

Ecclesiastes Greek: Ἐκκλησιαστής

Originally called  
*Qoheleth* (Hebrew: קהלת, literally,  
"Preacher") in Hebrew.

Who wrote the book?

The traditional Rabbinic and early  
Christian view attributed Ecclesiastes  
to King Solomon

The Babylonian Talmud claims that Hezekiah, the 14th king of Judah, composed the book.

According to Longman and Dillard, the book includes two 'characters', Qoheleth/Solomon and the narrator, who uses Qoheleth/Solomon as the main character in a book of wisdom literature.

Rabbi Nachman Krochmal suggests that the term "son of David" should be interpreted to mean "descendant of David". He posits that it was written by a powerful lord during the Persian Era (possibly during the missing years of Jewish history). The term "king" would not be difficult; since the Persian Monarch was known as the King of Kings, a lesser lord may have called himself a king.

Krochmal, Nachman (1851). Zunz, Leopold. ed (in Hebrew). Moreh Nevuchei Hazman [Guide for the Perplexed of the Time]. Lemberg.

Ecc 1:1 The words of the Preacher,  
the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

If you believe the Bible to be  
inerrant, then Krochmal is wrong  
because the author is King in  
Jerusalem.

Ecc 1:12 I, the Preacher, have been  
king over Israel in Jerusalem.

Can't be Hezekiah

Hezekiah is called King of Judah, but not King of Israel.

Hos 1:1 The word of the LORD which came to Hosea the son of Beerai, during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

There are two voices in the book, the frame-narrator (1.1–11; 12.9–14) and Qoheleth (1.12–12.8). Scholars are not unanimous about whether this indicates two authors.

Can't be two authors as he represents  
his authorship as one!

Ecc 12:9 In addition to being a wise  
man, the Preacher also taught the  
people knowledge; and he pondered,  
searched out and arranged many  
proverbs. (10) The Preacher sought to  
find delightful words and to write words  
of truth correctly.

Ecc 12.9 points out one author! 1.1-1.11 are written by the same author as 1.12 – the preacher! So Longman and Dillard are wrong!

Ecc 1:1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.

Ecc 12:9 In addition to being a wise man, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge

Who's left?

Who was king over Israel in  
Jerusalem, a descendant of David,  
who wrote many proverbs?

Solomon – if you believe the Bible!

Pro 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

Pro 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

Pro 25:1 These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, transcribed.

Does Ecclesiastes belong in the canon of Scripture? If so, why?

Many believe that the writer was a cynic who had given up on the world and everyone in it!

Ecclesiastes emphatically proclaims all the actions of man to be inherently "vain", "futile", "empty", "meaningless", "temporary", "transitory", "fleeting," or "mere breath," depending on translation, as the lives of both wise and foolish men end in death.

The point of Solomon is that all is futile under the Sun. One should therefore put all one's efforts towards that which is above the Sun.

Ecc 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. (14) For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Thus the start and finish of Ecclesiastes show it to be from God.

*1.1 the words of the preacher – 12.13  
fear God and keep His  
commandments*



Mural from 1936,  
WPA by Lloyd  
Moylan, ENMU  
Administration  
Building by Jimmy  
Wayne, Flickr