

# “VANITY OF VANITIES”

## The Book of Ecclesiastes

### Who wrote The Book of Ecclesiastes?

The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes is identified as Qoheleth who is commonly thought to be Solomon. However some scholars suspect that this book might have been written by a wise sage using Solomon's name.

### How did The Book of Ecclesiastes get its name and/or what does that name mean?

Ecclesiastes is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name for Qoheleth meaning "presider" or "one who convokes an assembly."

### When did these events take place?

The Book of Ecclesiastes was written around the 3rd century B.C.

### For more about The Book of Ecclesiastes:

See page 664 in the [Fireside Catholic Youth Bible](#).

It is not hard to see how the world around us measures happiness and success? The advertisements tell you that living in a huge new house and driving a fancy new car is just the beginning. You need to be sure to buy some designer clothes and pick up the latest video, audio and computer equipment. Then just for extra measure, be sure not to miss the latest movie on the weekend it premieres. The message our culture sends us is "Don't worry about either the financial or personal costs. The happiness these things bring is more than worth it."

But, the fact is, many people who try to live like this are actually miserable inside. It may take them a while but they eventually discover that things are temporary and eventually vanish. Pretty soon they discover that searching for happiness in things is like chasing the wind. Sometimes they stop looking for happiness and give up and just become cynical about life in general.

That's where we meet Qoheleth, a skeptic and a king of Jerusalem. By looking for happiness and fulfillment in earthly things instead of in God, Qoheleth has discovered the vanity (the emptiness) of his pursuit. But all is not lost. Through his bitterness, he actually is able to identify some simple truths about life that are the most valuable lessons of The Book of Ecclesiastes, even today. First, Qoheleth discovers that making the right choices about how we live our lives will bring us more happiness than what we accumulate along the way. Secondly, we learn through his experience and in his advise that it's the simple pleasures in life that God allows us that give us the truest sense of fulfillment. All we need to do is keep God first. If we don't, then what we reach for can and will easily vanish like the wind.

**Interesting Fact:** A major part of the theme of The Book of Ecclesiastes is that humankind is judged by the amount of output rather than quality of input.

**Bonus Point:** A "gold bowl hung from a silver cord" is a symbol for what?