

## *Acknowledgments*

My deepest and sincere gratitude is expressed to:

The only Wise God, who is worthy of all the praise and honour. It is in Him that I live that I move and find my very existence. Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer, who has been my refuge throughout this study. The Holy Spirit, my Comforter and my strength, who made the presence of God, the Father real to me.

Genine, my friend, my counselor, my confidante and most importantly the love of my life to whom I pledge forever. You believed in me when I did not and always inspired me to be more than I could ever imagine.

The Jacobs and Clarke families who, although far, were always in my heart, mind and prayers. My mother, Sybil and my father, Aubrey to whom I am much in debt. Times were hard but you still supported your son through your prayers and love. Samantha, Sandy, Jarred, Alec, Camray and Kyle, you always believed in me and I am honoured to be your brother and uncle.

The Brentjies family, Mrs Egil Brentjies in particular. I am grateful for all the hard work and stress on your part in getting this dissertation done. Your love, support and encouragement are truly appreciated. Belinda, your support is greatly appreciated. Thank you for showing so much love, you are a great friend.

Prof. Hennie Viviers, your wisdom, guidance and moral support helped me to finish this degree.

Prof. P Ryan, your editorial knowledge and skill brought this paper up to scratch. Thank You!

## Abstract

This mini-dissertation is an investigation into wealth and poverty, land and class issues. These issues are very topical in the current South African political debate. The land issue, especially, is and will for the foreseeable future remain, a contentious issue especially on the African soil (cf. for instance the Zimbabwe situation, Khoi-San land claims). The question asked is, can the Bible make a valuable contribution to solving these problems?

This study investigates whether Qoheleth can make a meaningful contribution to issues such as wealth and poverty, class and land. The book Qoheleth was chosen for its apparent “revolutionary” stance against traditional wisdom. In wisdom literature and tradition, the sages are known to situate themselves between the wealthy and the poor. Forming part of the protest phase of development of wisdom thought, it was necessary to evaluate Qoheleth to determine on whose side he is on, the haves or have-nots? Does he also protest against economic injustice? An ideological appreciation of Qoheleth was done to determine this.

It was found that Qoheleth reinscribes the *status quo* of his time in terms of established hierarchies. He disappoints on the issue of the haves and the have-nots and does not provide a way out of social injustice. He certainly is not much of a voice for the have-nots. Qoheleth’s apparent “revolutionary” stance is rather an intellectual reaction against the doctrine of retribution, but not in a political or social sense. The Old Testament prophets might be far more useful in addressing current issues on social injustice.

## Opsomming

Hierdie skripsie fokus op kwessies van rykdom en armoede, grond (-besit) en klassisme. Hierdie kwessies staan almal in die brandpunt van die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse politieke debat. Grondbesit is en gaan in die toekoms steeds 'n kontensieuse saak bly op die Afrika-kontinent (vgl byvoorbeeld die Zimbabwe-situasie, die Khoi-San grondeise). Die vraag wat gevra word is, kan die Bybel 'n bydrae maak tot die oplossing van hierdie probleme? Hierdie studie ondersoek of Prediker wel 'n sinvolle bydrae te maak het oor kwessies soos rykdom en armoede, klas en grondbesit.

Die boek Prediker is gekies omdat dit oënskynlik “revolutionêr” vertoon in sy reaksie teen tradisionele wysheid. Die wysgere in die wysheidsliteratuur en tradisie is bekend daarvoor dat hulle nie kant kies vir die rykes of armes nie. As deel van die protesfase van die ontwikkeling van wysheidsdenke, was dit nodig om te bepaal aan wie se kant Prediker staan, die besitters of besitloses? Protesteer hy ook teen ekonomiese onreg? 'n Ideologiese waardering van Prediker is gedoen om dit te bepaal.

Uit die studie het dit geblyk dat Prediker die *status quo* van sy dag in terme van die gevestigde hiërargieë, reïnskribeer. Hy stel teleur wanneer dit kom by die besitters en besitloses en bied nie 'n oplossing vir sosiale onreg aan nie. Hy is nie veel van 'n stem vir die besitloses nie. Prediker se “revolutionêre” indruk wat hy skep is eerder intellektueel van aard en gemik teen die vergeldingsdogma, maar nie in 'n sosiale of politieke sin nie. Die Ou-Testamentiese profete hou veel meer belofte in om huidige kwessies van sosiale onreg aan te spreek.

## Table of Content

Headings	Page
<b>Acknowledgment</b>	I
<b>Abstract</b>	II
<b>Opsomming</b>	III

### Chapter One

#### Methodological Orientation

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	The Problem	2
1.3	Purpose and Aim	3
1.4	Methodology: Ideology Criticism	4
1.5	My Own Ideological Stance	6
1.6	Structure of Dissertation	10

### Chapter Two

#### The Importance and Centrality of Land in the Old Testament

2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	Defining the Term “Land”	12
2.3	The Origins of Israel	14
2.4	A Theology/Ethics of the Land	18
2.4.1	The Importance of Land in Relation to Yahweh	18
2.4.1.1	The Historical Concept: The Land Promised to Israel	19
2.4.1.2	The Cultic Concept: Yahweh’s Land	22
2.4.2	Land, the Family and Yahweh	23

2.4.3	The Ethics that govern the Land	26
2.4.4	The land lost and regained	28
2.5	Wealth and Poverty in the Old Testament	29
2.5.1	Origins of Wealth and Poverty in Israel	29
2.5.1.1	Defining Wealth and Poverty in Israel	29
2.5.1.2	Wealth and Poverty in Israel	31
2.5.1.3	The Reality of Classism in Israel	33

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Qoheleth and Wisdom Literature**

3.1	Understanding Wisdom Literature	34
3.1.1	What is wisdom?	34
3.1.2	Wisdom Books	36
3.1.2.1	Proverbs	36
3.1.2.2	Job	38
3.1.3	Development of Wisdom	40
3.2	Wealth and Poverty within the Wisdom Perspective	42
3.3	A Closer Look at Ecclesiastes	45
3.3.1	The Title/Name Qoheleth	45
3.3.2	Qoheleth, the Man	46
3.3.3	Qoheleth in the Old Testament Canon	49
3.3.3.1	Qoheleth within the Hebrew Literature Tradition	50
3.3.3.2	Qoheleth within the Old Testament Wisdom Traditions	51
3.3.4	The Structure of Qoheleth	54
3.3.5	The Message of Qoheleth	57
3.3.5.1	The Place of God in Qoheleth	60

## Chapter Four

### The Ideological Qoheleth on Class, Wealth and Poverty

4.1	The Ideological Qoheleth	63
4.2	Qoheleth the Protestor	67
	4.2.1 Qoheleth and the “haves” and the “have-nots”	69
4.3	Conclusion	83

## Chapter Five

### Summary

5.1	Summary of Study	85
5.2	Conclusion: Qoheleth’s Contribution?	86
5.3	<i>Quo Vadis?</i>	87



<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>89</b>
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