

# Wednesday Night Supplemental Teaching

Covered this week: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

## Psalms

### Key Themes

- Recognition of the kingship and sovereignty of God
- God's comfort, defense, and provision in hours of need
- The praise of God in all circumstances
- The importance of bringing one's emotions to God in prayer

**Key Characters:** David, Moses, Sons of Korah

**Setting:** The Psalms are set across Israel's history. Most cannot be dated with any accuracy.

### Key Verses:

- Psalm 8:1 – O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
- Psalm 10:1 – “Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?”
- Psalm 19:1 – The heavens declare the glory of God.
- Psalm 23:1 – The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
- Psalm 27:1 – The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear.
- Psalm 37:4 – Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart.
- Psalm 51:10 – Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

### Outline

- I. Introduction (1-2)
- II. Book 1: David's Conflict with Saul (3-41)
- III. Book 2: David's Kingship (42-72)
- IV. Book 3: The Assyrian Crisis (73-89)
- V. Book 4: Introspection about the Destruction of the Temple and the Exile (90-106)
- VI. Book 5: Praise and Reflection on Return and the New Era (107-145)
- VII. Concluding Praise (146-150)

### Other Interesting Notes

- There are several categories of Psalms including Praise, Lament, Wisdom, Royal, and Imprecatory Psalms.
- The Hebrews Psalms differ from other ancient hymns in that there is no evidence of magic incantations in them. Many of songs of other ancient faiths attempt to manipulate the God's

through magic. The Hebrew prayers, in contrast, call on their relationship with God as reason for God to answer their prayers.

## Proverbs

### Key Themes

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
- The way of wisdom leads to life.
- A proverb illustrates a general principle, not a promise.
- We show wisdom (or a lack thereof) in the way we speak and act.

**Key Characters:** Solomon

**Setting:** This book served as instruction for young males in the king's court.

### Key Verses:

- Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.
- Proverbs 9:10 – The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.
- Proverbs 26:4-5 – “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. Answering a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.”

### Outline:

- I. Title and Purpose (1:1-7)
- II. A Father's Reflections on the Way of Wisdom
  - a. Discourse on Wisdom (1:8-4:27)
  - b. Instructions on Marriage and Warnings Against Adultery (5-7)
  - c. Wisdom Personified (8-9)
- III. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1-22:16)
- IV. Anonymous Wise Sayings (22:17-24:22)
- V. More Anonymous Wise Sayings (24:23-24)
- VI. More Proverbs of Solomon (25-29)
- VII. Appendices
  - a. Sayings of Agur (30)
  - b. Sayings of King Lemuel (31:1-9)
  - c. Anonymous Acrostic Poem on the Ideal Wife (31:10-31)

### Other Interesting Notes

- Nothing is known of Agur and Lemuel of Massa. Walton argues that is likely they were members of the northern Arabian tribe of Massa, one of the sons of Ishmael (Genesis 25:14; 1 Chron 1:30). Their inclusion in the book speaks to the universality of wisdom traditions in the ancient world.

# Ecclesiastes

## Key Themes

- Life should not be expected to be self-fulfilling.
- Frustrations in life are unavoidable.
- The seasons of life must be accepted.
- Enjoyment of life comes only through a God centered worldview.

**Key Characters:** The teacher

**Setting:** Almost impossible to know.

## Key Verses:

- 3:1-8 – “There is a time for everything...a time to be born and a time to die.”
- 3:11 – “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men.”
- 7:14 – “When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other.”
- 9:11 – “The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong.”

## Outline

- I. Introduction (1:1-11)
- II. Fulfillment: Problems and Solution
  - a. Problem: Fulfillment is not found in wisdom, escapism, or legacy (1:12-2:23)
  - b. Solution: Seek God not answers (2:24-3:15)
- III. Frustrations: Problem and Solution
  - a. Problem: Frustrations are unavoidable including unfairness, death, becoming a victim, graft, not being able to change things (3:16-6:12)
  - b. Solution: Do your best to accept frustrations and learn from them. Don't be surprised when life lets you down (7:1-29)
- IV. Guidelines for Plotting a Course through life.
  - a. Live under authority, but don't expect government to solve your problems (8:1-9)
  - b. Live as if people get what they deserve, but don't expect to see it operating in your life (8:10-14)
  - c. Don't expect to receive all the answers (8:15-17)
  - d. Death is inevitable (9:1-6)
  - e. Enjoy the Life God has given (9:7-10)
  - f. Expect the Unexpected (9:11-12)
  - g. Wisdom is better than strength, but folly can mess a lot up (9:13-10:20)
  - h. Be cautious and prepared but not paralyzed (11:1-6)
  - i. Enjoy Life, but remember that you will answer for what you do (11:7-10)
  - j. Don't wait until you are old to obtain the right perspective on life (12:1-8)
- V. End Matters (12:9-14)

## Interesting Notes

- The name of the teacher, Qoheleth, may be an actual name, a pseudonym, or the title of an office. It means convener or assembler.
- Tradition holds that the author is Solomon, but there is no certainty to that claim.

## Song of Songs

### Key Themes

- The goodness of humanity created male and female in God's image.
- The dignity of human affections.
- The sanctity of human sexual expression in the context of marriage.
- The virtue of chastity before marriage and the virtue of faithfulness once married.

**Key Characters:** Bridegroom and the Beloved

**Setting:** Tradition places it in Solomon's time. Some scholars also view Hezekiah as a potential author.

### Key Verses

- 2:7 – Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.
- 8:6-7 – Love is strong as death . . . it burns like a blazing fire . . . many waters cannot quench love.

### Outline

- I. Superscription (1:1)
- II. The Shulammitte Maiden in Solomon's Harem (1:2-3:5)
- III. Solomon Woos the Shulammitte Maiden (3:6-7:9)
- IV. The Shulammitte Maiden Rejects King Solomon (7:10-8:4)
- V. The Sullammite Maiden and the Shepherd-Lover are Reunited (8:5-14)

### Interesting notes

- It is not always easy to know who is speaking. Some scholars see only two speakers, others three.
- It is also difficult to know if the Hebrew in 1:1 means "of/to/for/about Solomon." This is similar to the issues we have in those Psalms described as Psalms of David.
- The book was a controversial inclusion in the Cannon for both Jews and Christians. Many interpreters through the centuries have attempted to downplay its sensual nature by arguing for an allegorical interpretation.