

Genesis 1-5 references

1. Ecc 3:11 ["He has made everything appropriate in its time"] refers to Gen 1:1-31.
2. Ecc 3:20 ["All came from the dust and all return to the dust"] refers to Gen 3:19.
3. Ecc 4:9-12 ["Two are better than one"] refers to Gen 2:18.
4. Ecc 7:29 ["God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices"] refers to Gen 1:27; 3:6.
5. Ecc 12:1 ["Remember also your Creator"] refers to Gen 1:26-27.
6. Ecc 12:7 ["then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it"] refers to Gen 3:19.

Imperatives

1. 5:1: "Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools..."
2. 5:2: "Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few."
3. 5:4: "When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for {He takes} no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!"
4. 5:6: "Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger {of God} that it was a mistake..."
5. 5:7: "...fear God."
6. 7:9: "Do not be eager in your heart to be angry..."
7. 7:10: "Do not say, 'Why is it that the former days were better than these?' ..."
8. 7:13: "Consider the work of God..."
9. 7:14: "In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider-- God has made the one as well as the other So that man will not discover anything {that will be} after him.
10. 7:16: "Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly wise..." ???
11. 7:17: "Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool..."
12. 7:21: "... do not take seriously all words which are spoken, so that you will not hear your servant cursing you."
13. 9:7: "Go {then,} eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works."
14. 9:8: "Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head."
15. 9:9: "Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun."
16. 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do {it} with {all} your might..."

17. 10:4: “If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses.”
18. 10:20: “...in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man...”
19. 11:1: “Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days.”
20. 11:2: “Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth.”
21. 11:6: “Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.”
22. 11:8-9: “Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything that is to come {will be} futility. Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.” ???
23. 11:10: “...remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting.”
24. 12:1: “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth...”
25. 12:13: “The conclusion, when all has been heard, {is:} fear God and keep His commandments, because this {applies to} every person.”

Purpose: *There are two viewpoints of this book: It was written from the bias of a man who wasted his life (Solomon) and it is a story written during that wasted period and thus not to be taken at face value (e.g., bewailing life); or it was written from a very positive viewpoint (not bewailing life but pointing out the uselessness of life when seen on its own).*

The purpose of the author [Solomon] was to point out the uselessness of life absent of God's direction and purpose, though there is no doubt that Solomon's chagrin at his own errors is a driving force within the text. Though there are a few verses that raise eyebrows and seem to point to the first viewpoint, careful study no doubt mitigates those questions.

The conclusion of the book points most conclusively to the second viewpoint: 12:13-14: “The conclusion, when all has been heard, {is:} fear God and keep His commandments, because this {applies to} every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.” This is the author's stated conclusion, the summary of what he has been deliberating in the twelve chapters of text: Fear and obey God.

The author mentioned fearing God in other verses [e.g. 8:11-12], and – though the repeated theme might seem to be to eat, drink, and be happy – when the author encouraged this thought one time he added that it was impossible to be happy without God [2:24-25]. Along the way through the book, the author points out the futility of human aspiration, whether it is through knowledge and wisdom [1:17-18; 8:16-17; 12:12], pleasure [2:1, 11], money [5:10], or action [9:11]. All this leads to the conclusion noted above.