**THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES**

**LESSON 1 - THE VANITY OF LIFE, THE GRIEF OF WISDOM, AND THE VANITY OF PLEASURE**

**(ECCLESIASTES 1-2)**

**EXTRA INFO:** Ecclesiastes means “preacher.” In Hebrew the words Qohelet or Kohelet add that this is a preacher who gathers the people and addresses the assembly, giving us a picture of the NT Church. The preacher here is King Solomon, son of David. This book is one of the wisdom books in our Bibles. Solomon’s wisdom, like Job’s wealth, surpassed the wisdom of all the people in the east according to 1 Kings 4:30 and Job 1:3. The rabbis usually read this book on the Day of Pentecost. This book aims to answer some of life’s most challenging questions. Solomon, probably in his later years, warns the young to not go through life following human wisdom; but to only live by the revealed wisdom of God.

**DAY ONE** - Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 (The Vanity of Life)

1. *Vanity* in English pictures life as being futile, meaningless. Here it’s better translated from the Hebrew as “vapor” or “breath.” How does James 4:13-14 portray this idea?

*Answer here*

2. What does *the son of David, king in Jerusalem*, first say to his audience in verses 2-3?

*Answer here*

3. What does the Preachersay about our short lives, in verse 4, compared to the *earth*?

*Answer here*

4. How do verses 5-7 describe God’s creation continuing, day after day?

*Answer here*

5. How are verses 8-11 a kind of summary of life, as we do the same things over and over again? There is *nothing new under the sun*, nor anything that will be remembered.

*Answer here*

**DAY TWO** - Read Ecclesiastes 1:12-18 (The Grief of Wisdom)

1. As *the Preacher* identifies himself as *king over Israel in Jerusalem*, how does he describe his effort to find practical wisdom, that was more than just knowledge, in verse 13?

*Answer here*

2. How does Solomon describe all he has seen in his life *under the sun* in verses 14-15, with its fleeting character, that leaves so many unresolved issues in our lives?

*Answer here*

3. What did he say about himself in verse 16?

*Answer here*

4. What did Solomon *perceive,* in verse 17, as he set his *heart to know wisdom* *and madness and folly*?

*Answer here*

5. What does *much wisdom and increased knowledge* often lead to in verse 18?

*Answer here*

**DAY THREE** - Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 (The Vanity of Pleasure)

1. What stands out to you about what the Preacher *said in his heart* in verses 1-3, so he *might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven*?

*Answer here*

2. List some of the other things that stand out to you, about how Solomon pursued beauty in his houses and gardening projects, in verses 4-6, in order to be satisfied with his life.

*Answer here*

3. How did the Preacher pursue prestige, by all that he owned, in verses 7-8?

*Answer here*

4. What had happened to Solomon, according to verse 9, during this time?

*Answer here*

5. Then, what did he do in verses 10-11?

*Answer here*

**DAYS FOUR & FIVE** - Read Ecclesiastes 2:12-26 (The End of the Wise and the Fool)

1. As Solomon decided *to consider wisdom and madness and folly,* in verses 12-14, what conclusion did he come to?

*Answer here*

2. What did he, then, say in his heart in verses 15-16?

*Answer here*

3. What is the *therefore*, there for, in verses 17?

*Answer here*

4. Then, what else did Solomon come to *hate,* and why did he hate itin verse 18?

*Answer here*

5. What can happen, when a king passes on his kingdom to the next in line, according to verse 19?

*Answer here*

6. What happened after Solomon’s death, confirming all his fears, as his two sons divided his kingdom and squandered their opportunities in 1 Kings 12:16-19 and 14:29-30?

*Answer here*

7. Back in Ecclesiastes 2:20-23, what does the Preacher repeat about his heritage going to someone who has not worked for it, and what is his conclusion?

*Answer here*

8. Even with the limitations of this life, how do verses 24-25 tell us that we should still rejoice in the temporal joys of life?

*Answer here*

9. Life and the labor God has given us is a gift from Him to be enjoyed by all who see it coming from His hand. What does verse 26 say about this?

*Answer here*

10. And yet, what are our short lives like, in the end?

*Answer here*

**DISCUSSION:** What had the Apostle Paul learned about disappointment and failure in Philippians 4:11-13?

*Answer here*