

# Ecclesiastes

Avon Heights, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2009

## LESSON # 5:

### Wed. Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>

Reading:

- Eccl. 6:1-12

### Sun. Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>

Reading:

- Eccl. 7:1-14

Extra Reading:

- "Wake Up and Smell...the Sediment"

## For Wednesday, Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>

1. Eccl. 6:1-12 begins the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle. After reading this section, write down the highlights in the Eccl. chart. Be prepared to discuss.

### Eccl. 6:1-6

2. What is the vanity, the grievous ill that Solomon had witnessed in 6:1-2? Why would God do this?
3. In 6:3, who is better off than this man?
4. In 6:4-5, what has the stillborn child found that the discontented man lacks?

5. In 6:6, what fate is common to all men no matter how long they live?
6. Read Pro. 1:7. What is the difference between the man in Eccl. 5:19 and the man in Eccl. 6:2? Be prepared to discuss your answer.

### Eccl. 6:6-9

7. What do all people work for in 6:7?
8. What is the answer to Solomon's questions in 6:8?
9. What does Solomon mean in 6:9 when he says, "Better what the eye sees than the roving of his appetite"?

### Eccl. 6:10-12

10. In 6:10-12, is the man looking under the sun able to make sense of his life?
11. Read Is. 45:9-13. Who knows "what is good for mortals"? What hope do we have of understanding life? Remember Pro. 1:7, Eccl. 5:7 and Eccl. 8:5.

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## For Sunday, Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>

In the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle, Solomon provides an answer to the questions of 6:12: “Who knows what is good...?” The answer is repeatedly found in Eccl. 7:1-8:13. The answer is...the wise man does! As Kidner points out, “The author now brings in a stimulating change of style and approach. Instead of reflecting and arguing, he will bombard us with proverbs, and their strong impact and varied angles of attack.”

### Eccl. 7:1-6

1. Eccl. 7:1-14 is part of the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle. After reading this section, write down the highlights in the Eccl. chart. Be prepared to discuss.
2. What does Solomon say is better in 7:1-6?
3. What do the following phrases mean?
  - a. v. 2 – *“the living will lay it to heart”*
  - b. v. 3 – *“because a sad face is good for the heart”*
4. Read Psalm 90:1-12. How does verse 12 connect with what Solomon is saying here?
5. What does Jesus say about sorrow in Matt. 5:4?
6. Read *“Wake Up and Smell...the Sediment”*. When was the first time something sobering made you think about your mortality and life after death? What are some of the things people do to keep from thinking about these things?
7. According to vs. 5-6, what is better than the praise of fools? See also Ps. 141:5 and Pro. 27:5-6. Can you think of any instances in the Bible where people heeded the rebuke of a wise man, or maybe someone sought the song of fools? What about in your life? Have people lovingly rebuked you before, or maybe you distracted yourself from spiritual maturity by seeking “the song of fools”?

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## **Eccl. 7:7-10**

8. In these verses Solomon provides instruction and warnings to those undergoing oppression. In v. 7, what does a wise man need to be conscious of as he endures oppression?
  
9. In v. 8, what is better and why? Consider Jas. 1:2-4.
  
10. In v. 9, what is one of the dangers of suffering injustice?
  
11. According to v. 10, what do we tend to do in the midst of suffering? What benefit does Solomon see in this?
  
12. What possession is of the highest value in vs. 11-12 and why?
  
13. What is it that Solomon wants us to consider in vs. 13-14? What does a man learn when he sees the good times as a gift from God (Eccl. 5:19)? What does a man learn when he sees difficult times as something God gives (Eccl. 3:18)?

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## Wake Up and Smell...the Sediment

By Robert Wolgemuth

I'm a morning person. Ninety-five percent of the time, I'm the first one to the office. Some of this is sheer enthusiasm for the day and some of it is trying to keep up with the smart ones (if you were in the slow group in grade school too, you know what I mean).

Anyway, the first job of the day is making coffee. Over the years, I have become pretty adept at this challenging task. But there's something about making the coffee that makes me angry. If you've come across this, you'll know exactly what I mean.

Sometimes, when I get to the coffee maker, I discover that the last person out of the office the day before neglected to turn it off. And there, at the bottom of the glass carafe are six or eight cups of hot coffee reduced to a putrid, rock-hard sediment. (Shades of high school chemistry class.) The coffee room smells like a dirty sock.

Having come across this the other day, I started thinking about it in terms of human life. The day we were born, God filled us with fresh hot life and put us on a slow-heating burner. From that moment until the day we die, you and I are being reduced to sediment at the bottom of life's coffee carafe. At our funerals, people will pass by our caskets and view these remains. Someone will deliver a eulogy, and our entire lifetime will be reduced to a three-minute speech.

Is this fair? No. Is this the way it is? Yes.

And we can't say that we weren't warned. From our first report card to our last performance review, countless hours of tireless work are reduced to one single letter grade or one forgettable raise in pay. How could all this labor and effort be summarized so concisely, so briefly, so abruptly? But it is.

Although we don't know what inspired King Solomon to write today's text, it sounds a lot like he jotted these words down right after attending someone's funeral. Maybe the experience of listening to a man's eulogy made him take a hard look at what was important in life. "What am I doing that's a complete waste of time?" he might have mused. Or, "What should I be doing with my time that I've been completely avoiding?"

*"Death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart...a sad face is good"* (72b-3b), Solomon wrote, almost sounding happy about this experience of mourning. These are powerful thoughts.

Waking up and smelling the sediment has a way of pulling our lives back in line. Don't waste your time today on things that will vanish in the steam. Never forget this.

Oh, and if you're the last one out, please turn off the coffee maker. Thanks.