

Numerical Features of the Book of Qoheleth

A New Approach to its Structural Design

Please read the [General Introduction](#)

Qoheleth as a Well-designed Numerical Composition

In his article “Ecclesiastes, Book of” (*Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1992, II, 271-280), James L. Crenshaw, came to the conclusion that “every attempt to discover the book’s structure serves a little more than a heuristic device” (274). This is in line with F. Delitzsch’s remark in his commentary from 1875: “Alle Versuche, in dem Ganzen nicht nur Einheit des Geistes, sondern auch genetischen Fortgang, allesbeherrschenden Plan und organische Gliederung nachzuweisen, mußten bisher und werden inskünftig scheitern”. At this point in time the problem of the structure of Qoheleth is still “The Riddle of the Sphinx” as G.A. Wright typified it in 1968. The present article is a fresh attempt to understand the structural design of the book, which is based on the objective, hard evidence provided by its striking numerical features. I shall demonstrate that Qoheleth is one of the most finely crafted numerical compositions in the Hebrew Bible.

For the meaningful centre of the book, which is situated at the mathematical middle (6,9b: ‘*This too is futility and a chasing of wind*’), see my earlier article “[Compositional Structure of Ecclesiastes](#)”.

As in the case of Proverbs, where its numerical features enabled us to detect the seams in the text and to ascertain the compositional process of its coming into existence – see my analysis of [Proverbs](#) – the numerical features of Qoheleth can help us in the same way, seeing that Qoheleth is clearly the follow-up to the Book of Proverbs, as demonstrated by their similarly organized architectures.

Proverbs begins with an introductory passage (1,1-6, including the heading) consisting of **37** words, which represents the numerical value of its crucial key word חכמה, ‘wisdom’ (8+11+13+5=37).

Qoheleth begins with an introductory passage (1,2-18, excluding the heading) consisting of **209** words, which is 11x**19**, the numerical value of its central key word הבל, ‘vanity’ (5+2+12=19).

Moreover, in order to impose the stamp of ‘wisdom’ on Qoheleth, the author/redactor gave it **222** verses, which is 6x**37**. To underscore this qualification, he created at the end of the book a concluding passage (12,9-14) as an Epilogue, consisting of **74** (2x**37**) words.

Proverbs has two strong breaks in the text causing three literary units which are determined by a number of words that are multiples of the divine name numbers **17** and **26**: after 7,27 and after 29,27.

1,1-7,27 The Introduction and the Introductory Collection of Sayings: **1462** (86x**17**) words.

1,1-29,27 The three major Collections of Sayings: **6396** (246x**26**) words.

30,1-31,14 The two additional Collections: the Words of Agur and Lemuel: **520** (20x**26**) words.

Further considerations, especially concerning content, made it relatively easy to ascertain Proverb’s unmistakable sevenfold structure – see page 7 of the [Analysis of Proverbs](#).

Qoheleth has no less than seven clear seams in the text between eight passages which are determined and sealed by numbers of words that are multiples of the numbers **17** and **26** and the numerical values of הבל, ‘vanity’ (**19**) and חכמה, ‘wisdom’ (**37**): to wit, between chapters 2 and 3; between 4 and 5; between 5 and 6; between 6 and 7; between 7 and 8; between 8 and 9, and between 12,8 and 12,9. These seams and the six [highlighted passages](#) make it relatively easy to ascertain the overall structural design of the book, which corresponds strikingly with the traditional chapter arrangement.

For its relative, but not absolute, reliability, see “[The Chapter Arrangement in the Hebrew Bible](#)” (2015).

- I. **1,1-2,26** made up of 596 words; chapter 2 is highlighted and sealed by **26** verses.
- II. **3,1-4,17** highlighted and sealed by **510** (30x**17**) words; chapter 4 is sealed by **17** verses.
- III. **5,1-19** highlighted and sealed by **266** (14x**19**) words; chapter 5 is sealed by **19** verses.
- IV. **6,1-12** highlighted and sealed by **170** (10x**17**) words.
- V. **7,1-29** made up of 330 words; until this point (1,1-7,29) **1872** (72x**26**) words.
- VI. **8,1-17** made up of 281 words which are highlighted and sealed by **17** verses.
- VII. **9,1-12,8** highlighted and sealed by **760** (40x**19**) words.
- Appendix: 12,9-14** highlighted and sealed by **74** (2x**37**) words.

The present arrangement of the text is so cogent that it may be qualified, in my opinion, as conclusive. This arrangement is additionally underscored by the following numerical features:

Parts I-VII (1,1-12,7), including the heading, excluding the motto in 12,8: **2907** (171x17) words.

Parts I-VII (1,2-12,8), excluding the heading, including the motto in 12,8: **2907** (171x17) words.

End of Part VII: 11,1-12,8, which concludes the main body of the book: **255** (15x17) words.

Part IV-VII and Appendix (6,1-12,14): **1615** (95x17) words.

Parts I-VII and Appendix (1,1-12,14): **222** (6x37) verses.

Seeing the use of the four highlighting numbers in the overall structure, the author/redactor did not endeavour to weave them consistently into the subsections to lay special emphasis on specific passages. As in Proverbs, they appear only sporadically: 649 of the 2987 words (22%) within the eight major parts. This makes it difficult to ascertain all *consciously intended* subdivisions/paragraphs. Perhaps we should restrain ourselves in this respect: some major subdivisions may prove to be undividable units, and many smaller divisions may never have been intended to constitute paragraphs. In any case, in my opinion, our objective should be to try to discover the arrangement of the text the author/redactor had in mind. His arrangement based on the numerical features is clear. The Sphinx has at last broken silence and speaks: in the language of number. Has the riddle now been solved?

In my arrangement of the text, which is based on its numerical features and with due regard for the layout markers, **P** and **S** (not always respected by commentators), I come to seven Main Parts which constitute the basic structure of the book, subdivided into 22 paragraphs, and an Epilogue.

Detailed outline of the structural design of the Book of Qoheleth

Part I. 1,1-2,26 All is vanity and all endeavour is futile: 596.

1,1 Heading: 6 words.

§1: 1,2-8 Motto, and the leading theme **{}: 78** (3x26).

§2: 1,9-11 There is nothing new under the sun **P: 13+13+13=39**.

§3: 1,12-18 Qoheleth goes in search of insight **{}: 92**. Altogether 78+39+92=**209** (11x19).

§4: 2,1-14 The futility of all human endeavour **{}:199**.

§5: 2,15-26 The toil of a wise man and a fool is worthless **{}: 182** (7x26).

Part II. 3,1-4,17 A time for everything, but life is hopeless {}: 510 (30x17).

§1: 3,1-8 There is a time for every matter under the sun **S: 67**.

§2: 3,9-22 Life is given to us to enjoy despite injustice **{}: 206**.

§3: 4,1-17 Injustice makes life hopeless for the lonely **{}: 237**.

Part III. 5,1-19 Religion, pledges, poverty, and wealth {}: 266 (14x19).

Part IV. 6,1-12 The futility of human endeavour {}: 170 (10x17).

Part V. 7,1-29 Wisdom and folly compared {}: 330.

§1: 7,1-13 Thirteen observations about human society **{}: 130** (5x26).

§2: 7,14-22 Accept things as they are and keep a low profile **{}: 34(2x17)+78(3x26)**.

§3: 7,23-29 In search of wisdom, it appears to be out of reach **{}: 88**.

Part VI. 8,1-17 The inequalities of life {}: 281.

§1: 8,1-9 Only the king's word is absolutely sovereign **{}: 115**.

§2: 8,10-13 Villains do what they like, but God will protect us **{}: 64**.

§3: 8,14-17 Enjoy life even though God's ways are unfathomable **{}: 102** (6x17).

Part VII. 9,1-12,8 Excellence of wisdom and human duty {}: 760 (40x19). NB **9,1-12,7: 754** (29x26) w.

§1 9,1-10 The righteous and the wise are in God's hand **S: 189**.

§2 9,11-18 Time and chance happen to all people **{}: 52(2x26)+68(4x17)=120**.

§3 10,1-20 Thirteen bright observations to learn from **{}: 196**.

§4 11,1-10 Wise recommendations to lead a decent life **{}: 143+**

§5 12,1-8 Remember your Creator before your life ends **{}: 112/255** (15x17).

Appendix: 12,9-14 Final Observations and Recommendations Colophon: 74 (2x37) words.

In light of the hard facts based on the numerical features of the book, the great diversity of arrangements of the text that have up until now been put forward raises a serious question: How can such arrangements be brought into line with the arrangement based on its numerical features? This is not the place for me to assess the merits and the shortcomings of earlier attempts to fathom Qoheleth's structure. I fully realize that commentators do not clearly differentiate between 'structure' and devices (captions) serving to help the reader to understand the text. All I can say is that the study of Qoheleth must necessarily be taken up again from a new perspective and that we have to recognize the numerical structure as the basic overall structure and at the same time allow room for other hidden structures that have become inextricably intertwined with it. The following list of select literature on its structure and the survey of various arrangements by commentators may be helpful. These arrangements are usually taken from the table of contents in the commentaries and it is not for me to say whether they were intended by the commentator to reflect the structure of the book, which I assumed in the first place, or whether they were meant as handgrips to help the reader get a grip on the text.

For an excellent review of publications dealing with the architecture of the Book of Qoheleth (until 1997), see Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger (Hg.), *Das Buch Kohelet. Studien zur Struktur, Geschichte, Rezeption und Theologie* (BZAW 254, 1997), especially the article by the Editor, "Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung" (5-39) and particularly "Aufbau des Buches" and "Einheit" (7-20), and the deepdrilling contribution by Norbert Lohfink, "Das Koheletbuch: Strukturen und Struktur" (39-121).

See further G.A. Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx: The Structure of the Book of Koheleth", *CBQ* 30 (1968), 313-334. J.A. Loader, *Polar Structures in the Book of Qoheleth*, BZAW 152, 1979.

G.A. Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx Revisited: Numerical Patterns in the Book of Qoheleth: *CBQ* 42 (1980), 38-51.

D. A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 1999, 192-198.

W. Zimmerli, "Das Buch Kohelet – Traktat oder Sentenzensammlung?" in: *VT IOSOT 2013*, 77-86.

A more complete list is to be found in Th. Krüger, *Kohelet (Prediger)*, in: BKAT XIX (Sonderband), 2000, 76-77.

Eighteen different views on the structure of Qoheleth

W. ZIMMERLI (*Sprüche/Prediger*, in: ATD 16/1, 1962, 123-251):

1,1: Überschrift; 1,2: Ein Leitwort Kohelets

1,3-11: Was hat der mensch für einen Gewinn? **P**

1,12-2,26: Weisheit, Torheit und Freude (1,12-15.16-18; 2,1-11.12-17.18-23.24-26)

3,1-15: Das Geheimnis der fallenden Zeit

3,16-4,3: Zwei Worte von Unrecht unter der Sonne (3,16-22; 4,1-3)

4,4-12: Zwei Worte von der menschlichen Arbeit (4,4-6.7-12)

4,13-16: Von der Vergänglichkeit des Weisheitserfolges

4,17-5,6: Vier Sprüche vom Verhalten im Bereich des frommen Lebens (4,17; 5,1-2.3-4.5-6)

5,7-8: Das Unrecht im Staate

5,9-6,12: Spruch über den Besitz und die Möglichkeit ihn zu genießen (5,9.10.11.12-14.15-16.17-19; 6,1-9.10-12)

7,1-14: Was ist gut? Sieben Sentenzen (7,1.2.3-4.5-7.8-10.11-12.13-14)

7,15-22: Sei nicht allzu gerecht!

7,23-24: Die unfaßliche Weisheit

7,25-29: Das Rätsel der Frau

8,1-8: Der Herrscher

8,9-15: Die Ungerechtigkeit der Welt

8,16-9,12: Die unauffindbarkeit des Tuns Gottes, in zwei Sentenzen erläutert (8,16-17; 9,1-10.11-12)

9,13-10,3: Das kleine Mißgeschick der großen Weisheit

10,4-20: Vermischte Einzel Sprüche

11,1-8: Das tätige Leben im ungesicherten, vergänglichen Dasein

11,9-12,7: Die Jugend freue sich ihrer Jugend und gedenke ihres Schöpfers, denn einst kommt das Alter

12,8: Das Leitwort Kohelets

12,9-11: Ein Nachwort über den Lehrer Kohelet

12,12-14: Ein zweites Nachwort über die Lehre Kohelets.

H. W. HERZBERG und H. BARDTKE (*Der Prediker und das Buch Esther*, in: KAT XVII/4-5, 1963):

- I. 1,1-2-11 Der Prolog **P**
- II. 2,12-26 Was kommt bei der Weisheit heraus?
- III. 3,1-4,16 Alles hat seine Zeit
- IV. 4,17-5,8 Höre und schweige!
- V. 5,9-6,9 Drei Stücke von der Nichtigkeit des Reichtums
- VI. 6,10-8,1 Fünf Stücke von der wahren Weisheit
- VII. 8,2-9 Rebellion ist zwecklos
- VIII. 8,10-9,10 Gotteswege und Menschenwege (Zwei parallele Gedankengänge)
- IX. 9,11-10,11 Von der Wertlosigkeit der Weisheit (Vier parallele Gedankengänge)
- X. 10,12-20 Reden ist Silber, Schweigen ist Gold
- XI. 11,1-8 Nicht die Zukunft berechnen, sondern der Gegenwart leben
- XII. 11,9-12,8 Lebensfreude, ehe es zu spät ist. 12,9-14 Der Epilog.

K. GALLING (*Der Prediger*, in: *Die Fünf Megilloth*, in: HAT 18, 1969, 73-125):

1,1-3 Überschrift und Einleitung

1,4-11 Die 1. Sentenz **P**; **1,12-2,11** Die 2. Sentenz; **2,12-17** Die 3. Sentenz; **2,18-23** Die 4. Sentenz;
2,24-26 Die 5. Sentenz; **3,1-15** Die 6. Sentenz; **3,16-22** Die 7. Sentenz; **4,1-3** Die 8. Sentenz; **4,4-6** Die 9. Sentenz;
4,7-12 Die 10. Sentenz; **4,13-16** Die 11. Sentenz; **4,17-5,8** Die 12. Sentenz; **5,9-19** Die 13. Sentenz; **6,1-6** Die 14. Sentenz;
6,7-9 Die 15. Sentenz; **6,10-12** Die 16. Sentenz; **7,1-14** Die 17. Sentenz; **7,15-22** Die 18. Sentenz; **7,23-8,1** Die 19. Sentenz;
8,2-8 Die 20. Sentenz; **8,9-15** Die 21. Sentenz; **8,16-9,10** Die 22. Sentenz **S**; **9,11-12** Die 23. Sentenz; **9,13-16** Die 24. Sentenz;
9,17-10,20 Die 25. Sentenz; **11,1-6** Die 26. Sentenz; **11,7-12,6.7f.** Die 27. Sentenz; **12,9-14** Zwei Nachworte.

A. LAUHA (*Kohelet*, in: BKAT XIX, 1978):

- 1.1.2 Der Titel des Buches and das Leitwort: Alles ist eitel
- 1,3-11 Der Prolog: Nichts Neues uner der Sonne **P**
- 1,12-2,26 Mißlungene Versuche zur Lösung der Sinnfrage des Lebens
- 3,1-15 Gefangen in der Zeit
- 3,16-22 Die Kreatürlichkeit des Menschen
- 4,1-3 Die Tränen der Unterdrückten
- 4,4-6 Die Arbeit als vergebliche Konkurrenz
- 4,7-12 Die Einsamkeit
- 4,13-16 Sic transit gloria mundi
- 4,17-5,6 Die Reserviertheit beim Kult
- 5,7-8 Das System der Willkur
- 5,9-6,9 Die Nichtigkeit des Reichtums
- 6,10-12 Die Ohnmacht gegenüber der Determiniertheit
- 7,1-14 Ein didaktische Intermezzo: Was ist gut?
- 7,15-22 Der goldene Mittelweg
- 7,23-24 Die Unerreichbarkeit der Weisheit
- 7,25-8,1 Bitterer als der Tod
- 8,2-9 Herscher und Untertan
- 8,10-15 Die Gerechtigkeit geht nicht in Erfüllung
- 8,16-17 Die Unerforschlichkeit des Tuns Gottes
- 9,1-10 Im Schatten der Todesbestimmung **S**
- 9,11-12 Zeit und Geschick
- 9,13-18a Das Ansehen der Person
- 9,18b-10,3 Die Weisheit ist nützlich, aber zerbrechlich
- 10,4-7 Die verworrene Gesellschaftsordnung
- 10,8-11 Der Unfall bedroht auch den Könner
- 10,12-15a Torengeschwätz
- 10,15b-17 Schlechte und gute Regenten
- 10,18-20 Über Faulheit, Festmähler und Vorsicht
- 11,1-6 Das Leben in der Ungewißheit
- 11,7-12,7 Jugend und Alter

12,8 Das Schlußwort: Alles ist eitel
 12,9-11 Der Kolophon
 12,12-14 Ein Vorbehalt.

J. A. LOADER (*Ecclesiastes*, in: Text and Interpretation, 1986):

1,1 Superscripture
 1,2-11 The Prologue **P**
 1,12-2,26 Experiments and Their Results
 3,1-9 The Grip of Time
 3,10-15 The Futility of Thought
 3,16-22 Injustice Instead of Justice
 4,1-3 Oppression and the Oppressed
 4,4-6 Labour without product
 4,7-12 The Worthless Labour
 4,13-16 The Vagaries of Popular Favor
 5,1-9 Talk Versus Silence
 5,10-6,9 The Worthlessness of Riches
 6,10-12 Words of the Powerless
 7,1-4 Death is better than Life
 7,5-7 The Frustration of Wisdom
 7,8-10 To Stop Speaking is Better than to Start
 7,11-14 Wisdom and Possessions
 7,15-22 No Happy Medium
 7,23-8,1 Bitter Wisdom
 8,2-9 Political Power and Powerlessness
 8,10-15 Does Justice Exist?
 8,16-17 The Inscrutability of God's Work
 9,1-10 There is no Retribution **S**
 9,11-12 Nothing depends on man
 9,13-10,1 Wisdom and Social Discrimination
 10,2-7 Wisdom and Social Chaos
 10,8-11 Frustration on the Job
 10,12-15a The Words of the Ignorant
 10,15b-20 Silence is Better than Protest
 11,1-6 Risk and Assurance
 11,7-12,8 *Therefore Enjoy Yourself!*
 12,9-14 The Epilogue.

N. LOHFINK (*Kohelet*, in: Die Neue Echter Bible,⁶ 2009): *Inhalt und Struktur (10)*

Einerseits, eine Diatribenstruktur:

1,2-11 Einstieg (Thesen, Fragen, ein Kosmosbild als Hintergrund)
 1,12-3,15 Narrative Einführung in die vor allem anthropologische Hauptthese
 3,16-6,10 Vertiefung durch viele Einzelzugänge aus der sozialen Erfahrung
 6,11-9,6 *Refutatio* entgegenstehender Auffassungen, vor allen der älteren Weisheit
 9,10-12,8 *Applicatio* durch konkrete Weisungen für das Weltverhalten.

Andererseits, eine Palindromische Struktur

1,2f. Rahmen
 1,4-11 Kosmologie (Gedicht) **P**
 1,12-3,15 Anthropologie
 3,16-4,16 Gesellschaftskritik I
 4,17-5,6 Religionskritik
 5,7-6,10 Gesellschaftskritik II
 6,11-9,6 Ideologiekritik
 9,7-12,7 Ethiek (am Ende: Gedicht)
 12,8 Rahmen.

- 1,1 Buchtitel. 1,2-3 Vorspruch
 WECHSEL, DAUER UND VERGESSEN (1,4-11)
 BEDINGTHEIT DES MENSCHEN – UN DURCHSCHAU BARKEIT GOTTES (1,12-3,15)
 1,12-2,2 Drei Überblicke
 2,3-11 Menschliches Glück durch Weltgestaltung **P**
 2,12-23 Bildung und Besitz in ihrer Bedingtheit
 2,24-3,15 Gottes Handeln in seiner Vollkommenheit und Undurchschaubarkeit
 DIE ÜBEL DER WELT (3,16-4,16)
 3,16-22 Unrecht bei Gericht
 4,1-6 Ausbeutung und Konkurrenzkampf
 4,7-12 Der alleinstehende Mensch
 4,13-16 Wankelmüdigkeit Volksgunst
 RATSCHLÄGE FÜR DAS RELIGIÖSE VERHALTEN (4,17-5,6)
 4,17-5,2 Hören, Opfern und Sprechen im Gottesdienst
 ÜBER ARMUT UND REICHTUM (5,7-6,10)
 5,7-8 Beamtenherrschaft
 5,9-11 Nutzlosigkeit des Reichtums
 5,12-16 Reichtum, der verloren geht
 5,17-6,2 Reichtum, der doch keine Freude bringt
 6,3-5 Langes Leben und Reichtum ohne Freude
 6,6-10 Langes Leben in Armut und ohne Freude
 ALTE SPRUCHWEISHEITEN – KRITISCH ÜBERPRÜFT (6,11-9,6)
 6,11-12 Einleitung
 7,1-4 Zum Thema: Nachruhm
 7,5-7 Zum Thema: Bildung
 7,8-10 Zum Thema: Zurückhaltung und Konservatismus
 7,11-18 Zum Thema: Wissen als Mittel zu langem Leben
 7,19-22 Zum Thema: Wissen als Schutz
 7,23-8,1a Zum Thema: Überliefertes Wissen und Wissen aus Beobachtung
 8,1b-4 Zum Thema: Gebildete und König
 8,5-12a Zum Thema: Schicksal des gebildeten Gesetzstreters und des ungebildeten Gesetzübertreters
 8,12b-15 Weiterführung
 8,16-9,6 Zum Thema: Grenzen der Erkenntnis
 RATSCHLÄGE UND SENTENZEN KOHELETS (9,7-12,8)
 9,7-10 Freude und kraftvolles Handeln **S**
 9,11-12 Zufall und Zeit
 9,13-18 Wissen und Macht
 10,1-3 Dummheit
 10,4 Gelassenheit
 10,5-7 Ungerechte Behandlung bei Hof
 10,8-9 Lauerende Gefahren
 10,10-11 Anwendung des Wissens
 10,12-15 Der ungebildete
 10,16-17 Königshof und Schicksal des Volks
 10,18 Faulheit
 10,19 Geld
 10,20 Vom Reden über Mächtige
 11,1-3 Berechenbarkeit und unberechenbarkeit der Zukunft
 11,4-8 Tatkräftiges Handeln
 11,9-12,7 Freude in der Jugend im Blick auf Alter und Tod
 12,8 Rahmvers
 ZWEI NACHWÖRTE VON HERAUSGEBER (12,9-14)
 12,9-11 Erstes Nachwort
 12,12-14 Zweites Nachwort.

M. A. BEEK (*Prediker - Hooglied*, in: POT 1984): *My translation of the headings.*

- 1,1-2 The title
- 1,3-11 There is nothing new **P**
- 1,12-18 Discouraging investigation
- 2,1-11 Trying to enjoy life
- 2,12-17 No benefit from Wisdom
- 2,18-26 Who inherits the toil of the wise?
- 3,1-9 For everything there is a time
- 3,10-15 The work of God
- 3,16-22 Humans and animals
- 4,1-8 Oppression and toil
- 4,9-16 Going together is better than being alone
- 4,17-5,6 Pledges
- 5,7-16 The risks of wealth
- 5,17-19 It is fitting to enjoy life
- 6,1-9 Wealth without any benefit
- 6,10-12 The unescapable fate
- 7,1-14 A series of admonitions
- 7,15-22 A sound middle course
- 7,23-29 A woman can be a snare
- 8,1-9 The power of the king
- 8,10-17 An incomprehensible abuse
- 9,1-12 Time and chance
- 9,13-18; 10,1-3 The power of wisdom
- 10,4-15 Wisdom in everyday life
- 10,16-20 Self-restraint
- 11,1-6 The unfathomable happening
- 11,7-10 Enjoy life in your youth
- 12,1-8 Degeneration and death
- 12,9-14 Concluding words.

R. N. WHYBRAY (*Ecclesiastes*, in: The New Century Bible Commentary, 1989):

- 1,1.2-3 Vanity of vanities
- 1,4-11 The ceaseless round of nature **P**
- 1,12-2,26 'Solomon's' testimony
- 3,1-15 Man does not know his time
- 3,16-22 Where is justice to be found?
- 4,1-3 The plight of the oppressed
- 4,4-6 The folly of overwork
- 4,7-8 The miser
- 4,9-12 Two are better than one
- 4,13-16 The hazards of power
- 5,1-7 Advice on worship
- 5,8-9 On the political system
- 5,10-20 The deceptiveness of money
- 6,1-6 Life without joy
- 6,7-9 A loose group of sayings
- 6,10-12 Man's weakness and ignorance
- 7,1-14 The limitations of human life
- 7,15 Inequities observed
- 7,16-18 A warning against self-righteousness
- 7,19 The superiority of wisdom
- 7,20-22 Do as you would be done by
- 7,23-8,1 True wisdom is inaccessible
- 8,2-9 Despotism and human servitude

8,10-15 Life's unfairness
 8,16-17 The inscrutability of God's work
 9,1-10 Enjoy your life, for death levels all **S**
 9,11-12 Time and chance
 9,13-18 The limited values of wisdom
 10,1-11,6 Miscellaneous sayings
 11,7-8 Rejoice in the light
 11,9-12,7 Make the most of youth
 12,8 Editorial conclusion. 12,9-14 Epilogue.
 R. E. MURPHY (*Ecclesiastes*, in: WBC 23A, 1992):
 1,1.2 Superscription and Motto
 1,3-11 A Poem about Human Toil **P**
 1,12-18 Introduction
 2,1-11 A Reflection upon Pleasure
 2,12-17 A Reflection upon the Merits of Wisdom and Folly
 2,18-26 A Reflection upon Human Toil
 3,1-4,6 A Reflection upon Time and Toil
 4,7-16 A Reflection upon "Two"
 4,17[5,1]-6,9 Varia: Worship, Officials, Wealth and Its Uncertainties
 6,10-12 A Reflection upon Divine Knowledge and Human Impotence
 7,1-14 Past and Present Wickedness
 7,15-24 Wisdom Relative to Justice and Wickedness
 7,25-29 A Reflection upon Humankind
 8,1-17 Varia: Instruction and Reflections
 9,1-12 Reflections
 9,13-10,15 Various Applications of Wisdom
 10,16-11,2 A Collection of Sayings
 11,3-6 Living in Uncertainty and Ignorance
 11,7-12,8 Instruction concerning Youth and Old Age
 12,9-14 Epilogue.

C. L. SEOW (*Ecclesiastes*, in: The Anchor Bible, 1997):

Superscription (1,1)

Part I.A. Reflection: Everything Is Ephemeral and Unreliable

I.A.1. Preface (1,2-11) **P**

I.A.2. Nothing is Ultimately Reliable (1,12-26)

I.A.3. Everything is in the Hand of God (3,1-22)

I.A.4. Relative Good Is Not Good Enough (4,1-16)

Part I.B. Ethics: Coping with Uncertainty

I.B.1. Attitude Before God (5,1-7 [Heb 4,17-5,6])

I.B.2. Enjoyment, Not Greed (5,8-6,9 [Heb 5,7-6,9])

Part II.A. Reflection: Everything is Illusive

II.A.1. No One Knows What Is Good (6,10-7,14)

II.A.2. Righteousness and Wisdom Are Illusive (7,15-29)

II.A.3. It's an Arbitrary World (8,1-17)

Part II.B. Ethics: Coping with Risks and Death

II.B.1. Carpe Diem (9,1-10) **S**

II.B.2. The World is full of Risks (9,11-10,15)

II.B.3. Living with Risks (10,16-11,6)

II.B.4. Conclusion

Epilogue (12,9-14).

T. LONGMAN (*The Book of Ecclesiastes*, in: NICOT, 1998):

I. Frame Narrative: Prologue (1,1-11) **P**

A. Superscription (1,1)

- B. Introduction to Qoheleth's Thought (1,2-11)
- II. Qoheleth's Autobiographical Speech (1,12-12,7)
 - A. Autobiographical Introduction (1,12)
 - B. "Solomon's" Quest for the Meaning of Life (1,13-2,26)
 - C. The Quest Continues (3,1-6,9)
 - D. Qoheleth's Wise Advice (6,10-12,7)

III. Frame Narrative: Epilogue (12,8-14).

D. A. DORSEY (*The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, 1999, 192-198):

- 1,1 Title: author mentioned in third person
- a 1,2-11 Poem about the brevity and insignificance of life **P**
- b 1,12-2,26 Wisdom's failure to discover life's meaning
 - c 3,1-15 Poem about time
 - d 3,16-6,12 CENTER: fear God!
 - c' 7,1-14 Poem about time revisited
 - b' 7,15-10,19 Wisdom's failure revisited
- a' 10,20-12,8 Poem about life's brevity revisited.
- 12,9-14 Conclusion.

W. P. BROWN (*Ecclesiastes*, in: Interpretation, 2000):

- 1.1.2-11 Superscription. A Vanity of Cosmic Proportion **P**
- 1,12-2,26 Qoheleth's Confession: 1,12-15.16-18; 2,1-11.12-23.24-26
- 3,1-22 Chronology without History: 3,1-8.9-15.16-22
- 4,1-16 The Problem of Power: 4,1-6.7-12.13-16
- 5,1-20 The Simplicity of Reverence: 5,1-7.8-9.10-17.18-20
- 6,11-2 The Limits of Desire: 6,1-6.7-9.10-12
- 7,1-14 Proverbs of Paradox: 7,1-4.5-7.8-12.13-14
- 7,15-29 The Primacy of Reverence: 7,15-22.23-29
- 8,1-9 The Limits of Power
- 8,10-17 The Vanity Character and the Mystery of God
- 9,1-10 Death and the Moral of the Moment **S**
- 9,11-12 The Hegemony of Chance and Calamity
- 9,13-18 Wasted Wisdom
- 10,1-20 Miscellaneous Musings
- 11,1-6 The Resourcefulness of Giving
- 11,7-12,8 The Agony and Ecstasy of Vanity
- 12,9-14 Epilogue(s): The Edifying Ethos of Qoheleth.

TH. KRÜGER (*Kohelet (Prediger)*, in: BKAT XIX (Sonderband), 2000):

- 1,1 Überschrift. 1,2 Motto.
- 1,3-4,12 Der König und der Weise**
 - 1,3-11 Vorspiel: Gibt es einen Gewinn angesichts der Ewigkeit? **P**
 - 1,12-2,26 Reflexionen des Königs Kohelet: Die Erwertung des unverfügbaren Glücks
 - 3,1-9 Zwischenspiel: Gibt es einen Gewinn angesichts der Zeit?
 - 3,10-4,12 Reflexionen des Weisen Kohelet: Das unverfügbare Glück als höchstes Gut
- 4,13-5,8 Der König und der Gott**
 - 4,13-16 Kritik falscher Erwartungen an einen König
 - 4,17-5,6 Aufruf zur richtigen Haltung gegenüber dem Gott
 - 5,7-8 Kritik falscher Erwartungen an einen König
- 5,9-6,9 Armut und Reichtum**
 - 5,9-11 Sprichwörter
 - 5,12-16 Negative Fälle
 - 5,17-19 Positive Fälle
 - 6,1-6 Negative Fälle
 - 6,7-9 Sprichwörter
- 6,10-8,17 Kritische Diskussion gängiger Weisheiten**

- 6,10-12 Grenzen des Menschen
- 7,1-14 Kritik weiser Ratschläge
- 7,15-22 Grenzen der Gerechtigkeit und der Weisheit
- 7,23-29 Grenzen der Weisheit
- 8,1-9 Wissen und Macht
- 8,10-15 Gerechte und Frevler
- 8,16-17 Grenzen der Weisheit

9,1-12,7 Leben in Anbetracht des Zufalls und der Vergänglichkeit

- 9,1-12 Aufruf zur Freude und zu tatkräftigem Handeln im Blick auf den Tod und den Zufall
- 9,13-10,20 Stärken und Schwächen der Weisheit
- 11,1-12,7 Ratschläge für das Leben angesichts der Unsicherheit der Zukunft and der Gewissheit des Todes

12,8 Motto. 12,9-14 Nachwort.

L. SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER (*Kohelet*, in: HThKAT, 2004):

I. Kohelet 1-3 Darlegung der Lehre

1. 1,1 Buchtitel;
2. 1,2-11 Kohelet als Wieser **P**
 - 2.1 1,2 Motto und Rahmvers: "Windhauch, Windhauch..."
 - 2.2 1,3 Leitfrage: "Welchen Gewinn hat der Mensch?"
 - 2.3 1,4-11 Die Vergänglichkeit der Menschen angesichts der Ewigkeit der Welt
3. 1,12-2,26 Kohelet als König
 - 3.1 1,12-2,2 Vorausschau: Grenzen des Handelns der Weisheit des Vergnügens
 - 3.2 2,3-26 Der Weg des Königs
4. 3,1-22 Kohelet als Weiser; Auswertung der königlichen Erfahrungen

II. Kohelet 4,1-6,9 Entfaltung der Lehre

1. 4,1-6 Ausbeutung und Konkurrenzkampf
2. 4,7-12 Gefahren des Alleinseins
3. 4,13-16 Unbeständigkeit königlicher Macht
4. 4,17-5,6 Religion
5. 5,7-8 Ungerechtigkeit und Misswirtschaft
6. 5,9-11 Ambivalenz des Reichtums königlicher Herrschaft
7. 5,12-16 Verlust des Reichtums
8. 5,17-19 Freude als Gabe und Antwort Gottes
9. 6,1-2 Fehlender Genuss gottgegebener Gaben
10. 6,3-6 Leben ohne Glückserfahrung
11. 6,7-9 Ungestilltes Verlangen

III. Kohelet 6,10-8,17 Verteidigung der Lehre

1. 6,10-12 Einleitung des theologiekritischen Teils
2. 7,1-10 Ärger ruht in der Burst der Toren
3. 7,11-14 Betrachte das Werk Gottes!
4. 7,15-20 Via media
5. 7,21-22 Zwischenfazit: Achte nicht auf alles Gerede!
6. 7,23-24 Weisheit ist unauffindbar
7. 7,25-29 Gott hat den Menschen recht gemacht
8. 8,1-9 Macht und Weisheit
9. 8,10-14,15 Frevler und Gerechten: Lobpreis und Freude
10. 8,16-17 Abschliessendes Fazit: Gottes Werk ist unergrundbar

IV. Kohelet 9,1-12,8 Anwendung der Lehre

1. 9,1-6,7-10 Carpe diem
2. 9,11-12 Unverfügbarkeit des Erfolgs
3. 9,13-16 Grenzen der Weisheit
4. 9,17-10,1 Weisheit und Torheit
5. 10,2-3 Das Wesen der Torheit
6. 10,4-7 Torheit und Macht
7. 10,8-11 Kein Handeln ohne Gefahr

- 8. 10,12-15 Schlussfolgerung: Weisheit als Torheit
- 9. 10,16-20 Verdeckte Herrschaftskritik
- 10. 11,1-6 Aufruf zu tatkräftigem Handeln angesichts einer gewissen Zukunft
- 11. 11,7-8 Vorauslaufende Interpretation des Schlussgedichts
- 12. 11,9-12,7.8 Aufruf zur Freude und zum Gottesgedenken angesichts von Alter und Tod

V. Kohelet 12,9-14 Schlussworte

- 1. 12,9-11 Mehr als ein gewöhnlicher Weisheitslehrer! 2. 12,12-14 Gottesfurcht und Halten der Gebote.

E.S. CHRISTIANSON, *Ecclesiastes Through the Centuries*, Blackwell Publishing, 2007

Ecclesiastes 1: 1,1.2 Vanitas vanitatum

1,3-18 The Overture Played Out

Ecclesiastes 2: 2,1-10 Wrestling with the Test of Pleasure

2,11-24 Understanding Wisdom , Folly and God's Gifts

Ecclesiastes 3,1-8: The Totality of Times

Ecclesiastes 3,9-6,12: 3,9-22 On Fate, Knowledge and Anthropology

4,1,12 On Oppression and the Value of Companionship

5,1-8 On Conducting Oneself in the House of God

5,10-6,12 On the Possibility of Profit and Relief from *hebel*

Ecclesiastes 7-8: 7,1-12 The Curious Values of Wisdom

7,13-29 The Incongruity of Experience and the Inaccessibility of Wisdom

8,1-17 About Wisdom, Power and Authority

Ecclesiastes 9,1-12: The Wisdom of Death and Life

Ecclesiastes 9,13-11,10: 9,13-11,6 Wise Conduct in the Light

11,7-10 The Final Call of Joy

Ecclesiastes 12,1-7: The Rule of Allegory. Beyond Allegory

Ecclesiastes 12,8-14: The Final Word.

D. C. FRIEDERICKS & D. J. ESTES (*Ecclesiastes and Songs of Songs*, in: *Apollos Old Testament Commentary* 16, 2010):

1,1 Ascription

1,2-11 Cycles in nature and Experience **P**

1,12-2,3 The search for wisdom

2,4-26 Autobiography leads to catharsis

3,1-22 Human action and providence

4,1-5,9 Wise living in relationships

5,10-6,9 Qualified advantages of labour

6,10-7,22 Death's implications for the wise

7,23-8,1 A search for Lady Wisdom

8,2-15 Realistic wisdom in the royal court

8,16-10,1 Disappointment and ironies

10,2-20 Career management in the court

11,1-12,8 Life's storms

12,9-14 Epilogue.

M. KÖHLMOOS (*Kohelet. Der Prediger Salomos*, in: *Das Alte Testament Deutsch Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk*, 2015):

1,1 Überschrift

1,2-11 Nichts Neues unter der Sonne (Prolog und Motto): 1,2-3; 1,4-7.8.9-11 **P**

1,12-2,26 Des Königs Experiment: 1,12.13.14.15.16-18; 2,1-2.3-10.11.12-26

3,1-15 Alles zu seiner Zeit: 3,1-8 **S**.9-15

3,16-22 Recht und Gerechtigkeit: "eine inheit"

4,1-6 Neid

4,7-12 Besser zwei als Einer

4,13-16 Wer wird König?

4,17-5,6 Kult und Weisheit

5,7-8 Recht, Macht, Gerechtigkeit

5,9-6,9 Was bleibt vom Reichtum? : 5,9-11. 12-16.17-19; 6,1-6.7-9

6,10-7,14 Gut und besser: "eine abgeschlossene Einheit"

7,15-22 Alles in Maßen
7,23-29 Was Kohelet nicht fand
8,1-8 Das Wort des Königs
8,9-15 Gerechte und Frevler
8,16-17 Das Werk Gottes
9,1-10 Das Ergebnis der Forschung **S Köhlmoos is the only commentator who took all layout markers seriously.**
9,11-12 Nicht die Schnellen gewinnen das Rennen
9,13-10,20 Sprüche Kohelets: 9,13-10,4; 10,5-15.16-20
11,1-6 Lebenskunst
11,7-8 Süß ist das Licht
11,9-12,8 Bevor die schlechten Tage kommen (Epilog und Motto)
12,9-14 Nachwort.

Quantitative structural analysis of Qoheleth

Part I		1,1-2,26			All is vanity and all endeavour is futile			
Vss	Text	Words	Letters	Sum words	Structural Design			
1	Qoh 1,1	6 Heading	23	6	§1 1,1.2-8 Heading, motto, and the leading theme			
2	Qoh 1,2	8	29	14	The scribes did not always include the heading in their tally of verses and words. E.g., the main body of the text, (1,2-12,8), excluding the heading (1,1) and the Epilogue (12,9-14), is made up of 2907 (171x17) words. 1,2-8 All is vanity; what gain is there? 78 (3x26) words.			
3	Qoh 1,3	8	30	22				
4	Qoh 1,4	7	26	29				
5	Qoh 1,5	10 78 (3x26)	36	39				
6	Qoh 1,6	14	52	53				
7	Qoh 1,7	16	60	69				
8	Qoh 1,8	15	54	84 []				
9	Qoh 1,9	13	46	97			§2 1,1-8 There is nothing new under the sun	
10	Qoh 1,10	13	45	110	13+13+13 means One+One+One = Always the same.			
11	Qoh 1,11	13/39	57	123/39 P	13 is the numerical value of אֶחָד, 'one' (1+8+4=13).			
12	Qoh 1,12	7	29	130	§3 1,12-18 Qoheleth goes in search of insight			
13	Qoh 1,13	21	76	151	1,14 The key statement 'all is vanity and a striving after wind' occurs in 1,14, 2,11; 2,17; 2,26; 4,4; and 6,9. Chapter 1, excluding the heading, is highlighted and sealed as a literary unit by by 17 verses and 209 (11x19) words. The number 19 is the numerical value of the key word הַבֵּל, 'vanity' (5+2+12=19).			
14	Qoh 1,14	12	45	163				
15	Qoh 1,15	8	32	171				
16	Qoh 1,16	22	81	193				
17	Qoh 1,17	13	53	206				
18	Qoh 1,18	9/92	33	215 []				
18	Qoheleth 1	215-6=209	807	215-6=209				
19	Qoh 2,1	13	47	228			§4 2,1-14 The futility of all human endeavour	
20	Qoh 2,2	7	28	235			2,3 The term בני האדם, 'the children of man', occurs 7x (1,13; 2,3; 2,8; 3,10; 3,18; 3,21 and 9,12). 2,8 Special emphasis on the climax of riches: 17 words. 2,10 The key word עִמּוּל, 'toil', occurs 35x : the noun 28x (4x7) and the verb 7x . 2,11 The key term תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, 'under the sun', occurs 26x . The paragraph appears to have been conceived as an undividable literary unit.	
21	Qoh 2,3	26	97	261				
22	Qoh 2,4	8	33	269				
23	Qoh 2,5	9	34	278				
24	Qoh 2,6	9	35	287				
25	Qoh 2,7	18	68	305				
26	Qoh 2,8	17	72	322				
27	Qoh 2,9	10	44	332				
28	Qoh 2,10	23	75	355				
29	Qoh 2,11	18	73	373				
30	Qoh 2,12	16	65	389				
31	Qoh 2,13	11	46	400				
32	Qoh 2,14	14	56	414/199 []				
33	Qoh 2,15	18+	69	432	§5 The toil of a wise man and a fool is worthless			
34	Qoh 2,16	17+	67	449	The paragraph is highlighted and sealed as a literary unit by 182 (7x26) words.			
35	Qoh 2,17	15+	53	464				
36	Qoh 2,18	13+	51	477				
37	Qoh 2,19	16+	59	493				
38	Qoh 2,20	11+	39	504				
39	Qoh 2,21	18+	65	522				
40	Qoh 2,22	12+	42	534				
41	Qoh 2,23	15+	48	549				
42	Qoh 2,24	18+	64	567				
43	Qoh 2,25	7+	22	574				
44	Qoh 2,26	22/182 (7x26)	87	596/182 []				
26	Qoheleth 2	381	1439	381			Chapter 2 is sealed by 26 verses .	
44	Part I: 1,1-2,26	596	2246	596				

Observation 1 In Part I **260** (78+182) of the 596 words (44%) are highlighted by the divine name number **26**. Chapters 1 and 2 are two distinct but closely connected literary entities.

Part II		3,1-4,17			A time for everything, but life is hopeless	
45	Qoh 3,1	7	23	603	S	<p>§1 3,1-8 There is a time for every matter under the sun This S serves to draw attention to what follows. A series of 14 matters and their opposites for which there is a time. The paragraph is conceived as an undividable literary unit. From the beginning until this point: 663 (39x17) words and 52 (2x26) verses. Coincidence or a pause in the writing?</p> <p>§2 3,9-22 Life is given to us to enjoy despite injustice</p> <p>3,17 God judges the righteous and the wicked: 17 words.</p>
46	Qoh 3,2	9	31	612		
47	Qoh 3,3	8	30	620		
48	Qoh 3,4	8	28	628		
49	Qoh 3,5	11	43	639		
50	Qoh 3,6	8	29	647		
51	Qoh 3,7	8	29	655		
52	Qoh 3,8	8/67	27/240	663/67	S	
53	Qoh 3,9	6	22	669		
54	Qoh 3,10	10	38	679		
55	Qoh 3,11	23	76	702		
56	Qoh 3,12	11	38	713		
57	Qoh 3,13	12	43	725		
58	Qoh 3,14	19	80	744		
59	Qoh 3,15	12	44	756		
60	Qoh 3,16	12	48	768		
61	Qoh 3,17	17	58	785		
62	Qoh 3,18	14	54	799		
63	Qoh 3,19	25	84	824		
64	Qoh 3,20	13	40	837		
65	Qoh 3,21	14	53	851		
66	Qoh 3,22	18/206	69/747	869/206	[]	
22	Qoheleth 3	273	987	273		
67	Qoh 4,1	22	86	891		
68	Qoh 4,2	12 51 (3x17)	42	903		
69	Qoh 4,3	17	55	920		
70	Qoh 4,4	19+	63	939		
71	Qoh 4,5	7/26	24	946		
72	Qoh 4,6	9	31	955		
73	Qoh 4,7	6	23	961		
74	Qoh 4,8	31	96	992		
75	Qoh 4,9	10	35	1002		
76	Qoh 4,10	13	49	1015		
77	Qoh 4,11	9	30	1024		
78	Qoh 4,12	11	47	1035		
79	Qoh 4,13	12	42	1047		
80	Qoh 4,14	10	36	1057		
81	Qoh 4,15	13	50	1070		
82	Qoh 4,16	19	63	1089		
83	Qoh 4,17	17	67	1106	[]	
17	Qoheleth 4	237	839	237		
39	Part II: 3,1-4,17	510 (30x17)	1826	510 (30x17)		

Observation 2 The two chapters are highlighted by **510 (30x17)** and **111 (17+51+26+17)** extra words (22%).

Part III		5,1-19			Religion, pledges, poverty, and wealth	
84	Qoh 5,1	22	81	1128		<p>5,7-8 Oppression of the poor and corruption by officials Who are protected by their superiors: 26 words.</p>
85	Qoh 5,2	9	32	1137		
86	Qoh 5,3	15	53	1152		
87	Qoh 5,4	7	24	1159		
88	Qoh 5,5	23	79	1182		
89	Qoh 5,6	10	39	1192		
90	Qoh 5,7	19+	66	1211		
91	Qoh 5,8	7/26	26	1218		
92	Qoh 5,9	13	40	1231		

93	Qoh 5,10	11	46	1242	
94	Qoh 5,11	14	54	1256	
95	Qoh 5,12	10	39	1266	
96	Qoh 5,13	10	40	1276	
97	Qoh 5,14	14	54	1290	
98	Qoh 5,15	14	44	1304	
99	Qoh 5,16	9	33	1313	
100	Qoh 5,17	26	96	1339	<u>5,17</u> It is fitting for a human being to enjoy life and accept the toil God has allotted him: 26 words.
101	Qoh 5,18	21	80	1360	
102	Qoh 5,19	12	41	1372	[]
19	Part III: 5,1-19	266 (14x19)	967	266 (14x19)	Part III is sealed by 266 (14x19) words and 19 verses.
102	Parts I-III: 1-5	1372	5039	1372	Qoheleth 1-5 is sealed by 102 (6x17) verses.

Observation 3 The entire text is highlighted by its **266** words; additionally two passages are emphasized by **2x26** words: 5,7-8 and 5,17. Part III appears to have been conceived as an undividable literary unit.

Part IV		6,1-12		The futility of human endeavour	
103	Qoh 6,1	10	33	1382	
104	Qoh 6,2	28	109	1410	
105	Qoh 6,3	25	91	1435	
106	Qoh 6,4	8	28	1443	
107	Qoh 6,5	9	25	1452	This is a close-knit, cohesive literary entity finalized and sealed by 170 words.
108	Qoh 6,6	14	48	1466	The mathematical centre in terms of words is 6,9b : which contains the meaningful centre: $1491+5+1491=2987$:
109	Qoh 6,7	8	27	1474	<u>גַּם־זֶה הַבַּל וְרֵעוּת רִיחַ</u> , “This also is vanity and a striving after wind”. Being positioned in pride of place in terms of words, it is also very close to the middle of the text in terms of its 222 verses (6,9-10): $110+2+110=222$.
110	Qoh 6,8	12	41	1486	
111	Qoh 6,9	10	34	1496	
112	Qoh 6,10	15	53	1511	
113	Qoh 6,11	9	30	1520	
114	Qoh 6,12	22	75	1542	[]
12	Part IV: 6,1-12	170	594	170	

Observation 4 Part IV appears to have been conceived as an undividable literary unit, highlighted and sealed by its **170** words.

Part V		7,1-29		Wisdom and folly compared	
115	Qoh 7,1	8	29	1550	§1 7,1-13 Thirteen observations about human society
116	Qoh 7,2	18	56	1568	
117	Qoh 7,3	8	25	1576	
118	Qoh 7,4	8	31	1584	
119	Qoh 7,5	8	30	1592	
120	Qoh 7,6	11	37	1603	The paragraph is conceived as an undividable literary unit which is sealed by its 130 (5x26) words.
121	Qoh 7,7	8	27	1611	
122	Qoh 7,8	9	34	1620	
123	Qoh 7,9	9	35	1629	
124	Qoh 7,10	15	53	1644	
125	Qoh 7,11	7	26	1651	
126	Qoh 7,12	10	40	1661	
127	Qoh 7,13	11	36	1672/130	[]
128	Qoh 7,14	21	74	1693	§2 7,14-22 Accept things as they are and keep a low profile
129	Qoh 7,15	13	48	1706	<u>7,14-15</u> God sets prosperity alongside adversity: 34 words.
130	Qoh 7,16	9	33+	1715	
131	Qoh 7,17	10	32+	1725	
132	Qoh 7,18	16	47+	1741	<u>7,16-22</u> Do not be over-righteous and do not be over-wise: 78 (3x26) words.
133	Qoh 7,19	8	33+	1749	
134	Qoh 7,20	10	33+	1759	The paragraph is sealed as a literary unit by 34+78 words.
135	Qoh 7,21	14	47+	1773	The 78 words have altogether 260 letters.
136	Qoh 7,22	11	35/260	1784/112	[]

137	Qoh 7,23	9	37	1793	§3 7,23-29 In search of wisdom: it remains out of reach
138	Qoh 7,24	7	25	1800	
139	Qoh 7,25	13	59	1813	
140	Qoh 7,26	21	83	1834	
141	Qoh 7,27	9	34	1843	
142	Qoh 7,28	15	54	1858	
143	Qoh 7,29	14	52	1872/88 []	
29	Part V: 7,1-29	330	1185	330	
143	Parts I-V	1872 (72x26)	6818	1872 (72x26)	Qoheleth 1-7 is sealed by 1872 (72x26) words.

Observation 5 In Part V 242 of the 330 words (74%) are highlighted by the numbers 17 and 26.

Part VI		8,1-17		The inequalities of life	
144	Qoh 8,1	13	46	1885	§1 8,1-9 Only the king's word is absolutely sovereign
145	Qoh 8,2	8	29	1893	
146	Qoh 8,3	13	41	1906	
147	Qoh 8,4	9	30	1915	
148	Qoh 8,5	11	34	1926	
149	Qoh 8,6	11	33	1937	
150	Qoh 8,7	11	35	1948	
151	Qoh 8,8	19	74	1967	§2 8,10-13 Villains do as they like; God protects believers
152	Qoh 8,9	20	63	1987/115 []	
153	Qoh 8,10	16	64	2003	
154	Qoh 8,11	16	52	2019	
155	Qoh 8,12	19	68	2038	
156	Qoh 8,13	13	50	2051/64 []	
157	Qoh 8,14	24	93	2075	
158	Qoh 8,15	26	99	2101	
159	Qoh 8,16	21 102 (6x17)	78	2122	
160	Qoh 8,17	31	110	2153 /102 []	
17	Part VI: 8,1-17	281	999	281	Qoheleth 8 is sealed by 17 verses and 999 (27x37) letters.

Observation 6 In Part VI 102 of the 281 words (36%) are highlighted by the number 17.

Part VII		9,1-12,8		Excellence of wisdom and human duty	
161	Qoh 9,1	26	93	2179	§1 9,1-10 The righteous and the wise are in God's hand
162	Qoh 9,2	20	85	2199	
163	Qoh 9,3	23	81	2222	9,7 A living dog is better than a dead lion: 17 words. This paragraph is clearly delimited as a distinct literary entity by a Setumah. Until this point, marked by a Setumah: 170 verses.
164	Qoh 9,4	17	51	2239	
165	Qoh 9,5	15	62	2254	
166	Qoh 9,6	18	63	2272	
167	Qoh 9,7	14	49	2286	
168	Qoh 9,8	10	35	2296	
169	Qoh 9,9	28	91	2324	
170	Qoh 9,10	18/189	65/675	2342/189 S	
171	Qoh 9,11	29	103	2371	
172	Qoh 9,12	23 52 (2x26)	92	2394	
173	Qoh 9,13	9+	32	2403	9,13-18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war: 68 w.
174	Qoh 9,14	15+	58	2418	
175	Qoh 9,15	17+	59	2435	
176	Qoh 9,16	11+	54	2446	
177	Qoh 9,17	7+	35	2453	
178	Qoh 9,18	9/68 (4x17)	35	2462/120 []	
18	Qoheleth 9	309	1143	309	§3 10,1-20 Thirteen wise observations to learn from
179	Qoh 10,1	1	11	2473	
180	Qoh 10,2	6	24	2479	
181	Qoh 10,3	2	10	2489	
					Vs. 2 and 3 are about the same subject.

182	Qoh 10,4	3	13	49	2502	
183	Qoh 10,5		9	36	2511	
184	Qoh 10,6	4	7	33	2518	Vs. 5-7 are about the same subject.
185	Qoh 10,7		9	39	2527	
186	Qoh 10,8	5	8	28	2535	
187	Qoh 10,9	6	8	30	2543	
188	Qoh 10,10	7	12	49	2555	
189	Qoh 10,11	8	9	34	2564	
190	Qoh 10,12		7	27	2571	
191	Qoh 10,13	9	8	36	2579	Vs. 12-15 are about the same subject.
192	Qoh 10,14		14	52	2593	
193	Qoh 10,15		9	33	2602	
194	Qoh 10,16		8	29	2610	Vs. 16-17 are about the same subject.
195	Qoh 10,17	10	11	46	2621	
196	Qoh 10,18	11	7	34	2628	
197	Qoh 10,19	12	10	38	2638	
198	Qoh 10,20	13	20	75	2658	☐ 1,2-10,20 is sealed by 2652 (26x6x17) words.
20	Qoheleth 10	196		772	196	
199	Qoh 11,1	9		32	2667	§4 11,1-10 Wise recommendations to lead a decent life
200	Qoh 11,2	13		41	2680	
201	Qoh 11,3	18		66	2698	
202	Qoh 11,4	8		28	2706	
203	Qoh 11,5	19		68	2725	
204	Qoh 11,6	21		68	2746	
205	Qoh 11,7	7		30	2753	§§4-5 11,1-12,8 constitute a single literary unit, which is sealed by 255 (15x17) words.
206	Qoh 11,8	18		60	2771	
207	Qoh 11,9	20	255 (15x17)	86	2791	
208	Qoh 11,10	10		42	2801/143	☐
209	Qoh 12,1	19		69	2820	§5 12,1-8 Remember your Creator before your life ends
210	Qoh 12,2	12		49	2832	
211	Qoh 12,3	14		65	2846	
212	Qoh 12,4	13		55	2859	
213	Qoh 12,5	20		85	2879	
214	Qoh 12,6	17		58	2896	9,1-12,7 is sealed by 754 (29x26) words.
215	Qoh 12,7	11		43	2907	1,1-12,7 is sealed by 2907 (171x17) words.
216	Qoh 12,8	6		23	2913/112	☐ 1,2-12,8 (main body) is sealed by 2907 (171x17) words.
18	Qoh 11,1-12,8	255 (15x17)		968	255 (15x17)	11,1-12,8 is sealed by 255 (15x17) words.
56	Part VII: 9,1-12,8	760 (40x19)		2883	760 (40x19)	9,1-12,8 is sealed by 760 (40x19) words.

Observation 7 The numerical features show that the book had been finalized and sealed at this point: 12,8.

Appendix		12,9-14		Final Observations and Recommendations		
217	Qoh 12,9	14		49	2927	
218	Qoh 12,10	9		33	2936	The numerical features underline the fact that 12,9-14 is an Appendix.
219	Qoh 12,11	10+	74	50	2946	
220	Qoh 12,12	13+		48	2959	12,11-14 Final recommendations and the advice to fear God and keep his commandments: 51 (3x17) words.
221	Qoh 12,13	14+		47	2973	
222	Qoh 12,14	14/51 (3x17)		42	2987	Col. The book is concluded by a passage of 74 (2x37) words.
6	Conclusion	74		269	74	
120	Qoheleth 6-12	1615 (95x17)		5930	1615 (95x17)	Qoheleth 6-12 is sealed by 1615 (95x17) words.
222	Qoheleth 1-12	2987		10969	2987	The book as a whole is sealed by 222 (6x37) verses.

Observation 8 In Qoheleth 1-12, 649 of the 2987 words (22%) are additionally highlighted by 17 and 26. The name YHWH is totally absent, but its numerical values, 17 and 26, are woven all the way through the fabric of the text to signify YHWH's presence. The designation אלהים occurs 32x and אלהים 8x. Like the Book of Proverbs, the Book of Qoheleth is an indisputable theological writing with a strong ethical component.

I owe thanks to Klaas Eikelenboom for his useful suggestions and for having checked the whole text.