GREAT THEMES OF ECCLESIASTES

A Thirteen Lesson Bible Study by Jeff S. Smith
Introduction
The Book of Ecclesiastes is a collection of observations on life, attributable perhaps to King Solomon, or at least to a tradition of Hebrew wisdom founded upon his insight. Ecclesiastes tells the tale of a man who sought meaning in life in every imaginable place, only to find in the end that without God at its essence, life itself is rather meaningless and futile.

Syllabus
1. Futility of Human Wisdom (Ecclesiastes 1:1-18) ..............................................1
2. Futility of Pleasure and Materialism (Ecclesiastes 2:1-17) .......................3
3. Contentment (Ecclesiastes 2:18-26) ..........................................................5
4. A Time For Everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11) ...........................................7
5. Rejoice and Do Good (Ecclesiastes 3:12-22) ..........................................9
6. Futility of Riches (Ecclesiastes 4:1-5:20) ..............................................11
7. Life is a Vapor (Ecclesiastes 6:1-12) .......................................................13
8. Precious Ointment (Ecclesiastes 7:1-29) ..............................................15
9. Time and Chance (Ecclesiastes 8:1-9:12) .............................................17
10. Life's Uncertainties (Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20) ....................................19
11. The Days of Your Youth (Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:8) .............................21
12. Conclusion (Ecclesiastes 12:9-14) .........................................................23
13. Review ..................................................................................................25
Lesson 1: Futility of Human Wisdom
Text: Ecclesiastes 1:1-18

1. While verse one introduces us to the author of the book, the second verse indicates his theme. Who is the author? Explain his theme.

2. The connection of the book to Solomon is a matter for scholarly debate, but that man’s wisdom is not. How did Solomon obtain his legendary insight (First Kings 3:5-12; cf. James 1:5-8)?

3. How does Solomon immediately display his wisdom (First Kings 3:16-28)?

4. Most people believe that being remembered after they are gone is important. Many of them seek to be remembered for their accomplishments. What flaw in that plan did the writer perceive (Ecclesiastes 1:3-11)?

5. Solomon himself (who is not necessarily the author of this book) was noted as a great builder of monuments to God and his own reign. How long did it take to build the temple and the king’s residence (First Kings 6:37-7:1)? What other buildings did he commission (First Kings 7:2-12)?
6. Surely, building is not wrong of itself, but what is the writer trying to teach us in Ecclesiastes 1:3-11?

7. One such structure is noted early in Genesis 11:1-9. Identify the structure and the problem in posed for its builders.

8. What are some examples of “ziggurats” or “towers” that men today build with a similar motivation?

9. So far, we have learned about that. there is in reality nothing new under the sun, but that so much human endeavor is in fact vanity of vanities. Even straightening out the world’s problems will prove to be frustrating, the writer acknowledges. How does world history since 1900 confirm this?

10. Why aren’t many wise according to the flesh called to Christ (First Corinthians 1:18-31; cf. James 4:6)?

11. How does one discern the nature and effectiveness of God’s wisdom from that of the world (James 3:13-18)?
Lesson 2: Futility of Pleasure and Materialism
Text: Ecclesiastes 2:1-17

1. The writer gave up on finding meaning in human wisdom and went to the opposite extreme. What was his next option (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3)?

   The Preacher tested his heart with mirth and pleasure. He attempted to gratify his flesh with wine while still guiding his heart with conviction, but found only folly and vanity in the end.

2. Many people seek something in wine and other mind-altering beverages and substances. What do they certainly find (Proverbs 23:29-35)?

   They find that alcohol and other drugs are only temporary salves to wounded, discontented consciences and bring on as many pains at they temporarily relieve. Many also find they are addicted to the substance and cannot even find moderate peace without escalating doses of it.

3. If the Preacher is not arguing against all laughter and mirth, what is the warning he would offer (First Peter 1:13, 5:8)?

   We may enjoy life and have fun, but to never through sin or by letting down our guard against iniquity and the return of the Lord.

4. In what did the king seek pleasure next (Ecclesiastes 2:4-9)?

5. For his part, Solomon acquired great riches and possessions from Egypt and beyond (First Kings 10:1-29). What other foreign acquisition did he make? (First Kings 11:1-8) What was the problem? What was the consequence?
6. Consider Ecclesiastes 2:10. Of what does this statement show a lack (First Corinthians 9:24-27, James 4:7)?

7. How did Moses make the opposite choice (Hebrews 11:24-27)? Where do we make application (Second Corinthians 4:16-5:10)?

8. Why did his pursuit of pleasure not bring satisfaction to his spirit (Ecclesiastes 2:11-17; cf. James 1:14-15, 4:1-5)?

9. What are some modern ways that people make fleshly pleasure the focus of their lives (Second Timothy 3:4-5)?

10. What is the end of those who make fleshly pleasure the focus of their lives (Second Thessalonians 2:12, First Timothy 5:6, Second Peter 2:13)?
Lesson 3: Contentment
Text: Ecclesiastes 2:18-26

1. With the exception of spoiled heiresses, most people must work very hard in order to be able to afford their pleasures—the focus of the first part of Ecclesiastes chapter two. Why did the Preacher find even this to be depressing and unsatisfying (Ecclesiastes 2:18-23)?

2. Although we are not certain that Solomon is actually the author of this book, the thoughts seem to reflect his life. To whom did Solomon leave the fruits of his labor (First Kings 11:41-12:15)? Was he wise or a fool? What became of the kingdom, the fruits of Solomon’s labor (First Kings 12:16-20)?

3. Can life be a success if it is defined by the acquisition of possessions and expenditure upon fleshly pleasure (Proverbs 1:10-19 and First Timothy 6:6-10, 17-20)? Explain.

4. What perspective does this give you regarding any legacy (money, property, heirlooms, etc.) that you might plan to acquire and leave to your children or to others?
5. Where did Christ counsel his followers to seek their achievement and contentment (Mark 8:34-38)?

Jesus challenged them to realize that a man must deny himself and take up the cross, for even if he should acquire the whole world, it would not be sufficient to buy back his immortal soul from damnation.

6. What would modern people call the condition described in Ecclesiastes 2:23?

Stress, depression, anxiety, etc.

7. So what was the Preacher’s conclusion regarding the place of labor in a man’s life (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26)? Should a man be defined by what he does for a living or by something else? How important should one’s trade, career or profession be in defining him?

Labor should not be the aspect of life that defines the character and worth of a person, lest he would become worthless upon retirement from the market. Rather, labor should be about earning the necessities of life and a man’s convictions should define who he is before the community.

8. What three things does God give the one who is good in his sight (cf. James 1:5-8)? Why is the sinner left out of this transaction (Proverbs 2:6-9)?

God gives the good person wisdom and knowledge and joy, which can only belong to a person who knows Christ. Unbelievers and sinners seek such things with dual intentions to receive from God, but spend on pleasure.

9. Some consider anxiety and worry to be acceptable, if regrettable, parts of the Christian’s life. Why should we instead seek to solve our worry and anxiety (Matthew 6:25-34)?

Continual anxiety and worry indicate a lack of trust in God and a misplacement of priority upon physical things rather than spiritual.

10. What does the Bible recommend in the battle against anxiety and carnal discontentment (Philippians 4:4-7, 10-12)?

We should work at having joy by being thankful for our blessings and leaving the rest in God’s hands via prayer so that his peace will guard our satisfied hearts.
Lesson 4: A Time For Everything
Text: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

1. If Ecclesiastes is a study in pursuing life’s meaning, what is the impact of God’s sovereignty as described in verse one of the third chapter?

2. Does man have the capability to alter the seasons in nature? What is that supposed to teach him about the seasons in the spirit?

3. The Preacher proves his point with a series of 14 suppositions (Ecclesiastes 3:2-8). On the surface, they are all completely obvious and easily overlooked for that reason. What is the human impulse regarding the seasons of life that makes these obvious observations worthy of deeper consideration (cf. Matthew 6:25-27)?

4. Consider verse 2. What is the folly in the almost universal wish of the young to be older? What two lessons do we learn from planting and plucking (Galatians 6:7-9 and James 5:7)?

5. Consider verse 3. When would there be a time to kill? When and why do men kill out of season (James 4:1-4, Galatians 5:19-21)?
6. Consider verse 4. What is right to do when one is mourning or when others are mourning around him (James 5:13-14, First Corinthians 12:26)?

We should pray, call for the elders and suffer with those who suffer.

7. Consider verse 5. When might it be the wrong season to embrace a friend (2 John 7-11) or a spouse (Joel 2:16, First Corinthians 7:5-6)?

We must not embrace one who goes beyond the doctrine of Christ. In marriage, spouses might refrain from intimacy while praying and fasting.

8. Consider verse 6. How can we accept the times when we must lose—a game, a job, money in the stock market, etc. (Job 1:13-22, Second Corinthians 4:16-5:7)?

It isn't easy to lose graciously but when our eyes are trained on the ultimate prize, defeat in life's little battles is nothing compared to victory in the war again.

9. Consider verse 7. If the tearing is related to the rending of one’s garments in remorse and repentance, what would the sewing be (Ezekiel 37:15, 22; Luke 22:31-32, Second Corinthians 2:6-11, 7:11)?

Sewing is the ministry of reconciliation and restoration when one is returned to fellowship with God and his people.

10. Consider verse 8. Since God in love, how could there ever be a time or anything to hate (Psalm 119:104, Proverbs 8:13)?

There is always a time for the lover of light to hate evil and every false way.

11. What is the result when we pursue any of the objectives in this passage, but out of season, that is, at the wrong time (Ecclesiastes 3:9-11)? Which of them is fit to be man’s chief objective in life?

Chaos and strife ensue–both internally and socially.

12. How will we respond when God’s timeline does not match our own? What usually defines our expectations as it regards a timeline?
Lesson 5: Rejoice and Do Good  
Text: Ecclesiastes 3:12-22

1. While there is nothing wrong with planning for the future, some people are so anxious or obsessed about it that the present becomes a state of misery. Consider Ecclesiastes 3:12-13. How does one balance the need to plan with the uncertainty of the future (cf. James 4:13-17, Ephesians 5:15-16)?

One must consider the future in light of its uncertainty, making sure that he is redeeming the value of each day.

2. What are the four things the Preacher recommends?

a. rejoice    

b. do good in life  
c. eat and drink    
d. enjoy the good of his labor

3. So many times, we ponder the idea that we will finally be happy once we marry, or graduate, or get promoted or reach retirement. While that might hold true, what is wrong with that mindset, if anything (First Thessalonians 5:16, First Peter 1:8)?

We are putting off the joy Christ intends for us until some “better day” which may never come. Too, we are judging happiness according to an unspiritual standard.

4. What do the following passages tell us about doing good?

a. Luke 6:27-35:

b. Galatians 6:10:

c. Second Thessalonians 3:13:

d. First Timothy 6:18:

e. James 4:17:

f. First Peter 2:20:
5. If the good of one’s labor is “the gift of God” as verse 13 suggests, does it follow that one need not labor for it (cf. James 1:17, Second Thessalonians 3:9-12) ?

6. Eternal life is likewise the gift of God. Does man have any responsibility in obtaining that gift (Ephesians 2:8-10, Philippians 2:12, James 2:14-26)?

7. In Ecclesiastes 3:14-15, the Preacher discusses the past, present and future in light of God’s sovereignty over all. What human response should be produced by that realization—one which often does not come until late in life (Second Corinthians 5:10, 7:1)?

8. Consider Ecclesiastes 3:16-17. If we acknowledge the future judgment by God of mankind, how should it affect our reasoning about the injustices we witness around us and perhaps against us (Romans 10:17-21)?

9. How are men like animals (Ecclesiastes 3:18-20)?

10. How are men different from animals (Ecclesiastes 3:21-22)?
Lesson 6: Futility of Riches
Text: Ecclesiastes 4:1-5:20

1. What did the Preacher consider next (Ecclesiastes 4:1, 5:8)? What was his conclusion about the problem (2)? Why (3)?

He considered all the oppression he saw around him and figured that it must be better to be dead than alive and even better never to have been born at all, for such a one would never have seen all the evil work done under the sun.

2. Consider Ecclesiastes 4:4-6. We are often tempted to envy the rich and powerful, but where did the Preacher find real contentment?

He recommended that we look to those who enjoy quietness or simplicity than among those who travel with the jet set.

3. Although the Preacher was disappointed in most of his pursuits, he found one that pleased. What is it (4:7-12)? What are its benefits (Proverbs 18:1, 24; 27:17)?

Companionship brings greater security and happiness, and gives one a person to offer reproof when it is needed.

4. Political power, however, ultimately proves unsatisfying as well (Ecclesiastes 4:13-16). Why?

Even a long reign is still but temporary and someone else will eventually succeed him and the ruler is forgotten.

5. What is prudence (Ecclesiastes 5:1) and what does it have with going to the house of God (Habakkuk 2:20, Leviticus 10:1-3, Ephesians 5:15-17)?

Great Themes of Ecclesiastes
6. Why is loquacity (talkativeness) often dangerous (Ecclesiastes 5:2-3, James 1:19-20, Proverbs 17:28)?

7. Read Ecclesiastes 5:4-7. How might Jesus summarize this passage according to Luke 14:28? How does this compare to the parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32?

8. Most think that great wealth would certify their happiness, but what was the Preacher’s experience (Ecclesiastes 5:8-11)?

9. Why won’t the abundance of the rich man let him sleep (12, Proverbs 23:4-5)?

10. Consider Ecclesiastes 5:13-17. Why is it hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:17-25)?

11. There is the anxious rich man whose abundance will not let him sleep. Why not just build bigger barns (Ecclesiastes 5:18-20, Luke 12:13-22)?
Lesson 7: Life is a Vapor

Text: Ecclesiastes 6:1-12

1. Consider Ecclesiastes 6:1-2. What are the three blessings God has given the man? Why don’t they do him much good?

2. Think about what could cause a man to obtain such gifts, but prove unable to enjoy them. What could it be (Lamentations 5:2)?

3. How did Job lose the honor he had accrued (Job 1:1-3, 30:1-16)?

4. What are four keys to riches, wealth and honor (Proverbs 18:12, 21:21, 22:4)?

   a.  
   b.  
   c.  
   d.  

5. Read Ecclesiastes 6:3-6. What could make the life of a stillborn child better than an old man’s?
6. Clearly it becomes important that we learn to be content with goodness. But what is goodness (Psalm 27:13, 31:19, 33:5, 65:4; Romans 11:22)?

7. How is God’s honor obtained (John 5:44, Romans 2:7-10, First Peter 1:7, Revelation 19:1)?

8. Ecclesiastes 6:7-9 has a similar message to the old axiom about a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush. What is the Preacher communicating here?

9. Why is it so difficult to restrain that wandering desire (First John 2:15-17)?

10. Read Ecclesiastes 6:10-12. How is man like a shadow or a vapor (James 4:13-17)? What does the godly man learn from this disturbing fact?

11. What should the godly woman take from this (Proverbs 31:30)?
Lesson 8: Precious Ointment

Text: Ecclesiastes 7:1-29


A good name is a good reputation and having the general favor of people due to honesty and integrity.

2. How on earth could the day of one’s death be better than that of his birth (First Corinthians 15:54-57, Hebrews 9:27-28)?

The only way that death could be superior to birth would be that heaven follows for the righteous.

3. Does this mean that we are wrong to weep over the death of a righteous person (John 11:11-38, First Thessalonians 4:13-18)? Why do we sorrow over the death of believing loved ones? What should temper our pain?

It is human to lament the loss of a loved one, even one who is righteous, but our belief in heaven should temper our pain and bring comfort so that we can let go.

4. What should the living take to heart in the house of mourning (Second Corinthians 5:10, James 4:13-17, Matthew 25:1-30)?

The living should learn that life is fleeting and that passing up opportunities is tantamount to rebellion. Before we face God’s judgment, we must make ready and apply his gifts properly.

5. Is mirth always sinful? When is mirth out of place (First Peter 5:8, Proverbs 26:19, 25:11)?

Mirth is not sinful, but serious matters should be taken seriously. It is wrong to terrify people as a joke or to make light of something that is not funny.
6. Consider Ecclesiastes 7:5-7. Which is better—an exciting Britney Spears or Rolling Stones concert, complete with hit songs, pyrotechnics and popcorn or a 45-minute sermon on sin?

7. How do oppression and bribery destroy or debase a man’s heart and reason?

8. Read Ecclesiastes 7:8-10. Why is it better not to hasten toward anger (Matthew 5:22, James 1:19-20, Ephesians 4:26-27)?

9. If it is impossible for us to explain all of life’s turnings, how should we handle prosperity and adversity (Ecclesiastes 7:11-14; First Peter 1:6-9)?

10. Ecclesiastes 7:15-20 is not an argument for religious moderation, but a reminder that righteousness does not necessarily bring automatic carnal benefit and might even lead to certain hardships. How does verse 20 apply to our opinion that God should grant our every wish?

11. Who is to blame for human suffering and wickedness—God, man, woman, who (Ecclesiastes 7:21-29, James 1:12-18)?
Man, not God who made him upright, is responsible for following his schemes.
Lesson 9: Time and Chance

Text: Ecclesiastes 8:1-9:12

1. Begin at Ecclesiastes 8:1. How is wisdom acquired (Proverbs 4:1-9, James 1:5-6)?

2. Subjection and compromise are topics for Ecclesiastes 8:2-9. Although most in the world today do not dwell in monarchies, what is to be our attitude toward civil authority (Romans 13:1-7, First Peter 2:17)?

3. Under what circumstances should Christians be willing to compromise (James 3:17-18, First Corinthians 6:6-7, Romans 12:10)? When is compromise wrong (Ephesians 4:1-3, Jude 3)?

4. How did Jesus handle such a situation in Matthew 17:24-27?

5. The Preacher begins to recognize how God sorts out the earth’s injustices (Ecclesiastes 8:10-13). How (Proverbs 1:32-33, Luke 16:19-31)?
6. Frustrated that the meaning of life could not be fully discerned, the Preacher seems to throw up his hands and acquiesce to enjoyment (Ecclesiastes 8:14-17). Why does a philosophy of “Eat, drink and be merry” fail, however (Luke 12:13-21 and First Corinthians 15:32, Romans 14:17)?

7. Carefully consider what the Preacher says in Ecclesiastes 9:1-2. He seems to have insight that escaped Job’s friends who figured that the man must be guilty of some heinous sin to account for his great suffering. One might likewise assume that the richest people on earth are also the favored of God. What is wrong with such assessments?

8. The Preacher contemplates death and in this pre-Christian era, his knowledge of eternity is obviously limited and despondent (Ecclesiastes 9:3-8). How does he describe this hopelessness?

   a. verse 3:
   b. verse 4:
   c. verse 5:

9. What importance does the condition of one’s marriage have upon a successful life (Ecclesiastes 9:9)?

10. What is it that often interferes with swiftness, strength, wisdom, understanding and skill (Ecclesiastes 9:10-12)? Explain.
Lesson 10: Life’s Uncertainties

Text: Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20


Wisdom does not always receive its due reward today. Instead fools and entertainers are usually the most compensated while educators and preachers labor in obscurity. People have short memories and carnal priorities, allowing them to forget who salved their souls in moments of despair.


She prevented Joab from destroying her city by giving him the head of Sheba whom he sought. One man died that the nation might endure.

3. Honestly, do you remember ever reading or hearing about this maidservant before? What does that tell you?

Her story is an obscure one and her wisdom is little appreciated, which goes to prove the Preacher’s point.

4. What is the conflict the Preacher acknowledges in Ecclesiastes 9:16-18? Why is its resolution usually so destructive? Does might make right?

Although wisdom is better than strength, strength usually prevails because wisdom tends toward meekness and patience while might is aggressive and unavailing.

5. Think about those “words of the wise, quietly spoken.” They are often the words of the woman, the meek, the aged, the survivor something harrowing which has sapped the body’s strength while enhancing the spirit’s (Mark 6:2-3). Sometimes they are even the words of the child. Why don’t we listen (see also Second Corinthians 10:1-7)?
We don’t listen because our ears are untuned and we expect only wisdom from the bold and experienced.

7. A person’s reputation can be destroyed by a single misdeed after a lifetime of achievement? Is this fair? Does that make any difference (Proverbs 22:1, Ecclesiastes 7:1, Matthew 5:13-16)?

8. Read Ecclesiastes 10:5-7. Agur also recognized four catastrophes that followed social reversal. List them (Proverbs 30:21-23).

   a. 
   b. 
   c. 
   d.

9. What is the theme of Ecclesiastes 10:8-10?

10. Consider Ecclesiastes 10:11-15, 20. When is it advisable to keep one’s mouth closed (see Proverbs 10:14, 15:1-2, 10:32; Matthew 12:36)?

11. The chapter closes in Ecclesiastes 10:16-20. What is the connection between drunkenness, laziness and debauchery?
Lesson 11: The Days of Your Youth

Text: Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:8


2. How are sharing and benevolence like investments (Matthew 7:12, Luke 18:22, Isaiah 49:4)?


4. Consider Ecclesiastes 11:3-6. The point is that some foresee hard times coming and respond by being miserly and selfish, but the child of God is not so restrained from righteousness. What excuses do we catch ourselves using so as to remove ourselves from the necessity of sharing or sacrificing?

5. Think about Ecclesiastes 11:6 and consider the Lord’s parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23. What is the problem with extensive testing of the soils?
It is impossible to tell beforehand which soil is good, for thorns and tares can appear in that which looks healthy and faith can sprout where decay was apparent at first.
6. The Preacher predicts that dark days are seldom further away than the next corner in one’s life. Although we should enjoy life, it must always be within a context that respects judgment and eternity even more. What does Paul mean when he instructs disciples likewise to walk circumspectly (Ephesians 5:15-17, Romans 13:11-14)?

7. Does the Preacher sanction a profligate lifestyle in Ecclesiastes 11:9-10? Think hard—what is his point (Second Timothy 2:22)?

8. In Ecclesiastes 12:1-8, the Preacher extends that sentiment to invite the younger generation to think about God immediately. Why do you think young adults tend to find it difficult to concentrate upon faith, heaven and eternity?

9. What did Agur recognize as perilous to such a generation as that (Proverbs 30:11-14)?

10. How does one go about remembering his creator in his youth?
Lesson 12: Conclusion

Text: Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

1. The epilogue of Ecclesiastes begins in the ninth verse of the twelfth chapter. What did the Preacher do because he was wise?

2. Somewhere in the reference to the Preacher, there is a connection to Solomon, although how close is unclear. Certainly, when the Bible student thinks of proverbs, he thinks of the 31 chapters that precede Ecclesiastes, although only a portion are attributed to Solomon. Read Proverbs 1:1-7 and identify what his purpose was in writing them.

3. What is a proverb and how is distinguished from other methods of instruction?

4. Perhaps Proverbs 3:6 would provide a fitting summary of the book of Ecclesiastes. After so much searching, where did the Preacher find meaning and fulfillment for his life?

5. How does God direct all of our paths (Jeremiah 10:23, Psalm 119:105)?

He compares words of truth to goads or well-driven nails, given by the Shepherd. Sometimes the truth is painful and it directs us in a way we not have traveled otherwise. Sometimes it causes us to take risks, make sacrifices, even invite ridicule and persecution—all so that our spirits might gain strength and stamina.

7. Perhaps the most famous convert in the history of the church spent time kicking against the goads of the Shepherd (Acts 9:9:1-5). What does that indicate?

Saul of Tarsus was kicking against the goads by persecuting the church and its founder despite the fact that both were true and righteous. Perhaps it also indicates that Saul was beginning to question his conviction that Christ was false, especially as he watched his Hebrew brethren willingly suffer and die because they believed.

8. Why do people still kick against the goads today, even as they search for meaning in life elsewhere (see also Matthew 6:19-24)?

Today, people seek meaning and purpose in life much the way the Preacher did—in materialism, relationships, hedonism and pride. It is the rare person who responds to his spiritual longing for fellowship with God and the hope of heaven. Life’s failures and a gnawing sense of emptiness indicate a vacancy where God ought to sit.

9. Most college students would concur with the wisdom of Ecclesiastes 12:12. Why don’t self-help books and the philosophy and psychology of men end up helping very much?

Because they are, by definition, uninspired, such books and disciplines can never provide the insight that the Bible has.

10. What is the conclusion to the search and its record in this book? In other words, what is your all (First John 4:17-19, Hebrews 4:11-13, Second Corinthians 5:10)?
Lesson 13: Review

1. While Ecclesiastes 1:1 introduces us to the author of the book, the second verse indicates his theme. Who is the author? Explain his theme.

2. Why aren’t many wise according to the flesh called to Christ (First Corinthians 1:18-31; cf. James 4:6)?

3. The writer gave up on finding meaning in human wisdom and went to the opposite extreme. What was his next option (Ecclesiastes 2:1-3)?

4. What would modern people call the condition described in Ecclesiastes 2:23? What does the Bible recommend in the battle against anxiety and carnal discontentment (Philippians 4:4-7, 10-12)?

5. What is the result when we pursue any of the objectives in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, but out of season, that is, at the wrong time (Ecclesiastes 3:9-11)? Which of them is fit to be man’s chief objective in life? How will we respond when God’s timeline does not match our own?

6. Consider Ecclesiastes 3:16-17. If we acknowledge the future judgment by God of mankind, how should it affect our reasoning about the injustices we witness around us and perhaps against us (Romans 10:17-21)?
7. Consider Ecclesiastes 5:13-17. Why is it hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Mark 10:17-25)?

8. Read Ecclesiastes 6:10-12. How is man like a shadow or a vapor (James 4:13-17)? What does the godly man learn from this disturbing fact? What should the godly woman take from this (Proverbs 31:30)?

9. What should the living take to heart in the house of mourning (Ecclesiastes 7:1-4, Second Corinthians 5:10, James 4:13-17, Matthew 25:1-30)?

10. What is it that often interferes with swiftness, strength, wisdom, understanding and skill (Ecclesiastes 9:10-12)? Explain.

11. In Ecclesiastes 12:1-8, the Preacher extends that sentiment to invite the younger generation to think about God immediately. Why do you think young adults tend to find it difficult to concentrate upon faith, heaven and eternity?

12. What is the conclusion to the search and its record in this book? In other words, what is your all (First John 4:17-19, Hebrews 4:11-13, Second Corinthians 5:10)?
We must learn to fear God and to keep his commandments, for God will bring every work into judgment.