

SOME ECCLESIASTES VOCABULARY

These are notations with particular connotations in Ecclesiastes given not in an alphabetical order but in the order of occurrence in the book. The list is not as exhaustive as it might be....I hope it is helpful....if not, well, we have tried! My listing is from the KJV and some of these terms are translated otherwise in other versions.

- 1:1 “preacher”...from the Hebrew verb “to call” or “to gather”...The term seen in some works is “Kohleth” or “Cohleth” and it marks the person who gathers an assembly.
- 1:1 “vanity” indicates “nothingness” It is not our modern used of vanity...but the suggestion of “airiness” “vanity of vanities” is a superlative construction and indicates nothing is as much vain as this.
- 1:3 “labour” the common work or industry of life.
- 1:3 “under the sun”...the world in which we live
- 1:13 “under heaven”, the expanse of the universe
- 1:13 “sore travail”...intense burdens, sorrows, societal difficulties
- 1:14 “vexation of spirit”....annoyance of the inward person....not a minor matter (cf 1:17)
- 1:13 “wisdom”...the ability to apply what one knows to meet the needs of one’s situation.
- 1:17 “knowledge” information accrued by study, communication or observation
- 2:1 “mirth” spontaneous joy....not planned humor but that which rejoices one inwardly and in some cases outwardly (cf 8:15)
- 2:2 “laughter” making light of a situation
- 2:11 “no profit” nothing to be gained by this experience
- 2:12 “madness” thoughtless consideration....no given accountability
- 2:13 “folly” of the several words translated “folly” this one seems to indicate thick headedness (Young) or a compulsion to do what one wants to do without considering the results (10:1, 6).
- 2:14 “fool” a non-thinking person, not just a happy clown! (10:14)
- 3:1 “season” “time” a period of existence....not obligatory but simple occurrences
- 3:13 “the gift of God” indicates gracious acts of God’s love and care....indeterminate quantities (2:24, 5:18, 8:15)
- 4:1 “oppression” affliction accorded in life by unspecified forces, etc
- 5:1 “the house of God”...presumably the temple but more designedly any place that is noted for God’s presence as in Psalm 23
- 6:1 “evil”...distressing circumstances, not necessarily immoral but often so.
- 6:6 “one place”...the grave, no doubt.
- 7:29 “inventions”...the devices of men to remove themselves from the directives of the Lord.