

Ecclesiastes

Avon Heights, 4th Quarter, 2009

LESSON # 1:

Sun. Oct. 4th

Reading:

- Eccl. 1-12

Wed. Oct. 7th

Reading:

- Gen. 1-3
- Romans 8

Extra Reading:

- Ardel B. Caneday –
*“Qoheleth:
Enigmatic
Pessimist Or
Godly Sage?”*

For Sunday, Oct. 9th

1. Scan Ecclesiastes once or twice, catching its tone and large emphases. What are your first impressions after this first reading? (Note: Do not tarry over details in this scanning stage, or you may lose sight of the broad panorama.)
2. What verses from Ecclesiastes help us understand its theme? What is the theme of Ecclesiastes?
3. Even though the author is not named, what do the following verses lead us to believe about him?
 - a. 1:16
 - b. 2:4-6
 - c. 2:8
 - d. 12:9
4. Based on the man described in the following verses, who does the author of Ecclesiastes seem to be (1 Kings 4:29-31; 1 Chron. 29:25; 2 Chron. 1:7-12, 15)?
5. What suggestions have you heard for the authorship of Ecclesiastes and what reasons were given?
6. Does it matter who wrote the book? Consider the following excerpt and share what you think.

“It is true that we do not know for sure who wrote several books in the Old Testament (1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, etc.) and the New Testament (Hebrews). But Ecclesiastes is the chronicle of one man’s experience in the search for life’s meaning. Who that man is becomes important to the validity of his answers.” – Paul Earnhart

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6. If Solomon truly was the author of this book, then when might he have written it and what would that tell us about him?

7. What repeated words or phrases have you already observed in the text of Ecclesiastes? Keep looking for others during the quarter. Three examples are “vanity,” “under the sun,” and “God.” Print out a copy of Ecclesiastes, or using your Bible, underline or circle these words every time they appear. Use a different color pencil for each, for this will help you see groupings of the phrases.

8. How do you think each of the phrases listed below is used in Ecclesiastes? Write out a definition(s) beside each one and give an example from the text if you can.
 - a. “vanity” –
 - b. “under the sun” –
 - c. “wisdom” –

9. How would you outline the book of Ecclesiastes, or how have you seen it outlined before?

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For Wednesday, Oct. 12th

1. One of the words repeated in Ecclesiastes is “God.” It is used 40 times, 1 time more than the word “vanity.” The Hebrew word for “God,” is Elohim, the name used by God in the creation account. The word “Yahweh,” the covenant name of God is never used in Ecclesiastes. Evidently the creation account is important to Solomon’s worldview and arguments in Ecclesiastes, therefore we’re going to spend some time studying it to prepare us for the rest of the book.
2. Read Genesis 1. What did God conclude about **everything** He had created? Was **anything** left out of God’s declaration in 1:31? Why is this so important for us as we prepare to study Ecclesiastes?
3. In Genesis chapters 3, 4, 6-9 & 11 what happened to God’s creation?
4. What words or phrases does Solomon use in Ecclesiastes to describe the world after the fall? Give examples from specific verses if you can.
5. Read Romans 8. What did Paul say about the creation, about the world we live in?
6. Read the excerpts from Ardel B. Caneday’s article, “*Qoheleth: Enigmatic Pessimist Or Godly Sage.*” Highlight at least 5 sentences or thoughts that stood out to you. Be prepared to discuss them in class.
7. After reading Caneday’s article, what would you say about the following statement: “*Ecclesiastes is the compilation of pessimistic and cynical man who has failed to find any meaning in his lifelong search.*”