

Difficult Passages In Ecclesiastes

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Introduction:

- I. The study of Ecclesiastes in adult Bible classes often consists of mining scattered gems of wisdom in the book while avoiding those passages which seem problematic.
- II. Michael Eaton describes what he calls the “enigma of Ecclesiastes”:
 - A. The major interpretative problem of Ecclesiastes is to understand its apparent internal contradictions and vicissitudes of thought. At times the Preacher seems to be gloomy, pessimistic, a skeleton at the feast; everything comes under his lashing scorn: laughter, drink, possessions, sex, work, wisdom, riches, honour, children, even righteousness. Yet, at other points he urges that we should enjoy life, that there is nothing better than to eat well, enjoy our labour, receive with gladness the riches God gives us but be content if he give none. (36)
 - B. And yet, as frustrating as this struggle to understand may be, it is actually a good thing that we feel the need to struggle with the meaning of some passages.
 1. Our struggle is based on the presumption of the harmony of truth.
 2. The phenomenon of “logical disconnect” abounds in the reasoning of religious people. A passage is interpreted in a way that conflicts with the only reasonable or logical meaning of another passage of Scripture, but this causes no discomfort.
 - C. Purpose:
 1. Discuss principles for interpreting difficult passages.
 2. Examine eight difficult passages in Ecclesiastes to determine their meanings.

Body:

- I. **Principles For Understanding Difficult Passages**
 - D. There are a number of reasons that some passages are difficult to interpret. Some of these include:¹
 1. The often figurative nature of poetic verse
 2. The cryptic nature of some statements
 - a. The original readers, with more exact knowledge of the culture and historical situation, may have understood the statement without difficulty.
 - b. It is also possible that some statements are purposefully ambiguous.
 3. Uncertainties in the translation of Hebrew (e.g., 3:21)
 4. Apparent contradictions with other specific passages or doctrines clearly taught in the Scriptures
 5. Corruption of manuscripts, particularly in the case of numbers
 - E. Any interpretation of a difficult passage must take into consideration, among other principles, the following:
 1. A passage must be interpreted in light of all other passages which are equally related to the same subject (Psalm 119:151). There should be the presumption of harmony between the constituent elements of truth.

2. A literal meaning should be assigned to language unless there is some clear reason to assume that the language is figurative.
3. A passage should be interpreted in view of its immediate and greater context. Included in the greater context of a passage is the author's purpose in writing or speaking.

II. The Author's Intent

- F. As noted above, the meaning of a passage can also be affected by the author's purpose in writing.
 1. In the case of Ecclesiastes, the author's purpose is perhaps also related to his identity.
 2. This point should not be pressed too much, as Eaton observes.²
 - a. Life in this world does not fundamentally change, and we do not need a date for Ecclesiastes in order to receive its message. It is part of the genius of the Preacher's thought that it stands on its own feet at any time and in any place.
- G. The traditional view, of course, is that Solomon authored the book of Ecclesiastes.
 1. Although the author does not identify himself specifically as Solomon, he identifies himself as "the son of David" and "king over Israel in Jerusalem" (1:1, 12). While other physical descendants of David might fit these descriptions, only Solomon's circumstances fit the experiences and privileges of the author in chapters one and two.
 2. If Solomon is the author of the book, his comments at the end of the book suggest two conclusions:
 - a. It was probably written toward the close of his life.
 - b. Solomon must have repented of his idolatry and returned to fellowship with God (1 Kings 11:1-13).
 3. However, the Scriptures do not record what Leupold calls "the fiction of the repentance of Solomon."³ It could perhaps be argued that Ecclesiastes IS the evidence of his repentance.
 4. Unlike most Bible students who preceded him, Martin Luther did not believe that Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes. Today, Solomonic authorship is widely rejected, even by many conservative scholars.
 5. Arguments against Solomon as author include:⁴
 - a. Linguistic incongruities such as the presence of Aramaisms, Persian loan words and a style of Hebrew which is unusual.
 - b. The past tense of 1:12 doesn't fit the situation of Solomon. The verse sounds as though the writer was formerly king of Israel. Solomon, of course, remained king until his death.
 - c. The author's title in 1:12 is "awkward." In no other place is Solomon described as "king over Israel in Jerusalem."
 - d. The description of the social conditions doesn't fit the time of Solomon.
 - 1) Is it, however, the author's purpose to comment on the specific conditions of Israel or to characterize the experiences of mankind in general?
 - 2) Does the message of the book only apply to Israel at a particular time?

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- e. Garrett offers a brief review of these arguments, suggesting that the conclusion drawn is by no means inescapable.⁵
- H. A popularly held view is that the author was a Jew who lived in the post-exilic period, perhaps near the time of Malachi.
- 1. Leupold holds this view, but argues that the author was inspired, thus preserving the canonicity of the book.⁶
 - a. Leupold maintains that the conditions of oppression, violence and misery are more consistent with the situation of the Jews following the return from exile than the circumstances of Solomon's reign.⁷
 - b. What is the author's purpose, according to Leupold?⁸
 - 1) The way is prepared for such comfort by the first part of the book, which beautifully illustrates the second major purpose of the book. By teaching with tremendous emphasis the vanity of all earthly things the author first disillusion his hearers... The best service that can be rendered a man is to divorce him from the things of this world as completely as possible. We call that disillusionment. The author aims to achieve such an end as thoroughly as possible. Men who know the vanity of all things are well prepared for the trials of depressing times.
 - 2. If this view of authorship is correct, the writer apparently is "impersonating" Solomon as a literary device.
 - a. While it might be argued that such "impersonation" is deceptive and indicates that the author is not inspired, some counter by suggesting that the author's method of identifying himself (e.g., the name of Solomon is not used; the awkwardness of the descriptive title – 1:12) is clearly intended to let the reader know that it is not actually Solomon who writes.
 - b. The author may have felt that such a pseudepigraphal approach was necessary to eliminate the objection that the vanity of "life under the sun" only applies to the average man or the poor man, but not to the privileged.
- A. As previously noted, the purpose of the writer may vary, depending upon his identity.
- 3. It is interesting that, even though he assumes that Solomon is the author, Waddey affirms that the arguments of the book are Solomon's, but not God's. He writes:
 - a. In this short story, God provides us a record of all that human wisdom can discover about the meaning and purpose of life. **The arguments advanced are Solomon's, not God's** [emphasis is Waddey's – asd]. We have here an accurate record of what Solomon said and did in his estrangement, given to us by the Holy Spirit... With the above point in mind, the meaning of several difficult passages will be clear. Some of the thoughts of the book reflect shrewd common sense. Others contain glimpses of deep spiritual truth. Still others are only partially true, and some are false.⁹
 - 4. Waddey believes that Solomon eventually repented; the contrast between 3:21 and 12:9 supposedly reflects his spiritual journey from estrangement to fellowship with God.¹⁰
 - 5. There was a body of literature produced in the ancient Near East beginning in the third millennium which is known as "pessimism literature."¹¹
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- a. Garrett cites examples of this kind of literature from both the Egyptian and Babylonian cultures.
 - b. Keddie notes that some have described Ecclesiastes in this way, but he does not understand the book to be simply the carping of one disillusioned with life. He argues that the author has a grander purpose than just to vent about the inequities and evils of life. He calls it “a divinely inspired bait-and-switch apologetic that carries the reader from the edge of hell to the threshold of heaven.”¹²
 - c. I likewise reject the view that Ecclesiastes is *merely* an exercise in pessimism. It seems clear that the author acknowledges that there is a God and furthermore that man is ultimately responsible to that God (e.g., chapters 11 & 12, even chapter 5).
6. It seems that the most reasonable explanation for the author’s apparent pessimism (from which stems the difficulty of some passages) is that he is attempting to show that man’s life is vanity apart from God.
- a. “Under the sun” means more than simply life on earth, but implies life viewed only through the spectacles of man’s wisdom, only from the perspective of man apart from divine wisdom.
 - b. “The Preacher divides reality into two realms, one the dwelling-place of God, the other the dwelling-place of man. ‘God is in heaven, and you upon earth’ (5:2) is an underlying assumption throughout the text. Three expressions are used for the earthly side of this duality: ‘under the sun’, ‘under heaven’ and ‘on earth’.”¹³

III. The Passages¹⁴

A. Ecclesiastes 3:18-22

7. The difficulty of this passage lies in the impression that man is no different from the animals, i.e., that he has no immortal soul.
 - a. Vs. 18: “in order for them to see that they are but beasts” (NASB)
 - b. Vs. 19: “man has no advantage over animals” (NKJV)
 - c. Vs. 21: “Who knows whether the human spirit goes upward and the spirit of animals goes downward to the earth?” (NRSV)
8. There is an apparent contradiction with other passages which teach that man is differentiated from the animals.
 - d. Man is made in the image of God, a characteristic never attributed to the animal creation (Genesis 1:26-27).
 - e. The divine scheme of redemption is for mankind only, not for the animals, nor for the angels (Ephesians 2:14-16; Hebrews 2:16).
 - f. Even the last chapter of Ecclesiastes seems to contradict this passage (12:7).
9. Some of the difficulty of these verses depends upon their translation (as noted above).
10. Regardless of what transpires afterward, there is a sense in which man is no different from the beasts, i.e., both experience death (vs. 19 – “as one dies, so dies the other”).
11. Apart from divine revelation, no man knows what happens after death. Furthermore, there is no one on earth who can “bring him to see what will happen after him” (see 6:12 and 7:14 for similar statements)!

12. The writer of Ecclesiastes speaks precisely to the confusion and perplexity of the one who attends a funeral and yet does not accept the inspired Scriptures!

B. Ecclesiastes 4:1-3

13. The writer speaks of the advantage of the dead over the living in light of the oppression present on the earth. Better still are the ones who have never had to experience this suffering at all or in any form.
14. The difficulty of this passage is that it appears totally pessimistic. The writer doesn't acknowledge any final (divine) justice to make right "the evil work that is done under the sun." Does the author not believe in the righteousness and sovereignty of God?
15. The author's pessimism seems to contradict the viewpoint of inspired writers who counsel faith in God in the midst of oppression.
 - a. Job was encouraged to trust God despite the injustice which he observed and even suffered.
 - b. Note the thread of this thought in the first epistle of Peter (1 Peter 2:23; 3:5; 4:19).
16. This apparent contradiction stems from the author's purposefully incomplete picture of justice.

I. Ecclesiastes 6:3-6

1. The difficulty in this passage arises from the impression left that all men have the same future after death. The "blessedness" of a man is reckoned entirely on the basis of whether he has opportunity to enjoy material things ("seen goodness") during his life.
 - c. Vs. 3: "a stillborn child is better than he"
 - d. Vs. 6: "Do not all go to one place?"
2. The greater context of this section of the book actually begins in 5:18.
 - e. The author first affirms the fortunate condition of the man who can indeed enjoy the physical blessings given to him by God (5:18-20).
 - f. In contrast, many men (6:1 – "it is common among men") are unable to "eat of" the bounty which God provides (6:2).
 - g. Garrett notes that "to have a hundred children (v. 3) or live two thousand years (v. 6) are oriental exaggerations; the three traditional conditions for happiness were wealth, long life, and many children."¹⁵
3. The author's viewpoint is valid if one assumes that there is no reward/blessing to be obtained after death or, more accurately, puts aside the possibility of future reward for the sake of argument. It is my belief, of course, that he makes that assumption in order to make his point about "life under the sun."
 - h. Later in the book he acknowledges a future judgment by God and thus the anticipation of reward or punishment (11:9).
 - i. This viewpoint, however, explains the frenzied efforts of many men to "grab all the gusto" that they possibly can.

J. Ecclesiastes 7:13-14

1. There seem to be at least two difficulties in this section of Scripture.

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- j. Verse 14 appears to be teaching that God “appoints” (NKJV) the day of adversity as well as the day of prosperity. The question of God’s relationship to evil (theodicy) in the world is a troubling one.
 - k. The meaning of the last half of verse 14 is difficult to determine.
 - 1) Is the thought that man is unable to see into his own future, i.e., he cannot know/determine whether tomorrow will be a day of prosperity or adversity?
 - 2) Is the meaning of the verse that man cannot determine his future (after death) by what happens to him on earth?
 - 2. Verse 13 teaches that man cannot “alter the events of life which God sends our way.”¹⁶ That which is “straight” is probably the equivalent to the day of prosperity; that which is “crooked” is likewise equivalent to the day of adversity.
 - 3. The author’s exhortation to the reader is that he accept the sovereignty of God. Eaton comments:¹⁷
 - a. Both *prosperity* and *adversity* have their uses. One leads to joy, the other draws attention to the realities of life and leads (if so allowed) to a life of faith in a sovereign God. Both are subject to God’s will and part of his providence. The constant fluctuation between them keeps us dependent not on our own guess-work, but on God who ‘holds the key to all unknown.’
 - 4. Job struggled with the same problem; sometimes the righteous suffer (experience days of adversity).
 - 5. Compare the translation of verse 14 in the NKJV with that of the NIV and the NRSV:
 - a. “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, so that man can find out nothing that will come after him.” (NKJV; emphasis mine – asd)
 - b. When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.” (NIV; emphasis mine – asd)
 - c. In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; God has made the one as well as the other, so that mortals may not find out anything that will come after them.” (NRSV; emphasis mine – asd)
 - 6. Deane observes that the variety of interpretations given to the end of verse 14 depend upon the meaning assigned to “after him.”¹⁸
 - a. Among other suggested interpretations, he mentions the view that “man may be kept in ignorance of what shall happen to him beyond the grave, that the present life may afford no clue to the future.”
 - b. Deane then comments that “one does not see why this should be a comfort, nor how it is compatible with God’s known counsel of making the condition of the future life dependent upon the conduct of this.”
 - c. The friends of Job, however, were willing to judge his spiritual condition on the basis of the “days of adversity” which he was experiencing (e.g., Eliphaz, chapters 4-5; Bildad, chapter 8).
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- d. It should be observed that there is a difference between saying that man's future cannot be determined by the character of the days he faces on earth and saying that man's future is not determined by the character of his conduct!
- 7. Leupold argues that "after him" does not refer to things which come to pass after his death, noting that the same Hebrew word is used in 6:12.¹⁹

K. Ecclesiastes 7:15-18

1. This passage sounds, at first blush, as though the writer is discouraging his readers from being fervent in their pursuit of righteousness.
 - l. Vs. 16: "Do not be overly righteous, nor be overly wise"
 - m. Vs. 17: "Do not be overly wicked, nor be foolish"; it is alright to be a little wicked?!
 - n. Is the author of Ecclesiastes expressing the cynical attitude sometimes expressed in the modern cliché, "Religion is a good thing, if practiced in moderation," i.e., don't be too fanatical about your faith?
 - o. Verse 18 becomes a little difficult to understand due to the cryptic nature of its language.
2. Verse 15 simply expresses what man can and has observed (cf. Job; Psalm 73). There is no guarantee of long life to the righteous man, nor immediate punishment to the wicked man.
3. Keddie suggests that the point of verse 16 is not the prohibition of personal holiness or great wisdom, but rather hypocritical pretension and self-deceit.²⁰ Eaton correctly observes that the issue is not excessive righteousness (see 7:20, 29; is this possible?), but self-righteousness.²¹
4. As the writer of Ecclesiastes himself affirms, there is none righteous. However, "those who embrace evil as a way of life (are overly wicked – asd) are destroyed by it."²²
5. Verse 18a presents the thought of a man grasping two things, but what are those things? Garrett answers that question as follows:
 - p. "In this context the two things to be maintained are, on the one hand, devotion to God and the teachings of wisdom and, on the other hand, enjoyment of the good things of life. The God-fearer 'comes forth' with them in that he maintains both through his life. While the ascetic looks upon every form of indulgence or mirth as sin (against religion) or folly (against wisdom) and the libertine looks upon any restraint as a threat to his pleasure-seeking, the Teacher counsels combining true religion – the fear of God – with true enjoyment of the good things of life."²³
 - q. The exhortation to enjoy the good things of life is a repeated theme of the book (e.g., 2:24; 3:13; 5:18).
6. The NIV translation of verse 18 probably does not accurately convey the author's meaning: "The man who fears God will avoid all extremes."

L. Ecclesiastes 7:27-29

1. These verses present some difficulty in interpretation because of:

- r. The cryptic nature of the verses
 - s. The appearance that the author is a misogynist, due to his comment about women in verse 28.
2. What was the author seeking (vs. 28)?
- t. Was he seeking for wisdom in men and women? Eaton favors this view (“Wisdom, he says, is rare in men, but rarer in women.”).²⁴ It is suggested by some that the context of verses 27-29 begins with verse 23 or even earlier.
 - u. Was he seeking for righteousness, uprightness in men and women? The NIV supports this view in its translation and a number of commentators understand it likewise.²⁵ Those who take this view tend to see the connection between verses 28 and 29 as closer.
3. It is also possible that, if the author is Solomon, he speaks from his own experiences with women. It must be remembered that Solomon had married a thousand women and his foreign wives had contributed to his spiritual downfall (1 Kings 11:1-8).
- v. Waddey makes the predictable comment that “here is clearly a case of man speaking purely from his own distorted, sinful reason and experience.”²⁶ It would appear that Waddey considers the statement of verse 28 to be indeed prejudicial!
 - w. Keddie instead argues that Solomon is simply making a general observation about men and women. He writes, “His poetic statistics for the relative uprightness of men and women cannot be meant to draw any serious comparison between the two.”²⁷
 - x. It is interesting that Garrett acknowledges that verses 26-28 “appear outrageously antiwoman” and proclaims them incomprehensible “if two factors are not considered:”
 - 1) “Ecclesiastes was originally written for a male audience...
 - 2) These verses look back to the early chapters of Genesis.”²⁸
 - b. I personally believe that Garrett missed the mark on this one!
4. Verse 29 seems to be asserting rather clearly that it is not God’s fault that righteousness is so rare among men and women.

M. Ecclesiastes 9:3-6

1. These verses discuss the consequence(s) of death. The author introduced the universality of death at the beginning of chapter 9.
2. The difficulty of this passage arises primarily from verses 4 & 5.
 - y. Vs. 4: no hope for the dead; “for a living dog is better than a dead lion”
 - z. Vs. 5: “But the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward”
3. As previously noted, any interpretation of these verses should seek harmony with other revealed truth.

- aa. The Lord Himself affirmed the existence of man after death in His discussion with the Sadducees in Matthew 22:23-33.
- bb. The importance of the author's intent is seen in the comments of Waddey at this juncture. He writes that we must remember two important facts to correctly understand the words of Solomon:
 - 1) "He was grappling with the profound theological issues alone with human wisdom; he had abandoned God for the time being. Without divine revelation, man would not know that there was a fundamental difference between man and beast." Waddey assumes that Solomon wrote these things because he didn't know any better!
 - 2) "He lived in a day when full knowledge of the future state of man had not been revealed." While there is probably some truth to this statement, it is inadequate to explain this passage, especially in light of chapters eleven and twelve.
- cc. In line with what I believe to be the author's intent, i.e., to show the nature of "life under the sun," there is no contradiction between these verses and any other passage.
 - 3) The author intentionally paints an incomplete picture.
 - 4) The dead know nothing with respect to life under the sun. Certainly their influence upon anything in this world ends with death.
 - 5) It is only in this sense that the living dog is better than the dead lion. This statement serves to emphasize the finality of death with respect to life on earth.
- dd. The author himself denies that man's existence ends at death, the doctrine of annihilation (cf. 11:9; 12:5, 7, 14).

N. Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

- 1. The difficulty of these verses stems more from their cryptic nature than any apparent contradiction with other scriptures. Commentators are divided on the question of whether this passage is speaking of the need to practice benevolence or giving counsel about commercial ventures.²⁹
 - ee. The expression "cast your bread upon the waters" is probably a way of saying that one must engage in some enterprise in order to realize profit. The phrase may even be a reference to Solomon's fleet mentioned in 1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:22. Others connect it to the Egyptian practice of sowing seed in the overflowing waters of the Nile to take advantage of the rich soil which would be deposited as the waters receded.³⁰
 - ff. Verses 4 and 6 mention sowing, an investment of labor.
 - gg. Verse 2 appears to favor a discussion of "giving." Note, however, the difference in translations of verse 2:
 - 1) "Give a serving to seven, and also to eight..." (NKJV; NIV is similar)
 - 2) "Divide your portion to seven, and even to eight..." (NASB; NRSV is similar)

2. I favor the interpretation which Garrett adopts, i.e., “advice on investments.” He summarizes the passage as follows:
 - hh. Verses 1-2: man should engage in commercial ventures, but not “put all your eggs in one basket”
 - ii. Verses 3-4: anxiety about things that he can’t control will only cause him not to succeed
 - jj. Verse 5: man doesn’t necessarily understand how God works
 - kk. Verse 6: since man doesn’t know what will happen (i.e., how God will work), he should work diligently
3. Eaton adds another dimension to Garrett’s view. He writes that the author is commending commercial endeavors with an emphasis on them as “ventures of faith.” He writes:³¹
 - a. The first proverb [in verse one – asd] crystallizes the essence of the Preacher’s appeal: it is a call to a venture of faith. The allusion is to the element of trust in much ancient business. Ships on commercial voyages might be long delayed before any profit resulted. Yet one’s goods had to be committed to them... Similarly the Preacher has called his readers to take life as from the hand of God, and to enjoy it despite its trials and perplexities. Such a life contains within it the elements of trust and adventure (*Cast*), demands total commitment (for *your bread* is used in the sense of ‘goods’, ‘livelihood’, as in Dt. 8:3; Pr. 31:14), and has a forward look to it (*you will find*), a reward which requires patience (*after many days*).
4. Keddie offers an excellent summary of the author’s purpose in chapters eleven and twelve which is quite plausible.³²
 - a. The Preacher is concerned with the direction and meaning of life. He began by considering the secular, under-the-sun life – life lived without any regard to God and eternity – and found it to be meaningless... The last two chapters of Ecclesiastes call for decisions to be God’s disciples and to live in faith for him. The writer’s tone changes from the somber to the triumphant, from a darkling pessimism to a luminous hope, rising to a ringing crescendo: ‘Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man’ (12:13, NIV)... Ecclesiastes 11 challenges us to invest in life with a vigorous holy boldness and with a joyous and expectant spirit.

Conclusion:

- A. It should be obvious that the obscurity of most of these “difficult” passages is resolved into clarity when interpreted in light of the author’s purpose.
- O. If I have correctly identified the purpose of the author in writing, then it is also true that the book of Ecclesiastes is an extremely practical book for our age.
 1. The influence of the general theory of evolution has multiplied the number of people who live life “under the sun” with no clear expectation of a future and certainly no deliberate acknowledgement of the existence of any divine Being.
 2. The vanity of such a life is forcefully portrayed by the author of Ecclesiastes and can be effectively used to turn men today toward God.

3. It is no wonder that Keddie, taking his cue from Eaton, refers to the message as “a kind of pre-evangelism.”³³ The full text of Eaton’s comment is as follows:³⁴
 - a. The Preacher wishes to deliver us from a rosy-coloured, self-confident godless life, with its inevitable cynicism and bitterness, and from trusting in wisdom, pleasure, wealth, and human justice or integrity. He wishes to drive us to see that God is there, that he is good and generous, and that only such an outlook makes life coherent and fulfilling.

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End Notes

¹ See a more comprehensive list of sources of supposed contradictions as listed by Dehoff (*Alleged Bible Contradictions Explained*, p. 26-41) or John Haley (*An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, p. 1-29).

² Eaton, p. 17.

³ Leupold, p. 9.

⁴ Conservative scholar Leupold lists these “weaknesses” (p. 9-14).

⁵ Garrett, p. 254-67.

⁶ Leupold, p. 19.

⁷ Leupold, p. 11-12.

⁸ Leupold, p. 17.

⁹ John Waddey, *Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Waddey, p. 67, 72-3.

¹¹ Garrett, p. 265-6.

¹² Keddie, p. 12.

¹³ Eaton, p. 44.

¹⁴ Inasmuch as various translations will be cited in this section, any quotation of the Scriptures should be assumed to be from the New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁵ Garrett, p. 315.

¹⁶ Waddey, p. 43.

¹⁷ Eaton, p. 113.

¹⁸ Deane, p. 160-1.

¹⁹ Leupold, p. 161.

²⁰ Keddie, p. 194.

²¹ Eaton, p. 114.

²² Garrett, p. 323.

²³ Garrett, p. 324.

²⁴ Eaton, p. 116. So also Leupold, p. 176; Moore, p. 56-7.

²⁵ For example, Matthew Henry, p. 1024; Deane, p. 166-7; Keddie, p. 205-6; Adam Clarke, p. 825.

²⁶ Waddey, p. 46.

²⁷ Keddie, p. 206.

²⁸ Garrett, p. 324. Wow!

²⁹ Leupold and Pulpit Commentary, for instance, take the first view; Garrett and Moore take the second view.

³⁰ Keddie, p. 288-89.

³¹ Eaton, p. 140.

³² Keddie, p. 289-90.

³³ Keddie, p. 12.

³⁴ Eaton, p. 48.