

OT-OV

Lesson 104

1. Last week I finished our overview of the book of Psalms. When time expired we were about to overview the book of Proverbs. I want to review some of that taught last week but not included in your lesson plan.

2. Many Psalms have special messages and meanings:

2.1 to demonstrate God's just and righteous judgment (Psa 58:11);

Psa 58:11 Then men will say, "Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth."

2.2 to show the authority of God over the wicked (Psa 59:13);

Psa 59:12 For the sins of their mouths, for the words of their lips, let them be caught in their pride. For the curses and lies they utter,
Psa 59:13 consume them in wrath, consume them till they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob. Selah

2.3 to lead the wicked to seek the Lord (Psa 83:16);

Psa 83:14 As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze,
Psa 83:15 so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm.
Psa 83:16 Cover their faces with shame so that men will seek your name, O LORD.

2.4 to cause the righteous to praise God (Psa 7:17);

Psa 7:17 I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

2.5 to let all know from where promotion comes;

Psa 75:5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.
Psa 75:6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.
Psa 75:7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

2.6 to let us know God is always with us both in time and eternity;

Psa 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
Psa 23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
Psa 23:3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Psa 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psa 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Psa 23:6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

2.7 to let us know Who keeps us safe;

Psa 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

2.8 to let us know rebound is a must if our prayers are to be heard.

Psa 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

3. Now we are ready for new material and an overview of the book of Proverbs.

The book provides divine wisdom for earthly relationships and circumstances. The book is a collection of proverbs spoken or written in the main by Solomon in the 10th century B.C.

1. According to 1Ki 4:32, Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs.

1Ki 4:31 Solomon was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite--wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations.

1Ki 4:32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five.

1Ki 4:33 He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish.

1Ki 4:34 Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

2. Pro 1:1 to Pro 9:18 are ascribed to Solomon as are Pro 10:1 to Pro 22:16 and 25:1 to 29:27. Keep in mind the proverbs in the latter section were selected from Solomon's collection by King Hezekiah's committee (Pro 25:1).

Pro 25:1 These are more proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah:

3. There were other contributors, however, about whom we know nothing. Agur the author of chapter 30 Lemuel, author of chapter 31 are two examples. Many believe Lemuel is Solomon, however, such identification is problematic.

Pro 30:1 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh-- an oracle: This man declared to Ithiel, to Ithiel and to Ucal:

Pro 30:2 "I am the most ignorant of men; I do not have a man's understanding.

Pro 30:3 I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One.

Pro 30:4 Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered up the wind in the hollow of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and the name of his son? Tell me if you know!

Pro 30:5 "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

Pro 30:6 Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

Pro 31:1 The sayings of King Lemuel-- an oracle his mother taught him:

Pro 31:2 "O my son, O son of my womb, O son of my vows,

Pro 31:3 do not spend your strength on women, your vigor on those who ruin kings.

Pro 31:4 "It is not for kings, O Lemuel-- not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer,

Pro 31:5 lest they drink and forget what the law decrees, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.

Pro 31:6 Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish;

Pro 31:7 let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.

4. The Hebrew term for "Proverb" means a comparison, and it came to be used for any sage or moralistic pronouncement. Many of the proverbs are condensed parables.

5. The sayings in the book form an extensive library of instructions on how to live a Godly life here on earth and how to be assured of reward in both time and eternity.

6. Proverbs of special meaning to me personally are:

6.1 Wisdom's or doctrine's warning:

Pro 1:28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me.

Pro 1:29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD,

Pro 1:30 since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke,

Pro 1:31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.

6.2 Wisdom or doctrine delivers from evil:

Pro 2:1 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you,

Pro 2:2 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding ...

Pro 2:12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse ...

Pro 2:16 It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words ...

Pro 2:21 For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it;
Pro 2:22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

6.3 Seven things the Lord hates:

Pro 6:16 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him:
Pro 6:17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,
Pro 6:18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil,
Pro 6:19 a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

6.4 In praise of wisdom:

Pro 8:1 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? ...
Pro 8:10 Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold,
Pro 8:11 for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her ...
Pro 8:17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.
Pro 8:18 With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.
Pro 8:19 My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver ...
Pro 8:27 I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep ...
Pro 8:32 "Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways.
Pro 8:33 Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it.
Pro 8:34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.
Pro 8:35 For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD.

6.5 Giving results in blessing:

Pro 11:24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.
Pro 11:25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

6.6 To find a good wife is a blessing:

Pro 18:22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

6.7 If you hate doctrine your prayers are an abomination to God:

Pro 28:9 If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.

6.8 If we refuse to rebound we will not prosper but if we confess our sins the Lord will show mercy:

Pro 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

6.9 The portrait of the virtuous woman and perfect wife:

Pro 31:10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

Pro 31:11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

Pro 31:12 She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

Pro 31:13 She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

Pro 31:14 She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.

Pro 31:15 She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

Pro 31:16 She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

Pro 31:17 She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

Pro 31:18 She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.

Pro 31:19 In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

Pro 31:20 She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

Pro 31:21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

Pro 31:22 She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.

Pro 31:23 Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

Pro 31:24 She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.

Pro 31:25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

Pro 31:26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

Pro 31:27 She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Pro 31:28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

Pro 31:29 "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

Pro 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Pro 31:31 Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

So much for the book of Proverbs. Let's take a look at an overview of Ecclesiastes. The book was written (though not without doubters) by Solomon; if Solomon did not write the book it is certainly about him; this most would agree. If Solomon is the author we can conclude it was written in c. 975 B.C. If written about him but not by him, the date of writing is said to be c. 600 B.C.

1. The world, its wealth, wisdom, pleasures, and boundless resources are pronounced as vanity. The theme of the book seems to be: material objects will not satisfy the heart of man. Solomon at the end of his tenure as King was in the throes of deep reversionism.

2. The book of Ecclesiastes gets its name from the Septuagint. There the title is said to be Ekklesiastes meaning "assembly." The name in the Hebrew is literally Qohelet, "one who assembles." This has been taken to mean either

2.1 "one who collects" wise sayings, or

2.2 "one who addresses an assembly," that is, a preacher or speaker, the implication being that one assembles a group for the purpose of addressing them.

3. Until the nineteenth century it was generally believed that Solomon wrote the book in its entirety. Many scholars now believe that Solomon may not have been the author, but rather that the work is a product of exilic or post exilic times.

4. These same scholars assume, however, that the central figure in the book is Solomon, and that the unknown author used him as a literary device to convey his message.

5. He did not intend to deceive his original readers, and undoubtedly no one was in fact deceived. Lack of certainty concerning authorship does not destroy the canonicity of the book.

6. The primary aim of the author is to show from personal experience that all earthly goals and blessings, when pursued as end in itself, lead to dissatisfaction and emptiness.

7. As we will see the Author makes clear, life without God controlling is indeed meaningless but on the other hand the wisdom of knowing God early in life can bring a measure of purpose and happiness.

8. The highest good in life, according to Ecclesiastes lies in reverencing and obeying God, and in enjoying life while one can.

9. The unusually pessimistic statements in this book must be understood as the musings of one attempting to think and live apart from divine revelation. In the final analysis only doctrine is adequate to address the human situation.

10. A major, if underlying, theme of the book is that doctrine in the soul is not only necessary but essential to an understanding of creation and human life as its most fundamental expression.

11. Outline

I. Title and Prologue (Ecc 1:1-11)

- II. Things That Are Vain (Ecc 1:12-2:26)
- III. The Futility of Human Effort (Ecc 3:1-4:3)
- IV. The Futility of Wealth (4:4-6:12)
- V. Overcoming Life's Frustrations (Ecc 7:1-8:15)
- VI. Overcoming Despite Powerlessness (Ecc 8:16-11:8)
- VII. Epilogue Ecc 11:9-12:14)

12. After identifying himself as "the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem, the author immediately launched into the main theme of the book, namely, that life "under the sun" is seemingly devoid of value and meaningless.

13. The phrase meaningless under the sun describes life and reality as perceived by mere human observation. It is a world view devoid of doctrine. Ecc 1:2, 3 and 9

Ecc 1:2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

Ecc 1:3 What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?

Ecc 1:9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

14. Nothing is new he goes on to say, for present events have occurred in the past and will occur again in the future. Ecc 1:10-11

Ecc 1:10 Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time.

Ecc 1:11 There is no remembrance of men of old, and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow.

15. Things which are vain:

15.1 The author gets specific: first he argues that human striving for knowledge for knowledge's sake is of no benefit. Ecc 1:13-18

Ecc 1:13 I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men!

Ecc 1:14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Ecc 1:15 What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.

Ecc 1:16 I thought to myself, "Look, I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge."

Ecc 1:17 Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.

Ecc 1:18 For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief.

15.1.1 He says even the pursuit of knowledge is of no value for the more one knows the more hopeless everything seemed to be.

15.2 Pleasure like human accomplishments are also said to be empty. Ecc 2:1-11

Ecc 2:1 I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless.

Ecc 2:2 "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?"

Ecc 2:3 I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly-- my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was worthwhile for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.

Ecc 2:4 I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards.

Ecc 2:5 I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them.

Ecc 2:6 I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees.

Ecc 2:7 I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

Ecc 2:8 I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well-- the delights of the heart of man ...

Ecc 2:11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

15.2.1 In fact the kingly office, declares the author, provides wisdom and pride of accomplishment but such leaves the king only wanting more. In Ecc 2:13-14 the author does admit wisdom is better than folly and yet both sage and fool die in time and become equally forgotten.

Ecc 2:13 I saw that wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness.

Ecc 2:14 The wise man has eyes in his head, while the fool walks in the darkness; but I came to realize that the same fate overtakes them both.

15.3 Acquiring material possessions is also said to be empty; for what one gains must be bequeathed at his death and the recipients may be wasteful fools taking only a short time to scatter the gains to the four winds. Ecc 2:18-22

Ecc 2:18 I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.

Ecc 2:19 And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless.

Ecc 2:20 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun.

Ecc 2:21 For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune.

Ecc 2:22 What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun?

16. The Author concludes the best a man can do is to enjoy his work and the simple pleasures of life; he concludes even this is from God. Ecc 2:24-25

Ecc 2:24 A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God,

Ecc 2:25 for without Him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

17. The one who follows God's protocol will receive blessing from God, but the godless one accumulates wealth which will ultimately be distributed to whomever God pleases. Ecc 2:26

Ecc 2:26 To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

18. In the span of eight verses the author refers to "time" twenty-nine times concluding that life is marked out by events over which people have no control. Ecc 3:1-8

Ecc 3:1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

Ecc 3:2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

Ecc 3:3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

Ecc 3:4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,

Ecc 3:5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

Ecc 3:6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,

Ecc 3:7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,

Ecc 3:8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

18.1 The author concludes however that the patterns of life will be instructive to those open to God's Word, i.e., His divine sovereignty and protocol. Ecc 3:14

Ecc 3:14 I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere him.

18.2 He further concludes understanding God's plan is difficult because life consists of many anomalies. Ecc 3:16-22

Ecc 3:16 And I saw something else under the sun: In the place of judgment--wickedness was there, in the place of justice--wickedness was there.

Ecc 3:17 I thought in my heart, "God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time for every deed."

Ecc 3:18 I also thought, "As for men, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals.

Ecc 3:19 Man's fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless.

Ecc 3:20 All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.

Ecc 3:21 Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?"

Ecc 3:22 So I saw that there is nothing better for a man than to enjoy his work, because that is his lot. For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

End Lesson