

For further reading in Ruth, consult LOVE SONG IN HARVEST, by Geoffrey Bull (Christian Literature Crusade). The commentary notes in JUDGES, RUTH, by Arthur Cundall and Leon Morris are very good (IVP).

b. Further study and items of work in Ruth:

- the character of Naomi
- the timing of God's providence
- the adequacy of Naomi's advice to Ruth
- the unwilling kinsman
- the non-Jewish parties in the genealogy of David and, in time, of course, the Lord.

2. A Survey Study of Ecclesiastes ("God's world!")

a. An overview:

Both Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs were written by Solomon according to tradition. In recent years however this tradition has been questioned--even Martin Luther said Ecclesiastes was probably not written by Solomon (his name is not used in the book). Some problems in dating Ecclesiastes to a particular period of time include the lack of historical allusions, the implication in 1:12 that the author no longer ruled in Jerusalem (never true of Solomon), and the lack of explicit ascription of the book to Solomon. Some scholars argue for a date in the Maccabean period (about 165-35 BC) on the basis of the grammar and style which are closer to that of the Mishna (a Jewish commentary on the Bible, finally written down between 100 BC and 100 AD) than that of any other biblical book. It is listed, however, by the author of Ecclesiastics (part of the Apocrypha) in his foreword. Since he wrote in 130 BC, Ecclesiastes must have been written and accepted as Scripture by that time. It is also found on fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls dating from the second century BC. It seems, therefore, that Ecclesiastes was probably written at some time after the time of Solomon, possibly as late as Malachi the prophet, if not by Solomon himself.

Critical scholars, misreading the point of Ecclesiastes, tended to divide it into three sources. 1) a Greek-influence skeptic who wrote the "vanity" sections, 2) a wisdom editor who added the sections which resemble proverbs, and 3) a pious orthodox Jew who added the conclusion, straightened out the book's errors, and made it suitable for the synagogue and canon. The evidence of themes in the book argues against this for the major themes recur in all portions of the text. It is difficult to conceive how this could have come about through a haphazard process as outlined above. Obviously Ecclesiastes has and maintains literary unity.

We may characterize the book as one that demonstrates intense human experimentation in the affairs of life with a rational view...a reasoned conclusion logically drawn and inferred. This is combined with practical earthy language that "tells it like it is." The factual character of the book has sometimes allowed it to be labeled as "fatalistic" "pessimistic", and so forth but when the themes are closely examined it will be seen that the proper term is "realistic." The aim of the book is undoubtedly to show the emptiness of life as it is lived without the knowledge of God.