

1. Solomon, for all his wisdom, sowed the seeds of his kingdom's dissolution.

2. 1 Kings 10:23 - Key verse: "King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth."

3. Solomon's naval ships were in Ezion Geber, on the shore of the Red Sea, and gave him control of the trade coming from the Orient.

4. Solomon fortified and improved the empire he inherited from his father - archaeologists have uncovered a great many of his building projects.

5. Megiddo, one of Solomon's fortified cities, has been extensively excavated:
 - a. Work began there in 1903.
 - b. The mound is 15 acres; the slope another 35 acres, and the depth is as much as 72 feet.
 - c. The work stopped in 1939 due to World War II.
 - d. Yigal Yadin identified Solomon's level at Megiddo as "stratum 4" and the following were uncovered there:
 - 1) Public buildings on the top of the stratum
 - 2) 2 stable compounds covering 1/5 of the area of the city
 - 3) City wall, massive gate, and palace in the southern portion
 - 4) The gate was built of 3 rows of hewn stone...also the description of Solomon's house in 1 Kings 7
 - 5) Charred pieces of cedar wood were excavated.
 - 6) Impressive water system

6. The apologetic value of archaeology in confirming the Old Testament historical accounts is invaluable.

7. Solomon, in spite of all his wisdom, failed to finish well.

1. Solomon, for all his wisdom, did not finish well. With 700 wives and 300 concubines, and all the children they produced, he had little time for active parenting.

2. What went wrong with Solomon?

a. He disobeyed God and accumulated wealth, horses and wives.

b. He depended too much on His wisdom, a marvelous gift from God, but forgot the Giver.

c. He depended on his wealth to give him what he needed, and ceased to remember that God was the source of his wealth. He did not share his wealth with his people.

d. His wives led him into idolatry. Jerusalem, which should have been the center of worship for the One True God, became a virtual supermarket of gods and goddesses.

3. Solomon's kingdom was given to him and to his descendants permanently, but conditionally. (1 Kings 9)

a. Some of God's promises, like the one to Noah about never again flooding the whole earth, are Unconditional.

b. When there are "ifs" or "thens" in the promise, they are conditional.

4. What about salvation? Is it conditional or unconditional?

5. God gave Solomon many precious gifts. But Solomon fell guilty to the sin of presumption. He forgot they were for the glory of God, not for his own glory.

1. Ecclesiastes is a perplexing and fascinating book. The author's description fits that of Solomon.

- a. A son of David
- b. King over Israel in Jerusalem
- c. A teacher
- d. One who is devoted to explore wisdom
- e. Wiser than any who ruled over Jerusalem before him

2. Perspective:

Psalm 127: Anchor verse for our study of Ecclesiastes - "Unless the Lord build the house, its builders labor in vain." Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 - "Now that all has been heard, here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment including every hidden thing whether it is good or evil."

3. St Augustine: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man and only God can fill it."

4. Apart from God all is "meaningless" - Ecclesiastes 1: "There is nothing new under the sun."

5. Chapter 2: If knowledge and education are not the answer, then perhaps it is found in experience, in pleasure. But this too did not bring meaning.

6. "This too is meaningless... a chasing after the wind." Meaning can only be found in "the understanding that there really is a God who is there and who gives meaning and supplies purpose in the revelation He has given of Himself."

1. The Book of Ecclesiastes is written from the perspective of one who reasons without the benefit of God's revelation - from the perspective of "under the sun".

2. "To everything, turn, turn, turn -
There is a season, turn turn, turn -
And a time for every purpose under heaven."

3. The teacher is very good at asking questions, but not so good at answering them, because he is reasoning from his human wisdom.

4. "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." We have a longing for the God who created us.

5. The pessimism of the man who tries to understand life without reference to God is seen in its boldest and most extreme form at the end of chapter 3. "Man's fate is like that of the animals..."

6. Take as much pleasure out of the work you find to do today, because there is nothing more coming - this is where materialism leads.

7. Extreme pessimism in chapter 4 - The dead are better off than the living, and better still those who not been born.

8. It is realism as well - and illustrates the total depravity of man.

9. In the midst of all his gloom and doom, the writer pens some wonderful little proverbs like this one: "Two are better than one..." We need each other.

1. Until the end of the book, the writer is writing from a “without God” perspective, so it is pessimistic, fatalistic and unchristian.

2. Review:

- a. Solomon has given us an impression of the restlessness and cyclical nature of life.
- b. He has tried the building of buildings, the pleasure of art, and the satisfaction of work well done. But these do not stand the acid test of death.
- c. He has talked about tyranny and cruelty which make death seem better than life.
- d. The inevitability of death has created bitterness and confusion.
- e. 1 Corinthians 15 - There is hope; death is not final; we too will rise.

3. Solomon revisits the theme of man’s sinfulness. It is universal. (Chapter 7, verse 20)

4. “At the end of (chapter 7), he says: “This only have I found: God made man upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes.” God made us in His image, perfect and without sin, but in the words of another Old Testament writer, “All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.” And that is why the Lord had to lay on Him, Christ, “the iniquity of us all.”

5. Chapter 8:11 - “When a sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.” God’s patience is often misunderstood to mean that He will not punish sin, but this is not true.