotes the world of our activities and life span

--"vexation of spirit" in a sense telling something of the inner conflict in which we often find ourselves embroiled.

The thrust is that our days are limited, our strengths are not nearly what they should be for achieving our ends, and the challenge of just living is overwhelming. The plus or minus of this scheme depends directly on the relation we bear with the Deity. Our satisfaction in life is dependent on god and not on our dabbling or attaining.

- C. A final reminder before we move to the content part of our work: