



# OT 376: God's Many-sided Wisdom for Daily Life (II): Ecclesiastes

Dr Philip Satterthwaite | 1.5CR

## About the Course

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The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes have a clear aim: to teach believers, those who 'fear God' (Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13), how to live wisely, such that their lives reflect their commitment to God at every point. Christians can gain much from studying these books and reflecting on the highly practical teaching which they offer on topics such as: friendship, family, love, loyalty, hard work, business, wealth, wise speech, justice and politics.

Both books, however, pose problems when you work through them: Proverbs seems to present its various teachings in a disorganized way; Ecclesiastes is even more perplexing – rambling, self-contradictory and at points apparently skeptical of Israel's traditions. How, then, are we to benefit from these two little-read books? OT 375 focuses on Proverbs and OT 376 focuses on Ecclesiastes. The two courses are presented as two parts (Part I and II) of a larger topic (God's Many-Sided Wisdom for Daily Life) out of a belief that Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are mutually illuminating and best studied together. OT 375 and 376 can, however, also be taken separately. Teaching is by blended learning (a blend of recorded lectures and class discussion). All classes will take place by Zoom.

Please note that this course will overlap significantly in content with OT 353, a course which Dr Satterthwaite has taught on Ecclesiastes in past years. There will be some new features to OT 376, but this course is not in general recommended to students who have taken OT 353 previously.

<b>Dates (2022)</b> Mar 29 Apr 12, 26 May 17, 24	<b>Location</b> Zoom Classroom
<b>Time</b> 7:15pm – 10:00pm	
<b>Class Format</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Paced+Live (In-Person) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Paced+Live (Online) <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Paced+Live (In-Person+Online)	<b>Fees*</b> S\$225(Credit) S\$120 (Audit)
<b>Closing Date for Registration (NB):</b> Mar 25, 2022	

## About the Lecturer

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Dr Philip Satterthwaite has been Lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew at BGST since 1998.

His main research areas are the OT Historical and Wisdom Books. In 2007 his book *Exploring the Old Testament 2: The Histories* (written with J.G. McConville) was published by SPCK/IVP. Philip has preached and taught in a number of churches in Singapore. He is a member of Prinsep Street Presbyterian church. He is married to Eileen.



# Learning Outcomes

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Students will learn about some of the different readings of Ecclesiastes which have been offered in the past and continue to be offered down to the present. They will learn to identify some of the key interpretative decisions which cause different scholars to come up with very different understandings of Ecclesiastes. They will come to understand both what Ecclesiastes has in common with other parts of the Old Testament, and what is distinctive about it. Finally, they will be enabled to reflect on what is involved in taking to heart the Teacher's recommendation to us to recognize the limitations that God has placed on our lives.

# Learning Goals

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We will work through Ecclesiastes in five sessions, going carefully through the text and discussing the different readings of key passages offered by different scholars. One session will be devoted to sampling the great variety of readings of Ecclesiastes, both past and present. There will be class exercises designed to help students grasp Ecclesiastes' teaching on particular issues. A focus of these exercises will be the question how the New Testament takes up key aspects of this teaching.

# Academic Information

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## Assignments:

1. A response (1000-1500 words) to an essay or article on Ecclesiastes. This can take the form of a review of the essay/article, or a more general reflection on issues raised by it. **[40% of grade point]**
2. An essay (2500-3500 words) on one of the following topics **[60% of grade point]**:
  - (a) In your view, what were the Teacher's aims? What did he want his hearers/readers to take away from what he said? What changes did he hope his teaching would bring about in their lives?
  - (b) What does Ecclesiastes teach on one of the following topics: (i) the environment; (ii) God; (iii) business ethics; (iv) politics? In your view, how does this teaching apply in modern Singapore?

## Class Schedule:

- Mar 29<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to the course: Ecclesiastes 1–2  
Apr 12<sup>th</sup>: Ecclesiastes 3–6  
Apr 26<sup>th</sup>: A sampling of readings of Ecclesiastes  
May 17<sup>th</sup>: Ecclesiastes 7–10  
May 24<sup>th</sup>: Ecclesiastes 11–12; conclusion.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

1. For **style and formatting** of assignments, please refer to the document “General Formatting for all Assignments” available on your course Moodle page.
2. ALL assignments are to be submitted by uploading via Moodle.
3. *Unless otherwise indicated*, students must submit their assignments 3 months after the first day of the month following the last class/session (“first deadline”). After the first deadline, students will be granted a further 3-month extension automatically (“second deadline”). However, students who submit after the first deadline will incur the **penalty of a one-third grade deduction** on the specific late assignment (e.g., B+ will be downgraded to B). After the second deadline, the status of the incomplete course will be **converted from Credit to Audit**. This conversion will *not* affect overall GPA.

**First Deadline: 1 July 2022**

**Second Deadline: 1 October 2022**

### NOTE FOR STUDENT PASS HOLDERS:

The first and second deadlines are shortened to 1 month and 2 months respectively.

Students are advised that BGST **strongly discourages plagiarism**. For more information on this point (what plagiarism is, how BGST penalises it), please consult the BGST 'Guidelines for Academic Papers'.

# Course Bibliography

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## Learning Resources and Bibliography

- C. Bartholomew 'Hearing the Old Testament Wisdom Literature', pp. 302-331 of C. Bartholomew and D.J.H. Beldman (eds.), *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God's Address* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 2012)
- C.G. Bartholomew & R.P. O'Dowd *Old Testament Wisdom Literature. A Theological Introduction* (Downers Grove/Nottingham: IVP/Apollos, 2011), pp. 188-209
- K.J. Dell *Interpreting Ecclesiastes: Readers Old and New* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), pp. 1-95
- P. Enns 'Ecclesiastes, Book of', in T. Longman and P. Enns (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, Writings* (Nottingham/ Downers Grove: IVP, 2008), pp. 121-32
- P. Enns *Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011)
- F.D. Kidner *The Message of Ecclesiastes* (IVP: Leicester, 1976)
- E.C. Lucas *Exploring the Old Testament III: The Psalms and Wisdom Literature* (SPCK/IVP: London/Downers Grove, 2003), pp. 145-73
- G.A. Klingbeil 'Ecclesiastes, Ancient Near Eastern Background', in T. Longman and P. Enns (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, Writings* (Nottingham/ Downers Grove: IVP, 2008), pp.132-40 (9)
- P.E. Satterthwaite 'Wealth and Poverty in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes', 26 pages.†
- R.N. Whybray 'Qohelet, Preacher of Joy', *JSOT* 23 (1982), pp. 87-98

†This piece was published as pp. 145-82 of *Jian Dao* 41 (Jan 2014). As you may not have easy access to this periodical, I will make available to you a copy of a draft of this piece which is very similar to the final printed version.

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