

WEEK TWENTY FOUR INTRODUCTION

By finishing Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, this week's reading closes the Old Testament wisdom books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes). *Wisdom* stands indivisibly connected to *righteousness*. To live wisely necessarily means to live rightly. Wisdom springs from the foundational orientation of *the fear of the Lord* which settles one under the standard of God revealed in His Word. Fearing God begins with understanding and surrendering to the fact that God is God and we are not. God is greater than us, yes, but He is also a greater kind of being. Wisdom then seeks to apply to immovable standards of God's revealed will in the Scriptures under the fear of God to every relationship and situation. In fact, the fear of the Lord closes the book of Ecclesiastes. Even as we read into a new scene in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, the problems of Israel arise because they, beginning with their leaders, lost the fear of the Lord. When a people losing the fear of the Lord they will inevitably lose their way as they are enslaved to lesser idols and gods.

KEY SCRIPTURE

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.
– Ecclesiastes 12:13 ESV

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Proverbs 27:1 states, *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.* How can Christians plan and make preparations about the future without arrogantly presuming on the future? Read James 4:13-17.

How would you summarize the book of Ecclesiastes? What applications does this challenging book have in our current culture and society? How does Solomon remedy the question of “vanity”? Where do we see this “vanity” gripping our family, friends, and neighbors? How can you share the news of a truly *meaningful* life with them?

What is it about Solomon that takes the Queen of Sheba's breath away (1 Kings 10:5)? Each area of his life displayed Solomon's wisdom and success. How did seeing all of this bring the Queen to the point of praising Yahweh (v.9)? Does each area of your life display your relationship with Jesus? Which areas need to come into greater conformity with God's will?

What is Solomon's downfall? In 1 Kings 11, to what cause does Scripture attribute Solomon's straying heart? What was the result of Solomon's infidelity to the Lord?

Proverbs 30:5-6 testifies, *Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.* Do you have this sort of confidence in God's Word in Scripture? Why is adding to God's Word dangerous? Where do you see it happening today?

Who rose to the throne of Israel after Solomon died? How did he fail and what was the result? See 2 Chronicles 10. What does Rehoboam's unfaithfulness bring upon Jerusalem? What response in 2 Chronicles 12:6-7 saves Jerusalem from destruction? What lesson should we learn today?

2 Chronicles 12:14 says of Rehoboam, *And he did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek the LORD.* There are only two ways for the human heart to go. Either we will seek the Lord or we will choose evil. Evil has many different paths which all result in death and destruction while seeking the Lord is singular in its focus. To seek the Lord is to follow Jesus. Which way will you choose?

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

“Speak up for those who have no voice, for the justice of all who are dispossessed. Speak up, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the oppressed and needy.” -**Proverbs 31:8-9 CSB**

**How will you advocate for the weak, voiceless, and needy?
Who needs your voice on their behalf**