

ROUTE 66
Session Number Five
Wednesday, January 15, 2014

1 Today we continue our study of THE BOOKS OF WISDOM - OR OTHERWISE
2 KNOWN AS THE POETIC OF THE BIBLE. They are

- 3 • Job
- 4 • Psalms
- 5 • Proverbs
- 6 • Ecclesiastes
- 7 • Song of Songs (of Solomon)

8
9 Last week we surveyed the first three of those books and so tonight it's Ecclesiastes and
10 Song of Solomon.

11
12 Here are all the biblical books we have checked so far:

13 **TORAH:** Genesis / Exodus / Leviticus / Numbers / Deuteronomy

14 **HISTORICAL BOOKS:** Joshua / Judges / Ruth / I and II Samuel / I and II Kings / I
15 and II Chronicles / Ezra / Nehemiah / Esther

16 ...and the afore mentioned Poetic books (line 3-7 on this page)

ECCLESIASTES

17
18
19
20 Early in his reign, King Solomon, son and successor to King David, asked the Lord for
21 wisdom. Sadly, long before his demise, Solomon had given way to materialism and lust.
22 While his book of Proverbs showed the wisdom of God, Ecclesiastes reveals the
23 foolishness of Solomon. What a stark contrast!

24
25 The word "Ecclesiastes" comes from the Greek word for "preacher" or "teacher."

26
27 We read how Solomon abused his own life with his insane pursuit of career success,
28 material things, alcohol, pleasure and other vices guaranteed to take him away from
29 God's blessings.

30
31 What caused Solomon's downfall? Primarily women. Lots and lots of women. He
32 took hundreds of wives and mistresses (concubines) from foreign lands, importing their
33 idolatry. Because of his affection for them, his love for God was put on a far-away
34 shelf, so to speak. This book, while largely depressing, encourages the follower of
35 Christ to draw as close to the Lord as possible.

1 Eccles. 1:1-3

2 **The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. [2] Vanity of**
3 **vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. [3] What profit hath a man**
4 **of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?**

5
6 Strange response from a man who asked God for wisdom - and was granted his request.
7 But **WHAT KIND OF WISDOM?** Solomon did not asks for spiritual wisdom but
8 rather: 1 Kings 3:9 **Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge**
9 **thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this**
10 **thy so great a people?**

11
12 The king was so gifted in national leadership, enhancing what historians call "Israel's
13 Golden Age." But when it came to spiritual wisdom, he missed the boat. Without God
14 life is nothing more than "vanity."

15
16

Now Solomon begins to list all the things he sought for in life - and achieved for the most part, but they brought him no lasting fulfillment:
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17
18 **EARTH SCIENCE**

19
20 Eccles. 1:5-7 [New Living Translation]

21 **The sun rises and sets and hurries around to rise again. [6] The wind blows south and**
22 **north, here and there, twisting back and forth, getting nowhere. [7] The rivers run into**
23 **the sea, but the sea is never full. Then the water returns again to the rivers and flows**
24 **again to the sea.**

25
26 Solomon was well educated - which all of us should be as thoroughly as possible. We
27 may not attend colleges or universities but we can all READ. The statement listed
28 above regarding laws of nature are known to be valid even today. But when his older
29 years came upon him, that knowledge was not enough to sustain him. (Please note: this
30 is NOT a knock on education or science; simply a statement that life requires more than
31 that.)

32
33 **WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY**

34
35 Eccles. 1:17 [NLT]

36 **So I worked hard to distinguish wisdom from foolishness. But now I realize that**
37 **even this was like chasing the wind.**

1 PLEASURE

2
3 Eccles. 2:1-11

4 I said to myself, "Come now, let's give pleasure a try. Let's look for the 'good things'
5 in life." But I found that this, too, was meaningless. [2] "It is silly to be laughing all the
6 time," I said. "What good does it do to seek only pleasure?" [3] After much thought,
7 I decided to cheer myself with wine. While still seeking wisdom, I clutched at
8 foolishness. In this way, I hoped to experience the only happiness most people find
9 during their brief life in this world.

10 [4] I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and by planting
11 beautiful vineyards. [5] I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit
12 trees. [6] I built reservoirs to collect the water to irrigate my many flourishing groves.
13 [7] I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I
14 also owned great herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who lived in Jerusalem
15 before me. [8] I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and
16 provinces. I hired wonderful singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful
17 concubines. I had everything a man could desire!

18 [9] So I became greater than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. And
19 with it all, I remained clear-eyed so that I could evaluate all these things. [10] Anything
20 I wanted, I took. I did not restrain myself from any joy. I even found great pleasure in
21 hard work, an additional reward for all my labors. [11] But as I looked at everything
22 I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless. It was like chasing the
23 wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

24
25 That's quite a picture of our present-day Western culture, isn't it? Mad for pleasure!
26 Anxious for bigger and better everything - and then you get it and you set the standard
27 even higher.

28
29 FATALISM (Que Sera' - "Whatever Will Be Will Be")

30
31 Eccles. 3:1-8

32 There is a time for everything,
33 a season for every activity under heaven.

34 [2] A time to be born and a time to die.

35 A time to plant and a time to harvest.

36 [3] A time to kill and a time to heal.

37 A time to tear down and a time to rebuild.

38 [4] A time to cry and a time to laugh.

39 A time to grieve and a time to dance.

40 [5] A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones.

1 **A time to embrace and a time to turn away.**
2 **[6] A time to search and a time to lose.**
3 **A time to keep and a time to throw away.**
4 **[7] A time to tear and a time to mend.**
5 **A time to be quiet and a time to speak up.**
6 **[8] A time to love and a time to hate.**
7 **A time for war and a time for peace.**
8

9 This mind set negates the brain God gave you to use for His glory. God gave you a will
10 (which He will not over-ride) and a reasoning capacity. To sit back and allow "life" to
11 run all over you is foolish.
12

13 RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

14
15 There is often a lot of emotion in religion - some of it valid, some of it pretty shallow and
16 vapid. Some people have been saved a thousand times (they think). Here is Solomon's
17 conclusion about that:
18

19 Eccles. 5:2

20 **And don't make rash promises to God, for he is in heaven, and you are only here**
21 **on earth. So let your words be few.**
22

I don't have a real quarrel with some revivals of recent vintage; however, I look at the venues of those "outpourings" and there is not much there. One place in particular (which I visited) was known around the world for the "revival." When it ended there was nothing left - only a handful of people, millions of dollars of debt and a shambles of reputation. On the other hand, First Assembly (which is a moderately-conservative church) in that same period of time continues to grow by the grace of God and has invested millions upon millions of dollars in missions - orphanages, churches, feeding stations, Bible schools, and support of hundreds of missionaries. Now I ask you - logically and scripturally, which is the "real revival?"

23 Eccles. 5:7

24 **Dreaming all the time instead of working is foolishness. And there is ruin in a**
25 **flood of empty words. Fear God instead.**
26

27 Over the past 50 years I have seen a lot of "dreamers" come and go. There are valid
28 spiritual dreams, to be sure, as evidenced by Joel chapter 2. But many of those "dreams"
29 are the result of late-night pizza. What about discipleship? Faithfulness to God in the
30 very real world?

1 There are several shorter chapters that follow that deal believing our own morality can
2 save us....with being spiritually lukewarm....and similar issues.

4 ON MARRIAGE

6 Eccles. 9:9 [NLT]

7 **Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that**
8 **God has given you in this world. The wife God gives you is your reward for all your**
9 **earthly toil.**

10
11 I love our children....I love this church. But the greatest joy of my life is my wife of
12 nearly 58 years, Darlene. It is a tragedy that some church people have drab and dreary
13 marriages. The romance has gone. God never meant for it to be that way.

15 DOING GOOD THINGS WILL NOT SAVE YOU
16 BUT SAVED PEOPLE DO GOOD THINGS.

18 Eccles. 11:1-2

19 **Give generously, for your gifts will return to you later. [2] Divide your gifts among**
20 **many, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead.**

21
22 This is a simple lesson - do good to as many people as you possibly can. I love the list of
23 the FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, listed by Paul in Galatians 5:22: **But when the Holy**
24 **Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace,**
25 **patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.**

26
27 We are known by our FRUIT and not by our gifts.

29 CHAPTER TWELVE

30
31 This final chapter of Ecclesiastes is very famous. It is a poetic picture of old age.

32
33 Eccles. 12:1-14

34 **Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in**
35 **your youth before you grow old and no longer enjoy living. [2] It will be too late then**
36 **to remember him, when the light of the sun and moon and stars is dim to your old eyes,**
37 **and there is no silver lining left among the clouds. [3] Your limbs will tremble with age,**
38 **and your strong legs will grow weak. Your teeth will be too few to do their work, and**
39 **you will be blind, too. [4] And when your teeth are gone, keep your lips tightly closed**
40 **when you eat! Even the chirping of birds will wake you up. But you yourself will be**

1 deaf and tuneless, with a quavering voice. [5] You will be afraid of heights and of
2 falling, white-haired and withered, dragging along without any sexual desire. You will
3 be standing at death's door. And as you near your everlasting home, the mourners will
4 walk along the streets.

5 [6] Yes, remember your Creator now while you are young, before the silver cord of
6 life snaps and the golden bowl is broken. Don't wait until the water jar is smashed at
7 the spring and the pulley is broken at the well. [7] For then the dust will return to the
8 earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

9 [8] "All is meaningless," says the Teacher, "utterly meaningless."

10 [9] Because the Teacher was wise, he taught the people everything he knew. He
11 collected proverbs and classified them. [10] Indeed, the Teacher taught the plain truth,
12 and he did so in an interesting way.

13 [11] A wise teacher's words spur students to action and emphasize important truths.
14 The collected sayings of the wise are like guidance from a shepherd.

15 [12] But, my child, be warned: There is no end of opinions ready to be expressed.
16 Studying them can go on forever and become very exhausting!

17 [13] Here is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is the
18 duty of every person. [14] God will judge us for everything we do, including every
19 secret thing, whether good or bad.

20
21 What a marvelous, practical book God has given us! May we learn from it!

22 23 THE SONG OF SOLOMON

24
25 There can be little question about the author of this holy book:

26
27 Song of Songs 1:1 The song of songs, which is Solomon's. Some modern
28 commentaries ponder the authorship. Verse 1 is very explanatory.

29 30 TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

31
32 1. One concept is that it is a book about sex between a married man a married woman -
33 married to each other. There is reason to follow that line of reasoning.

34
35 2. The basic Christian concept is that Song of Solomon is allegorical; that is the book is
36 an analogy for the love between Christ and His follower.

37
38 I believe there is truth in both concepts. In this book is caught the story of a romantic
39 drama. In it, the king (Solomon) has fallen in love with a country girl. Solomon was a
40 Jew, of course, and it's possible his lover is a black woman. Some say that she was only

1 sun-burned from working in the fields for in verses 5 and 6 we discover: Song 1:5-6

2 **I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the**
3 **curtains of Solomon. [6] Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun**
4 **hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the**
5 **keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.**

6
7 Back and forth these two exchange love notes or songs.

8
9 Song 1:4

10 **"Take me with you. Come, let's run! Bring me into your bedroom, O my king."**

11 TLB

12
13 He replies: Song 1:9-11

14 **What a lovely filly you are, my beloved one! [10] How lovely are your cheeks, with**
15 **your earrings setting them afire! How stately is your neck, accented with a long**
16 **string of jewels. [11] We will make earrings of gold for you and beads of silver." No**
17 **cheapskate here!**

18
19 Their love notes get downright steamy:

20
21 Song 1:12-14

22 **"The king is lying on his couch, enchanted by the fragrance of my perfume. [13] My**
23 **lover is like a sachet of myrrh lying between my breasts. [14] He is like a bouquet of**
24 **flowers in the gardens of En-gedi." (En-gedi is the canyon on the west side of the**
25 **Dead Sea, known as the well-watered oasis where David hid in the caves from Saul. I**
26 **have hiked that canyon at least 25 times through the years.)**

27
28 Solomon knows how to "sweet-talk:" Song 4:1-7

29 **Young Man: "How beautiful you are, my beloved, how beautiful! Your eyes behind**
30 **your veil are like doves. Your hair falls in waves, like a flock of goats frisking down**
31 **the slopes of Gilead. [2] Your teeth are as white as sheep, newly shorn and washed.**
32 **They are perfectly matched; not one is missing. [3] Your lips are like a ribbon of**
33 **scarlet. Oh, how beautiful your mouth! Your cheeks behind your veil are like**
34 **pomegranate halves—lovely and delicious. [4] Your neck is as stately as the tower of**
35 **David, jeweled with the shields of a thousand heroes. [5] Your breasts are like twin**
36 **fawns of a gazelle, feeding among the lilies. [6] Before the dawn comes and the**
37 **shadows flee away, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of**
38 **frankincense. [7] You are so beautiful, my beloved, so perfect in every part.**

39
40 Aren't you relieved to know that this girl still had all her teeth? (Vs. 2)

1 A husband and wife could learn something about the treatment of each other from this
2 charming holy book. But even more we learn something about our relationship to
3 Christ. That relationship is not the cold "religious" Sunday morning Christianity that
4 becomes ritualistic and boring. It is the ever-growing deep romance of choicest love
5 between Christ and His follower.

6
7 Note how this book ends with the woman (the Christian) saying to her lover (Christ):
8 Song 8:14 **"Come quickly, my love! Move like a swift gazelle or a young deer on
9 the mountains of spices."**

10
11 May that be the yearning of every follower of Christ, not a cold and calculating recitation
12 that comes from a book and not the heart. Every husband and wife should express their
13 love to each other every day – I mean every day!! And even more so, the believer in
14 Jesus should express deepest heart-felt love to the Lord daily – and listen carefully for His
15 response. His response will come!

16
17
18 Next week I will be in Springfield for Executive Presbyter meetings. In two weeks we
19 begin the study of the Old Testament prophets. I will take some time with them so let's
20 not be in a hurry to get through them. They are too rich and meaningful!