ECCLESIASTES

BIBLE SURVEY III



BACKGROUND

- The writer is Solomon, the most prosperous King of Israel, and likely of the entire world.
- He had peace in the kingdom and with neighbors.
- He had wealth beyond compare, and denied himself nothing.
- He had wisdom beyond compare.
- Yet Solomon was unsatisfied.

THE DREARY CYCLE OF LIFE

- Solomon starts off by recounting the dreary cycle of life. There is nothing new.
- Nature repeats day after day.
- There is no remembrance of the prior glories by the present.
- There will be no remembrance of later glories by the future.

WHAT ABOUT WISDOM?

- Solomon sought to increase his wisdom.
- He found no joy in wisdom … only grief and increasing pain.
- He found that the works done by men are just vanity, and striving after the wind.

WHAT ABOUT POSSESSIONS?

- Solomon sought after possessions.
- He found that they too gave no lasting joy.
- He sought it by acquiring houses and gardens and slaves and wealth.
- Still he found there was no satisfaction in it.

SOME SOUGHT SATISFACTION IN OPPRESSION

- In Eccl 4:1-3, neither oppressors, nor their oppressed had any comfort.
- So Solomon congratulates those who are dead, rather than those who were living.
- But better than the living on the dead, Solomon congratulates those who never existed!
- Well, how do you congratulate one who does not exist?

SOME SOUGHT SATISFACTION IN WORK

- In Eccl 4:4-12 some sought satisfaction in work.
- But he notes that every work on earth is the result of rivalry.
- Rivalry and competition is the essence of business.
- He observes in passing that cooperation is better than competition.
- Still, it is all vanity!

SOME SOUGHT SATISFACTION IN HOARDED RICHES

- In Eccl 5:8-17 we see those who yearn for wealth.
- Eccl 5:10 *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.*
- Often men yearn for wealth that is unrighteously gained.
- 1 Tim 6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs*.

SOME SOUGHT SATISFACTION IN HOARDED RICHES

- Often hoarders do not live to enjoy their possessions.
- In Luke 12:16, the Lord tells the parable of the rich man who was planning to expand his thriving business.
- But God said to him "*You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared*?"
- Jesus then said "*So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God*."

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

- Is it to obtain satisfaction in this world?
- Is it to have a secure retirement?
- Is to leave a legacy for your family?
- Is it to be remembered fondly?
- Eccl 2:22-23 *For what does a man get in all his labor and in his striving with which he labors under the sun? Because all his days his task is painful and grievous; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is vanity.*

WHY WERE WE PUT IN THIS WORLD?

- It is a deep question we have all asked at one point or the other.
- Why am I here?
- What am I to do with my life?
- Why am I not be satisfied with anything here?

WHY WERE WE PUT IN THIS WORLD?

- There is a clue in Eccl 3:11 *… He has also set eternity in their heart …*
- C.S. Lewis said that we were designated for Eternity, for fellowship with God.
- We will be satisfied with nothing less than Him.
- Not wealth, nor health, nor fame, nor power, not relationships, nothing of this earth will satisfy us.

WHY WERE WE PUT IN THIS WORLD?

- It is not to seek things in this kingdom.
- It is to seek His Kingdom!
- Matt 6:33 *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*
- We were made for eternity, not for this temporal world.
- Nothing here, not even our relationships and family, will fully satisfy us.

WHY WERE WE PUT IN THIS WORLD?

- We need to seek a relationship with Christ!
- We need to seek His Kingdom.
- Only that will give us true satisfaction.
- 2 Cor 4:18 *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*.

COUNSEL FOR LIVING

- In Eccl 7-12 Solomon turns to Counsel for Living.
- Col 3:1-3 *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

COUNSEL FOR LIVING

- Heb 9:27 *… it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgement.*
- Eccl 12:14 *For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil*.
- Life is brief, and then we will all give an account of ourselves to God.

COUNSEL FOR LIVING

- For unbelievers judgment is at the Great White Throne of Judgment.
- Unbelievers will be judged as they desired, according to their own works, according to their own righteousness.
- Rev 20:15 *… and if anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire*.

COUNSEL FOR LIVING

- For believers judgment is at the Mercy Seat (Bema Seat).
- Our judgment is for rewards. Our place in eternity with the Lord is secure is due to His work on the cross, His righteousness!
- 1 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

HOW THEN SHOULD WE LIVE?

- Eccl 12:1-8 *Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil years come …*
- Solomon counsels us to remember our Creator.
- Solomon pictures old age like a gathering storm, where the sun and moon are darkened, and the clouds return.
- Solomon then describes old age like an old house!

OUR EARTHLY LIFE WILL FADE

- The watchmen tremble – weak arms and hands.
- The mighty men stoop – weak legs.
- The grinding ones stand idle because they are few – few teeth.
- Those who look through the windows grow dim – weak eyes.

OUR EARTHLY LIFE WILL FADE

- The doors are shut – deaf ears.
- Arise at the sound of a bird – light sleep.
- Pitcher is shattered – fragile life is lost.
- Spirit will return to God who gave it.
- This is our ultimate destiny … our spirit will return to God who gave it!

ENJOY LIFE!

- Eccl 9:7-9 *Go then, eat your bread in happiness … Enjoy life with the woman whom you love … for this is your reward …*
- Rest in Him, for He desires us to enjoy our life here.
- Remember that our future, our eternity, is with Him!

REMEMBER GOD

- Eccl 11:9 *Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of life. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things.*
- Eccl 12:13-14 *… fear God and keep His commandments … for God will bring every act to judgment …*

OUR ETERNITY IS SECURE!

- John 10:10 *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*
- Ps 91:14-16 *Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him, I will set him securely on high because he has known my name. He will call upon Me and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him, and let him see My salvation.*
- Rest in Him, for He desires us to have an abundant life here, and also in eternity.