

Psalm 94, Ezekiel 25-36 (#73) Revised 2023

Psalm 94 — God's role as divine Judge is examined in this psalm. *What actions does God take toward the various types of people listed here?*

Ezekiel 25 — God first judged His people (Ezekiel 9:5-6), and now turns His attention to the countries surrounding Judah (1 Peter 4:17-18). The Lord begins each of His judgments with the word "because" (v. 3). His judgments are always for a reason. The Ammonites said "Aha" and were happy about the fall of Judah and her captivity. Because of this animosity against Judah, God would destroy them. Moab said "Behold, the house of Judah is like all the other nations." The Edomites took vengeance on God's people by helping the Babylonians as they fought against Israel. The Philistines took revenge upon Judah, and so the Lord will wipe out what remains of these coastal people. *The phrase, "Then you will know that I am the Lord (Yahweh)," or a variation appears 65 times in Ezekiel and four times in this chapter. Why do you think the Lord repeats this phrase so often in Ezekiel?*

Ezekiel 26 — The next three chapters are concerned with Tyre. In this chapter God paints a picture of how He will destroy the impregnable city of Tyre like the scraping of a rock. Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned by name as the one who would besiege and destroy the city, and then later, Alexander the Great would wipe it off the face of the earth in 332 B.C. *What sin did this judgment on Tyre attack?*

Ezekiel 27 — Ezekiel then describes Tyre as a ship; beautiful and expensively made. It was loaded with riches and grew in wealth because of its location on the sea as well as for its trade routes that intersected all of the other nations. God would break the ship and sink it. The merchants of the nations would lament the loss of the wealth of Tyre because of its financial effect on them. *What sin did this judgment on Tyre rebuke?*

Ezekiel 28 — God next rebukes the prince (ruler) of Tyre. The prince thought of himself as a god. His heart was filled with pride. Although verses 11-19 speak of the King of Tyre, it seems evident that Satan was the real person behind the King of Tyre. The Lord weaves the life of the King of Tyre and the history of Satan in such a way that it is difficult to tell which is which. God then addresses the city of Sidon and promises to remove them from the land as well. After these judgments, Israel would no longer have any enemies surrounding her. The final section of this chapter deals with Israel being secure in their own land and protected by God. *Give the statements in verses 11-17 that seem to go beyond the King of Tyre to actually speak of the history and the person of Satan.*

Ezekiel 29 — The next four chapters prophesy against Egypt. The king of Egypt considered himself a great dragon that (crocodile/monster) guarded the Nile. Pharaoh thought that he owned the river and that he “created” it. God would show him who really made the river and who really owned it. Yahweh called Pharaoh a weak reed that never helped Israel when she needed it but only hurt her. As a reward for Nebuchadnezzar fulfilling His prophecy against Tyre, God would give him Egypt to plunder. *Israel turned to Egypt for aid instead of God. Where should we go for refuge in times of trouble?*

Ezekiel 30 — God next uses the picture of arms. God would break both the arms of Pharaoh and never allow them to heal again. God would also strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon so that Nebuchadnezzar would be victorious over Egypt and all of her allies. *Did God literally break the arms of Pharaoh? Explain.*

Ezekiel 31 — God now speaks directly to Pharaoh and his pride. Pharaoh thought Egypt was indestructible. God reminds him of another nation that thought the same thing, Assyria. God pointed out to Pharaoh of what He did to Assyria and said that He would do the same to Pharaoh and Egypt. The Lord would cut them down like a tree, strip them of their glory, and cast the nation into Sheol (hell). *What was the great nation of Assyria compared to? See verse 2b, 3. Why?*

Ezekiel 32 — Pharaoh considered Egypt to be a strong lion among the nations. God considered Egypt a sea serpent. The Lord would cause His nets to capture Egypt and drag her down to the Pit. All the nations would see what happens to Egypt and tremble for their own safety. *What is "Sheol" as found in 31:16 and 32:21?*

Ezekiel 33 — God had ordained Ezekiel as a watchman (3:16). The Lord instructed Ezekiel that if he knew the sword was coming and sounded the warning, and if the people do not listen, their blood would be on their own hands. But if he sees the sword coming and does not give the people a warning and a chance to repent, then their blood will be on his hands. Ezekiel did not speak any words for seven years other than the words that God gave him to speak. When God finally released him to speak, his first words were a warning about their sins. *Does God take joy when people eternally perish? See verse 11 and II Peter 3:9. Explain.*

Ezekiel 34 — Ezekiel was a watchman and served the people when they were in danger. The leaders of Israel were to be shepherds and care for the people day by day. The religious leaders and rulers were supposed to be feeding the sheep, protecting them, and helping to unite them. Instead, they were plundering them in order to gorge their own appetites. Even though the leaders failed, one day God will be their shepherd, and He will never fail them. Notice the "I will" statements of God throughout this chapter and take assurance from them. *Starting with verse 22, Ezekiel jumps ahead to the Kingdom age when Israel will have a perfect shepherd to care for them. Who is this shepherd, and what will this Shepherd do for Israel? See verses 22-31.*

Ezekiel 35 — God again has a message for Edom (Mount Seir). The Edomites were guilty of the sins of hatred, anger, envy, and pride. Their hatred stems from a grudge that began in Genesis 27 with Esau and Jacob, and continued on to that very day. Because of their hostility and rivalry, Edom helped Babylon ravage Jerusalem (Obad. 10-14). In Obadiah 1-4, Edom boasted of their security in the rocks, but in the 49th chapter of Jeremiah God humiliates them. Read 1 Peter 5:5b.

Ezekiel 36 — Beginning with this chapter until the end of the book, Ezekiel focuses on returning to the land, rebuilding the temple, and restoring the kingdom to the glory of God. God will restore the land (vv. 33-36) and His people (vv. 24-29). Yahweh will do this to bring glory to His holy name (vv. 20-23). God promises that “I am for you” in verse 9 (Rom. 8:31). *How did Israel profane the name of the Lord?*^{#7} p. 1239. Also see Romans 2:21-24. *Do you profane the name of Jesus Christ by the way you talk and live among the unbelievers?*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups-, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 95, Ezekiel 37-48 (#74) Revised 2023

Psalm 95 — This psalm (possibly written by David) celebrates God's sovereignty and exhorts us to remain malleable to His instruction. *The dangers of hardening our hearts toward God are still present today. What are some ways that we can avoid making the same mistake that the Israelites did? See also Hebrews 3:12-15 & 4:6-7.*

Ezekiel 37 — Ezekiel prophesies the miraculous resurrection, restoration, and unification of Judah and Ephraim in the latter days. In a vision, the prophet saw a valley of dry bones which represented the Jews who were scattered to the four winds. Then the bones come together, and God put tendons and flesh on them, but they still were lifeless. Next, God breathed into them the breath of life, and with God's Spirit in them they stood to their feet and became a vast army. Yahweh will restore the Jews from all the nations where they had gone, and bring them back to their land. They will again be one united nation with one king and one temple. *What is one event in recent history that makes the future fulfillment of the prophecy of chapter 37 possible?*

Ezekiel 38 — Israel and God's people will have enemies until the very end of this age. This chapter and the next one speaks of a coalition of nations (Gog) coming against Israel in the latter days (v. 16). As they begin to attack a wall-less Israel when she is at peace, Yahweh will rise up against the invaders and destroy them completely (v. 14). God will show His wrath before the nations through an earthquake (vv. 19-20), a storm including hailstones and fire (v. 22), by confusing the enemy, and causing them to destroy each other (v. 21). *In verses 18 to 23, the Lord will rise up and miraculously defend Israel when it is attacked by a coalition of nations. Share a story how the Lord has miraculously defended or protected you or someone you know.*

Ezekiel 39 — God continues to speak of His coming judgment against those who have invaded Israel. He will utterly destroy them and cause the birds and the beasts to eat their flesh and drink their blood. In doing this, God will make the nations know that He is the Lord (vv. 6-7), the Holy One of Israel (v. 7). He will also make known to Israel that He is their God (vv. 21-22). The Lord has punished Israel by hiding His face from them (vv. 23-24); but in this day, He will reveal Himself to them in such a way that they can no longer deny or turn away from Him, and He will pour out His Spirit on them (v. 29). *When does this battle take place? See Revelation 16:16-21, 19:19-21, and Zechariah 14:1-15.*

Ezekiel 40 — The rest of the book of Ezekiel describes the future state of Israel in the latter days when God builds the Millennial temple in Jerusalem. Israel, and particularly Jerusalem, had been destroyed in 586 B.C. The people were taken into exile in Babylon. Surrounded by this doom and gloom, God called Ezekiel to look forward to the glorious future of Israel that God had planned. The remnant returned in 538 B.C. to build the temple. The temple, however, that Zerubbabel finally built in 515 B.C. cannot compare with the grand vision that Ezekiel describes here. The glory of the Lord did not reside in the temple of Zerubbabel, but it did reside in the temple described by Ezekiel in chapter 43. There are so many details given in these nine chapters that are vastly different from the temple of Zerubbabel including its size (875 feet on each of the four sides), a governing prince, and the river that flows from the threshold of the temple into the Dead Sea that causes it to become fresh. The measurements of the new temple outer court, East Gate, North Gate, South Gate, Inner Court, Chambers for the priests, and Vestibule are all described in detail. *If this indeed is the Millennial Temple where Jesus will dwell, why do they need to return to animal sacrifices that are described in verses 38 to 43 since Jesus made one perfect offering for all sins for all time?*

Ezekiel 41 — Ezekiel now turns his attention to the Inner Temple. With this chapter through the end of Ezekiel, the word *holy* is given thirty-five times. God's temple will be holy. His people will be holy. The land will be holy. The reason that all these are holy is because God Himself is holy and He will make everything in His presence holy for His name's sake. Ezekiel gives exacting measurements for the Inner Temple and Holy of Holies. The whole structure is carved with cherubim and palm trees. Ezekiel started by describing the outside of the temple and then moved to the inside of the temple. God's holiness will be reflected in all of it. *Is the holiness of God reflected in your outward actions as well as your inward thoughts? Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to your mind anything that displeases Him (Psalm 39:23-24). For personal reflection only.*

Ezekiel 42 — For a great verse-by-verse 3-D animation of the temple visit <http://www.bibliaprints.com/>. It really helps to visualize the temple. This chapter deals with the chambers and galleries for the priests to eat and to serve. The priests and the place they are in are holy. Even their clothes are holy and, therefore, they must change their clothes before leaving the temple complex to be with other people. The final verse speaks of a wall to make a separation between the holy and the common. *Verse 20 says, "He measured the temple complex on all four sides. It had a wall all around it, 875 feet long and 875 feet wide, to separate the holy from the common (HCSB)." What was holy, and what was common, and how did the wall separate it? #7 p. 1250*

Ezekiel 43 — In Ezekiel 11:22-23, we see the glory of the Lord leaving the temple. Now, in chapter 43, the glory of the Lord returns to dwell as long as the earth lasts. In the temple there will be singing, worship, and the offering of sacrifices. It will be the place where God's glory dwells. The soles of His feet will rest there (v. 7). *The presence and glory of the Lord returns to the Millennial temple so God can dwell with His people. Where does God dwell today on earth? Where will God dwell after the Millennium? See I Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 2:19-22, I Corinthians 3:16, and Revelation 21:3.*

Ezekiel 44 — God gave Ezekiel instructions on who was to serve in the new temple and how they were to serve. God is very exact in His instructions and demands holiness from those who serve Him. One of the reasons that the presence of the Lord left the old temple was because the priests were not serving Him in the way that He had prescribed. They were actually worshipping idols within the Lord's temple. The Levites squandered their privilege to serve the Lord God Almighty, and they will live with their punishment during the Kingdom age. They will not be able to serve the Lord directly, but will stand as an example to Israel and be required to teach Israel all the laws of God as they should have done while Solomon's temple was still standing. Those priests who are descendants of Zadok, who faithfully served God even while others did not, will be honored to serve Him face-to-face. The duties and privileges of the faithful priests are enumerated including the type of fabric the clothes were made of, their type of hairstyle, who they should and should not marry, and the laws and statutes that they should keep. *What may be the reason the east gate will remain forever closed after the glory of the Lord enters through that gate and fills the Most Holy Place in the temple (43:1-5)?*

Ezekiel 45 — A sacred district that is approximately 55 square miles is set aside as holy to the Lord for the temple area, the priests of Zadok, the Levites, and the prince. God has Ezekiel go into great detail about the sacrifices and offerings that are to be presented to the Lord. Yahweh wanted to make clear what His expectations were for justice and fairness. He detailed down to the ounce how His people were to measure everything, and how much they were to give as an offering. The special feasts are delineated in verses 18 to 25. *What are the feasts (festivals) that will be celebrated during the Millennial Kingdom? Extra question: What feasts will be missing during the Millennium from those that were given by Moses to be celebrated by Israel in the Old Testament? See Leviticus 23. Why do you think these feasts are missing?*

Ezekiel 46 — God's temple will be so holy that the prince may only worship at the threshold of the gate and the people only at the entrance (vv. 2-3). On the Sabbath days and New Moons, the prince will lead

all the people in worship by presenting burnt and fellowship offerings that will be given to the priests to sacrifice on his behalf. When the people enter the outer court of the temple to worship God on the Sabbath day (north or south gates), they are required to leave through the opposite gate of that which they had entered (v. 9). The priests also are to offer a burnt and a grain offering to the Lord every morning (v. 13, Rom. 12:1-2). *Who is the prince mentioned in 44:3, 45:22, 46:16 and other passages, and what is his function?*

Ezekiel 47 — The prophet sees a stream of water flowing from beneath the temple from the east and the south, and this water flows with increasing depth as it moves toward the Dead Sea. This water causes the salty Dead Sea water to become fresh, and there will be life everywhere the water goes. The trees next to river will be for food, and the leaves of the trees will be for healing (vv. 1-12). The Lord describes the boundaries of the land of Israel during the kingdom age which are substantially larger than described by Moses (Numbers 34:1-5). Resident aliens will be treated like native-born Israelites and will be entitled to own property (vv. 13-23). *The water that flows from the temple will have life-giving properties for physical healing and prosperity. Of what spiritual significance does this water remind us? See John 7:37-39.*

Ezekiel 48 — God lays out the land of Israel and assigns each tribe and family their inheritance (Psalm 47:4). The Lord will ultimately keep His promise to Abraham (Genesis 13:14-17; 15:17-21) and give Israel all the land that was sworn to them. The tribes will surround the holy city on the north and south, and the prince shall own a swath running east to west. The Holy City will be in the center of Israel. The most important distinction of this city will be the awesome presence of Yahweh/Jehovah among His people. Therefore, the city will be renamed Jehovah Shammah – the Lord is there! (48:35). *There are seven principal compound names for Jehovah/Yahweh in the Old Testament. Besides Jehovah Shammah, give the meaning of the other six compound names for Jehovah. Jehovah Jireh means, “the Lord will _____” (Genesis 22:13-14). Jehovah Rapha means, “the Lord who _____” (Exodus 15:26). Jehovah Shalom means, “the Lord is _____” (Judges 6:24). Jehovah Tsidkenu means, “the Lord is our _____” (Jeremiah 23:6). Jehovah Nissi means, “the Lord is my _____” (Exodus 17:8-15). Jehovah Ra’ah means, “the Lord is my _____” (Psalm 23:1).*

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Psalm 96, Ecclesiastes 1-12 (#75) Revised 2023

Psalm 96 — This is a song declaring the glories of God to the nations and compelling us to do the same. *Why is God worthy to be praised (vv. 4-6, 10, 13)?*

Ecclesiastes — One does not have to be Christian very long to understand that a life lived “under the sun” or independently from God is vanity or meaningless. The wisest man of his day used his life as a quest to find the “real meaning of life.” Solomon wrote this book about 935 B.C., toward the end of his life, and tried every possible avenue to see if he could find fulfillment, but concluded “Vanity and meaningless, everything is vanity (1:2).” It doesn’t matter whether one goes after wisdom (scholarship), sensuality (food, sex, adventure, excitement), materialism (possessions and achievements), power, or prestige. Living is futile apart from remembering that all of life must be centered on its Creator God.

Ecclesiastes 1 — The third and fourth words of this book are “the Preacher” which is the word “Ecclesiastes,” and is speaking of “the one who calls or gathers the people.” At the outset of the book, the Preacher states his conclusion about “life under the sun.” The Hebrew word translated “vanity” means “breath” which gives the idea of transitory or fleeting (vv. 1-3). A life that does not put God in the center is futile, meaningless, and pointless. He says that all of creation including the sun, the wind, and streams are in constant motion, but return to the same place and have no permanent significance (vv. 3-11). To find meaning in “life under the sun,” Solomon dedicated himself to wisdom and scholarship. Being the wisest man that ever lived (other than Christ), he fully gave himself to accumulating human knowledge, reasoning, and philosophy to find satisfaction and purpose. Everything in nature and the world will point us to a creator who has infinite power (Romans 1:20) but will not tell you the real meaning of existence (vv. 12-18). *1. Verse 9b says, “there is nothing new under the sun.” The truth is that the desperate needs of humanity are only found in Christ. What are the “new” things that are offered us in Christ? #12 p.361. 2. What is the one gift that God has given us that fully explains our purpose for living?*

Ecclesiastes 2 — Solomon continued on his search for meaning and purpose in life. After he found wisdom and knowledge to be like chasing after the wind (1:12-18), he next tried to see if pleasure, laughter, and the finest wine would give him meaning, but this too was futility and madness (vv. 1-3). The next thing he considers to find fulfillment is material possessions such as houses, vineyards, parks, servants, cattle, silver, gold and sensual pleasure, and again he finds all of these pursuits the like chasing of the wind (vv. 4-11). Solomon then admits that life is better for a wise man than a fool just like living in light is better than living in darkness, but ultimately the wisdom one gains is of little value since the destiny of the wise and the fool is the same, which is death (vv. 12-17). To spend all of one's labor to accumulate is futile since what he leaves behind goes to his heir who has not earned it and may squander it. Instead of living to work and accumulate, one must learn to work to live and enjoy what he has earned, receiving it with thanksgiving from the hand of God (vv. 18-26). *In the first two chapters Solomon tried and experienced everything available in his day in order to bring purpose to his life and found it to be meaningless. If you were to meet a modern-day person like Solomon and were able to give him spiritual advice on his chasing after the things the world offers, what would you say to him? Please include scripture in your answer.*

Ecclesiastes 3 — Life is organized in a pattern of cycles, and all events in our lives come from God and are allowed by God for a purpose. #6 p.271. If we accept these events from the hand of God and cooperate with Him, we will see that life is not meaningless and He will make everything beautiful in its own time (vv. 1-14). Someday God will judge the wickedness of unjust judges. Speaking like a man living under the sun (unconverted), Solomon says that men are like animals in the sense that they both will die, and who knows whether the spirit of human beings rise upward and the spirit of animals go downward to the earth? *What is meant by the phrase, God "has put eternity in the hearts of men."?* #3 p 1060

Ecclesiastes 4 — The writer starts this chapter talking about the oppression and suffering of the poor and weak caused by the powerful who are in control, and thus sees death or never having been born as better alternatives for them (vv. 1-3). Then Solomon speaks on the subject of wealth by saying that some who seek after wealth do it because they are envious of their neighbor's prosperity (keeping up with the Joneses). He chastises the lazy, praises the one who works and is able to enjoy life, and heaps scorn on the one who struggles to get wealthy but is never able to delight in the joys of life (vv. 4-8). The teacher now accentuates the need of relationships, friendships, and partnerships to get through the trials and hardships of life (vv. 9-12). The rise of a poor but wise young man to eventually be king is exciting, but the interest of the people soon wanes, and this too is meaningless and chasing after the wind (vv. 13-16). *In verses 4 to 8 the writer talks about two wrong extremes regarding our work. What are they, and why are they both foolish? What advice did Paul give in II Thessalonians 3:10?*

Ecclesiastes 5 — Now the author visits the temple and makes observations about what he sees in those who come to worship. We are to fear God by quietly listening and seeking Him with a sincere and obedient heart, not making rash vows (vv. 1-7). One should not be surprised by the corruption in the best of governments since each official tries to protect the other, often to their own profit (vv. 8-9). Those that love money are never satisfied and seldom get restful sleep. Hoarding money or making bad investments to get rich will cause people to live under a cloud all their lives by causing them to suffer frustration, discouragement, and anger (vv. 10-17). God wants us to rejoice in our labor, enjoy life, and receive the good things as gifts from Him (vv. 18-20). *What are two sins one can commit when making vows (vv. 4-6)?*

Ecclesiastes 6 — Some people receive wealth and honor from God but do not live long enough to enjoy it while others may live long lives but do not possess the power to enjoy life since their wealth, not God, is the in the center of their lives. "Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have. Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the wind (v. 9, NLT)." We must not argue with God or be preoccupied about the future since He alone is sovereign and will fulfill His plans and purposes. *Verse 3 talks about "proper burial" or "no burial." What does this mean, and is cremation a proper burial for a Christian?*

Ecclesiastes 7 — Solomon says that it is important for a wise man to always live his life with the reality of his death in view, and not be like the fool whose life is a constant party and shields himself from the seriousness of death (vv. 1-6). The next verses are a variety of pithy statements about life beginning with the condemnation of extortion or bribery which turns wise people into fools (v. 7). We need to face the present reality of our lives and nation and not live in the past (v. 10). Wisdom is better than wealth since wealth can be temporary, but wisdom is enduring and can save us in the adversities of life (v. 11-12). In verses 16 to 18, the writer warns the readers to avoid the extremes of legalism and self-righteous pride on one side and immorality and wickedness on the other. In his exhaustive search for wisdom, the teacher explored every place possible and never came close to understanding the meaning of the events of his life but concluded that some things are unknowable (vv. 23-25). Solomon understood that the real problem in the world is the sinfulness of the human heart even though God originally created humankind upright (vv. 26-29). *How does one get wisdom? Give Biblical references with your answer.*

Ecclesiastes 8 — The wise person will live before rulers with discretion and tact knowing the proper procedures and timing for everything (vv. 1-6). There is no escaping the day of our death or of stopping the working out of God's laws and plans (vv. 8-9). There are many seemingly unjust occurrences on the earth; a wicked man receiving praise at his funeral, the sentence against a criminal act that is not carried out quickly, a perpetual evil sinner living a long life, and righteous people treated as though they were evil while evil people being treated as though they were good (vv. 10-14). We must learn to live with contentment and to accept with joy all the blessings our loving and gracious God gives us. Even though a person is extremely wise and tries to explore the depths of God's plans and purposes on the earth, he will come up short since there are always more questions than answers in life (vv. 8:15-17). #3 p.1065. *The seemingly unjust things that happen in life given in verses 10-14 are said by Solomon to be "meaningless." Is this true? Explain.*

Ecclesiastes 9 — The skeptical side of Solomon shows in the first few verses of this chapter. Even though he brings God into the picture, he still has doubts about the reality of the afterlife. As he looks at life under the sun, he sees the unpredictability of life whether that of the righteous or wicked and the inevitability of death for everyone. No matter how random life may appear, the actions of the godly and wise are in the hands of God (vv. 1-6). While you are living you need to enjoy life as your circumstances permit, rejoice with the wife God has given you, and work hard (vv. 7-10). The writer observes that many times the fastest runner or the strongest warrior may not come out on top, but that chance plays a big part and therefore, one cannot predict when difficult times will happen (vv. 11-12). A poor but wise man was able to save his besieged city by his wisdom but was not remembered or appreciated afterwards. The benefits of wisdom can be easily undone by one evil person (vv. 13-18). *How do we explain verses 4 to 6 and other verses in the book of Ecclesiastes since it seems to contradict other parts of the Bible?*

Ecclesiastes 10 — Solomon gives a variety of proverbs contrasting wisdom and foolishness. First, an example of folly is the person who thinks there is no harm with a little foolishness, but in reality, it can undermine a wise and honorable life that is needed to navigate life's journey with success. Another evil that happens is when a fool is put into a position of authority and his immaturity causes him to go against common sense protocol, to not follow normal precautions, and to not prepare by proper training and skill development (vv. 1-10). Secondly, a fool is seen by the words he speaks because they cause him to self-destruct. The words of a fool are crazy nonsense which ends in endless chatter and wicked madness. Thirdly, a fool shows himself in the way he leads. Instead of being a noble leader encouraging a sound work ethic, the foolish leader encourages laziness and a party atmosphere, putting an unhealthy emphasis on wine and money (vv. 11-20). #13 p. 983. *On the basis of this chapter, what makes for a wise and noble leader?*

Ecclesiastes 11 — The author encourages the reader to take advantage of opportunities and make measured risks in life in order to advance oneself, realizing that to do nothing will mean that nothing will be accomplished. It is wise to diversify one's investments, but to wait for perfect conditions to work and act will mean no success. Since God's ways are unfathomable like the formation of the child in the mother's womb, a wise person will work hard and then leave the rest in God's hands (vv. 1-6). Each person should appreciate and rejoice in each new day but recognize that dark days will come. Young people need to enjoy life when they are young, not fixating on sorrow and pain since the days of youth are fleeting. The young must have a continual awareness that God will judge them for everything they do (vv. 7-10). *Verse 1 says, "Send your grain across the seas, and in time, profits will flow back to you (NLT)." Whenever we accomplish something for the Lord it involves risk and faith. Is there anything right now that the Lord has prompted you to do, but the fear of failure is keeping you from taking action?*

Ecclesiastes 12 — The writer says that each one of us must honor and delight in our Creator before we reach the years of old age when possible enjoyment of Him may be greatly diminished. Verses 3 to 5 give us a description of progressive deterioration that happens in old age. The years of our lives go quickly, death eventually comes for everyone, and our spirit returns to God who gave it. All of life is a breath and is futile (vv. 6-9). The teacher gave a final conclusion to all that was said previously. "The reader is urged (1) to have a right relationship with God (fear God); (2) to maintain that relationship by following the law (keep his commandments); and (3) to anticipate a final and future judgment (God will bring every deed into account)." #7 p. 962. *Explain the meaning of the descriptions and images of old age given in verses 3-5.*

Sources for summary and questions: 1. Serendipity Bible for Groups-, c. 1988 Littleton, CO. 2. MacArthur Study Bible ESV, c. 1997 Thomas Nelson, Inc. 3. Life Application Bible HCSB, c. 1988 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 4. The Complete Bible Companion, c. 2014 Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, OH. 5. ESV Study Bible, c. 2008 Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL. 6. The World Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards, Word Inc., Waco, TX. 7. The Quest Study Bible NIV, c. 1994 Zondervan Publishing & Christianity Today, Grand Rapids, MI & Wheaton, IL. 8. The Transformation Study Bible, c. 2009 David C. Cook. 9. Halley's Bible Handbook, c. 2000 Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. 10. 500 & Answers from the Bible, c. 2006 Barbour Publishing, Uhrichsville, OH. 11. Understanding the Bible, c. 2000 Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN. 12. Homan Bible Handbook, c. 1992 Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 13. Moody Bible Commentary, c. 2014 Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL.

Psalm 97, Song of Solomon 1-8 (#76) Revised 2023

Psalm 97 — God's righteous and just reign is celebrated in this psalm. *What are we instructed to do in response to God's sovereign rule (see vv. 10 - 12)?*

Song of Songs or Song of Solomon — This book is traditionally ascribed to King Solomon (although which of his many wives he is addressing is not made clear). The purpose of this book is to tell of the love between a bridegroom and his bride, to affirm the sanctity of marriage, a celebration of love and sex, and to picture God's love for His people. The most explicit statements on the physical relationship between a man and his wife in the Bible can be found in this book. This book has often been criticized down through the centuries because of its sensuous language. The purity and sacredness of love represented here, however, are greatly needed in our day in which distorted attitudes about love and marriage are commonplace. God created sex and intimacy, and they are holy and good when enjoyed within the bonds of marriage. A husband-and-wife honors God when they love and enjoy each other. If you remember one thing from this book, remember that love between husband and wife is mysterious, passionate, awe-inspiring, and should be revered.

Song of Solomon 1 —

Single men — Tell someone in your life how important they are to you and what their friendship means to you.

Married men — Devote today to speaking words of love to your wife. You can also leave her notes for her to find. Examples would be "One of my favorite memories of us together would be..." or "I appreciate you and the things you do for me. I really love it when..."

Song of Solomon 2 —

Single men — How are you devoting yourself to the service of God and His people?

Married men — Today devote yourself to showing love to your wife through acts of service.

Song of Solomon 3 —

Single men — If God has marriage for you in the future, what are the qualities you are looking for in a wife?

Married men — Today express your love to your wife by giving her heart-felt gifts. They do not need to be expensive or big, just from the heart.

Song of Solomon 4 —

Single men — What qualities do you have that would make you a good husband?

Married men — Spend quality one-on-one time with your wife today and have a meaningful conversation with her about something other than daily tasks, chores, or kids. Rediscover her dreams and passions.

Song of Solomon 5 —

Single men — What changes do you need to make to be a godly and loving husband?

Married men — Find time throughout the day to touch your wife in a loving way. Hold her hand for no reason. Hug her whenever you see her. Give her a back rub. Etc.

Song of Solomon 6 —

Single men – If you would like to be married, what steps are you taking right now to find a godly woman?

Married men – Have a date-night with your spouse. Have a romantic dinner. Take a picnic walk or find some other activity that the two of you can do together.

Song of Solomon 7 —

Single men – Would you like to be married someday, or do you believe that the single life is what God has in store for you?

Married men – Today's assignment is a difficult challenge. Ask your wife how you can be a better husband to her, and then listen quietly to her response without defending yourself or interrupting.

Song of Solomon 8 —

Single men – What advantages and freedoms do you have as a single man that you would not have if you were married? See I Corinthians 7:32-33. What type of person should every Christian marry? I Corinthians 7:39, II Corinthians 6:14-16.

Married men – Discuss with your wife this past week. Find out what meant the most to her, what touched her heart and really made her feel loved? Congratulations, you have discovered her love language. Now, find new ways to tell her that you love her by using her favorite language.

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