

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 8) 21 July..... Ecclesiastes 01-02..... Can I Find Meaning?
- 9) 28 July..... Ecclesiastes 03-05..... Why Do I Feel Empty?
- 10) 04 August..... Ecclesiastes 05-06..... Am I Headed For Failure?
- 11) 11 August..... Ecclesiastes 07-08..... Can I Keep On Going?
- 12) 18 August..... Ecclesiastes 09-10..... Is There Any Hope?
- 13) 25 August..... Ecclesiastes 11-12..... What is the Answer?

INTRODUCTION

- An anonymous tradition says Solomon wrote **Song of Songs** in his youth to artistically describe love; he wrote **Proverbs** in his middle years to address living wisely; then he wrote **Ecclesiastes** in his later years to deal with harsher realities of life
- Ecclesiastes is one of those books where you should read the last chapter first to capture the right perspective of the whole book
 - ♦ Ecc 12:1, 13-14 “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth” [and] “The conclusion is: fear God and keep His commandments...for God will judge every act.”
- In brief, life without knowing and living for God is a waste of time
- We also should be aware that Solomon’s golden years were marked as idolatrous. 1Kings 11:4 says “When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as his father David was”
 - ♦ Solomon was wise (he knew what to do), but he was not prudent since he chose to chase earthly pleasures and wealth, or he opted to take the path of least resistance

Passage	Comments
Ecc 1:1-3	<p>Theme: Absolute Futility – Everything Is Futile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon is not being cynical about life, but rather gives a sober assessment of meaningless pursuits in life • v2. “All is vanity” – We, as Christians, have a unique advantage in life – God wants to give us an “abundant life” – not a life filled with vain things, but abundance of meaning, purpose, and joy Luke 12:15; John 10:10 • v3. “What does a man gain...” – We have a limited amount of time & energy in this life, & given the choice most choose immediate gratification instead of staying focused on things eternal – which takes discipline
1:4-11	<p>Nothing New Under The Sun</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v4. “...the earth remains forever.” – This is a temporal perspective. We know one day the earth will “melt with heat”, though there are “scoffers” who say “all things continue as they did from the beginning”.... 2Peter 3:3-5 • vv6-7. How did Solomon know winds operate in a circular fashion (trade winds & evaporation process)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Early man, in all probability, was more intellectually superior on average than what we are today? (AIG Link: http://blogs.answersingenesis.org/blogs/kenham/2013/04/15/human-intelligence-is-declining/) ♦ Or, Solomon possibly received some hand-me-down revelation on this matter from a prophet (e.g., David) ♦ Or, there was already a knowledge base gleaned from past generations who lived hundreds of years • v8. “All things are wearisome (full of labor)” – possibly eluding to man’s insatiable appetite for more food, more pleasure, more knowledge, more everything. God didn’t make us to be bored, but to be explorers of Him and His domain – but sin has tainted that appetite <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What appetites do we have? Which ones need controlling? And which ones need to be eliminated? • vv9-11. “That which has been is that which will be...” – Is this a general or an absolute statement?

Passage	Comments
1:12-18	<p>When Does Everything Mean Everything?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v14. Pursuing God’s righteousness or other eternal pursuits is outside of the scope of “everything” that man typically pursues, such as wealth and pleasure • Solomon pursued knowledge and wisdom and apparently kept good notes • v13. [Seeking & finding wisdom] is a grievous task which God gave to the sons of men to be afflicted with” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Since Adam’s fall, work, which was initially a joyful task, can be quit unpleasant, thankless, and a waste ♦ ...and, by God’s design, it even takes work and discipline to acquire knowledge and wisdom • v18. “...increasing knowledge, increases pain” – IOW, the smarter we get, the less we really know, and the more we know, the more we are held accountable
Ecc 2:1-11	<p>Will Pleasure be the Answer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many pursuits in life seem worthwhile and noble (career, more and bigger things) but these pursuits could be overwhelmingly burdensome if pursued outside of God’s will for our lives • v3. “...I stimulated my body with wine while my mind was guiding me” – Solomon did not go on a drinking binge since he kept his wits about him, but he engaged in some unbridled activities, apparently documenting the pros and cons of alcohol, of working hard, and of “acquiring many concubines” ...and it is all VANITY!
2:12-16	<p>Will Wisdom, Madness or Folly Rule the Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone suffers the same fate → DEATH, so why try to be wise, industrious, and moral?REWARDS
2:17-26	<p>Life Seems Futile, Vain, a Waste of Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv24-25. Remember the correct perspective of this book – Life is a waste if one lives without God • v26. God looks after the righteous and seems to allow at times the wicked to support the righteous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Proverbs 13:22 “...the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just”

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- If something does not have eternal value, then it is burnt up with no heavenly reward to enjoy throughout eternity

SUPPORTING PASSAGES

- Luke 12:15** Then [Jesus] said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."
- John 10:10** I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly
- 1Corinthians 3:15** If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

NEXT WEEK: Ecclesiastes 3-5. Solomon expresses some good aspects of life such as enjoying the blessings God gives to us while making full use of the limited time and resources we have

