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### Article Critique

*“Odd Book In” by James L. Crenshaw. Bible Review, Volume VI, Number 5. Oct 1990.*

Crenshaw’s article “Odd Book In” is a fitting title for the book of Ecclesiastes. While presenting God as indifferent to human conduct, declaring that all things worldly are futile, and a chasing after the wind, Ecclesiastes does “stand out like a sore thumb”, according to Crenshaw. Ecclesiastes is a much different book in the fact that it is riddled with skepticism and radical wisdom, contrary to most biblical conservative and conventional wisdom. Ecclesiastes questions everything, but also encourages people to live their lives to the fullest and enjoy what you have because, after all, you cannot take it with you. Crenshaw also adds that “skeptics like Qoheleth [Ecclesiastes] have a heightened sense of justice and possess a vision of a better world, hence they cannot be faulted for lack of faith. Qoheleth described life as he saw it.”

Crenshaw took a great look into the book of Ecclesiastes. I picked up quite a few tidbits of information through his examination of the writing. For instance, Ecclesiastes, although accredited to the authorship of King Solomon, was not written by Solomon. This attribute to Solomon must have been a later addition to the text. Crenshaw points out how the writing style changes, and how Ecclesiastes 1:12 is the actual beginning of the text. I found this useful as well, just as we have studied throughout class and from reading some of Friedman’s book “Who Wrote The Bible”, that the biblical authorship is not as originally thought. This also helps to explain how the book jumps from third person to first person, and the shift in writing style again in the epilogue.

Crenshaw also lets us know that while we don’t know who the writer of the book is, we have the name Qoheleth, which we translate into preacher or teacher, or the Greek translation, which is Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes comes from the Greek word ecclesia, which means church,

which is similar to iglesia, the Spanish word for church. Also, the article helps to point out that this is a book where some sort of a life after death is not only mentioned, but at least believed in.

I would recommend this article to those studying to the Old Testament. Crenshaw's unbiased look at Ecclesiastes helps to shed some light on the authorship of the book and reasons why it may have been added to the biblical cannon, and really helps the reader to understand the radical point of view that is the essence of this "odd book in" the bible.