

1. The main themes of Solomon's quest for meaning "under the sun":
 - a. Experience - meaningless
 - b. Hedonism - meaningless
 - c. Wealth - meaningless
 - d. Fatalism and determinism - meaningless
 - e. Philosophic systems that have dominated the thinking of mankind without including God - meaningless

2. Ecclesiastes is a thoroughly modern book.
 - a. The phenomenal realm - what we can measure by our 5 senses - modern man believes this is all we can know.
 - b. The nominal realm - ultimate realities way beyond the limit of our senses are there but they are unknowable, according to Kant and those who believe as he did.
 - c. Once you lose the concept of revelation, you are left with only the 5 senses, and everything becomes "meaningless".

3. Chapter 9's beginning thought - there is no difference between the righteous and unrighteous because their destiny is the same. Without revelation, life is meaningless because there is nothing more.

4. The interference of "time and chance" also makes the writer feel pessimistic.

5. Even in the midst of his gloom, he offers some good advice:
 - a. "The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of the ruler of fools."
 - b. "If a man is lazy the rafters will sag..."
 - c. "Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words and a bird on the wing may report what you say."

6. In chapter 12 we begin to see what Solomon has been doing in this Book of Ecclesiastes and his conclusion is: "Of the making of books there is no end, and much study wears the body... 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."

7. The fact that God IS there and that at the end, God is absolutely committed to justice, is what gives life meaning and purpose. So, "Remember your Creator now in the days of your youth."

8. "There is a reason to be righteous, there is optimism and hope because good will triumph, because God is judge."
 - a. The doctrine of judgment - that God does stand as judge at the end of time - is of immense importance.
 - b. It provides motivation for living holy lives.
 - c. There are higher motives, like gratitude for what Jesus did for us on the cross, to live holy lives, but 'judgment' is a legitimate motive.

9. There is meaning in life, because there is revelation, there is God, and there is a judgment. We as human beings are made by God and accountable to Him.

1. The Book of the Song of Songs is a love poem.
2. It is written like a play with 2 main characters, the groom and the Shulammitte maiden.
3. This book is different than any other in the Bible.
 - a. Early Jewish rabbis have attempted to explain this by interpreting it as an allegory.
 - b. Early Christian writers explain it as a “type” of Christ and His church.
4. The song “His Banner over me is Love” comes from today’s reading.
5. The book can be read and understood as a “type”, but it can also be read and understood for what it is:
 - a. The courtship of Solomon and the Shulammitte maiden
 - b. God takes delight in the proper relationship between a man and a woman.
 - c. God established the marriage relationship and His delight in it includes the physical and sexual part of it.
6. This book is a 3-act play:
 - a. Act 1 - We meet the Shulammitte maiden
 - *She lived 50 miles north of Jerusalem
 - *Her family maintained a vineyard, owned by King Solomon
 - *She worked in the vineyard, pruning, setting traps, keeping the flocks and getting sunburned.
 - * One day she met a mysterious stranger, who turned out to be Solomon, but he was disguised at this point.
 - *He fell in love with her and promised to return.

To be continued tomorrow....

1. Recap:

- a. It is a 3-act play with 2 primary characters and a chorus standing off to the side somewhere interjecting observations and encouragement.
- b. In the first act, the Shulammitte maiden meets a mysterious stranger who professes his love for her but remains anonymous.
- c. It is possible that Solomon, despite his many wives, wondered if someone who did know who he was would love him.

2. Act 2:

- a. The stranger leaves and promises to return.
- b. The maiden dreams about him twice.
 - *In one dream they were married, but one night she woke up to find him missing from their bed.
 - *In the second dream, her lover returns but she does not get up to open the door and he leaves, after which she goes about the city searching for him and finally finds him in the garden.
- c. Why did he leave her? Where did he go? Would he ever return?

3. Act 3: The mighty monarch returns

- a. She is not interested that the king is coming to Shulam.
- b. But he wants to see her, and then she recognizes him as her “beloved shepherd.”
- c. She returns with him to be his ‘choice wife’

4. This appears to be story of the king and his wife that has application to the relationship that exists between Christ and His church.

5. The descriptions of the Shulammitte maiden and Solomon teach us some important things about Bible interpretation:

- a. We cannot take her description literally - this is poetic language. If the description in Chapter 7 were taken literally, she would look quite interesting!
- b. We cannot forget the literal entirely and try to make everything allegorical, typical or symbolic. Her description of Solomon does give us a hint of what he looked like, though the language is still poetic.

1. Introduction: The Book of Ephesians has been described as “the crown of Paul’s writings”, “the divinest composition of man”, and “the queen of all epistles”. One of the great themes of Ephesians is the relationship that exists between Christ and His church. It is a twin to the Epistle to the Colossians. Both the letter to the Ephesians and the one to the Colossians were written while Paul was imprisoned in Rome, as described in Acts 28. Whether “Ephesians” was written to the church at Ephesus or to a broader group really makes no difference, as it is quite clear that it is meant for all of us.

5. John Stott’s outline from God’s New Society:

- a. Ephesians 1:3 - 2:10 - The new life which God has given us in Christ
- b. Ephesians 2:11 - 3:21 - The new society which God has created through Christ
- c. Ephesians 4:1 - 5:21 - New standards God expects of His new society, unity & purity
- d. Ephesians 5:21 - 6:24 - The new relationship into which God has brought us, harmony in the home and hostility toward the devil

6. Like all of Paul’s letters, the first part deals with doctrine and the second part deals with practical Christian living.

7. Paul’s prayers:

a. 1:15ff *He prays for God to give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so they can know Him better *He prays for our eyes to be enlightened *To know hope *To know the riches of our inheritance found in Christ *To understand His incomparably great power

b. 3:15ff *He prays for God to strengthen us with power through the indwelling Spirit of Christ *That we might be rooted and grounded in love *To have power * To grasp the love of Christ *To be filled with the fullness of God Himself

8. The Church:

- a. It is the body of Christ and He is its head.
- b. Christ rules all things for His church, along with the body.
- c. It is the household of God.
- d. He has adopted us into His own family.
- e. It is the temple of God - His dwelling place. He indwells each individual.
- f. The church is a mystery planned by God from before the foundations of the world, uniting Jews and gentiles to the praise of His glory.

9. The theme of salvation:

- a. Salvation begins with God.
- b. Salvation is accomplished through the work of Christ.
- c. Salvation has abolished the wall between Jew and Gentile by bringing us near through the work of Christ on the cross. It is by grace, not works (Ephesians 2:8,9 - memorize it!)
- d. Salvation is through faith to every individual who believes.
- e. The Holy Spirit seals that salvation.
- f. Our salvation is for the purpose of bringing great glory to God.

1. Today we read the “practical Christian living” part of this Epistle, which is also divided into parts:

- a. The new standards which God expects of His new society, especially in regards to purity and unity. (Chapter 4 and the first part of chapter 5)
- b. The new relationships into which God has brought us - harmony in the home and hostility towards the devil. (The rest of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6)

2. Unity:

a. The gifts God gives us:

- 1) We all have spiritual gifts, and we have been given different gifts.
- 2) These gifts are to be used to build up the body of Christ.
- 3) We are to use whatever God has given us to create unity.

b. The theme of “body building” is connected to what comes out of our mouths - should only be things that build up the body.

4. Purity: We are to be imitators of God. We are now children of light.

5. Being filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18):

a. “Do not get drunk on wine but keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit”

b. Signs and fruits of the Spirit-filled life:

- 1) An attitude of humility and submission - “It is the characteristic of submission that evidences the fullness of the Spirit of Christ in our lives.”
 - *Husbands and wives
 - *Children and parents
 - *Work relationships
- 2) Encouraging one another with Psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs
- 3) Giving thanks

6. Resisting the devil (Ephesians 6:10):

a. “Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God.”

b. The Christian in His Complete Armor by William Cornell and The Pilgrim’s Progress by John Bunyan - recommended reading on this important topic

c. “Stand firm with:

- *The belt of truth buckled around your waist
- *The breastplate of righteousness in place
- *Feet fitted with a readiness that comes from the gospel of peace
- *Holding the shield of faith
- *Placing upon our heads the helmet of salvation
- *Holding the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God

7. Being equipped with the Armor of God makes us ready to do spiritual warfare: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the power of the dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

8. Ephesians’ key concepts: The church; salvation; the Spirit-filled life; the reality of spiritual warfare; the importance of unity in the body; the use of spiritual gifts.