

Hello. We will begin our 18<sup>th</sup> lecture on “An Introduction to the Old Testament.” /We are studying the Poetic and Wisdom Books, and today we will learn about Ecclesiastes. /Ecclesiastes is the Preacher’s words of wisdom.

/Proverbs 1:7 lays down the conclusion, and then it goes on to prove the conclusion through deductive reasoning. However, Ecclesiastes follows a more developmental process in an inductive reasoning kind of way.

/Ecclesiastes mentions specific issues concerning wisdom. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 make the conclusion that fearing God is the whole duty of man. In this way, Ecclesiastes develops through inductive reasoning.

/Ecclesiastes mentions the Preacher’s words of wisdom, and we find out who this Preacher is in 1:1. /Proverbs says, “Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.” However, Ecclesiastes does not say the name “Solomon.”

/But we can say that Solomon, son of David, the king of wisdom, is the Preacher in Ecclesiastes. /The Preacher is someone who teaches wisdom, discusses wisdom, and preaches wisdom.

/In 1:3, we see the kind of wisdom that the book of Ecclesiastes is handling. It is the question of “What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?”

/Proverbs deals with the wisdom of living life, how one is to live wisely in life. On the other hand, Ecclesiastes teaches us about what we gain from toiling under the sun.

/In conclusion, it tells us the meaning of living life on this earth. /The Preacher tackles these subjects and shows us several types of his studies on wisdom.

/Chapters 1 to 11 are about how the Preacher, with wisdom, comes to realize the meaning of life. /One method by which he studies the meaning of life is by looking into his life experiences, his observations and personal experiences.

/Another way is by acknowledging God and discovering the meaning of life through it. /Proverbs teaches us the way of the foolish woman and the way of the wise woman. Similarly, in Ecclesiastes, the Preacher defines the meaning of life based on his experiences and knowledge. Also, another method is acknowledging God and following the meaning of life given by God.

/The meaning of life based on his experience and observations is found in 1:4-11. He defines it as being “Life is a repetition.” /We can see the Preacher’s experience and his observations and his search for the meaning of life in 1:13. It says, “And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven.”

/What is his conclusion about the meaning of life based on his experiences and observations? 1:14 says, “All is vanity and a striving after wind.” /Verse 18 tells us that much wisdom is much vexation and an increase in knowledge increases sorrow.

/2:11 reads, “Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.” / “All was vanity and a striving after wind” means that we cannot know. Like the wind that escapes the grasp of our hands, the meaning of life cannot be known through our experiences.

/Ecclesiastes keeps saying “Vanity,” and by this, he is saying that the meaning of life based on his experiences and observations is meaningless, that it cannot be known.

/In the book of Ecclesiastes, there is a way of discovering the meaning of life, and we do this by believing in God and discovering the meaning of life. /We can see this method in 2:24. It says that man’s eating, drinking, and toiling all come from God’s hand.

/The world is meaningless and painful, but a life that acknowledges God is in a happy state of eating and finding enjoyment.

/Proverbs showed us two ways: the way of the foolish woman and the way of the wise woman. From Ecclesiastes chapter 2 to 11, the Preacher speaks of two meanings of life. One way is discovering the meaning of life with the wisdom of acknowledging God and the other way is discovering the meaning of life with one’s personal experiences and personal wisdom.

/Chapter 12 provides the answer to the question of these two ways. The answer is to remember God our Creator when we are young and alive. /You cannot discover the true meaning of life based on your human experiences, knowledge, and observations. Therefore, man must remember his Creator before he dies.

/In Ecclesiastes 12:12, we see a phrase that we saw in Proverbs. It is “My son, beware of anything beyond these.” /It is saying to stop trying to figure out life using your experiences and to fear God and keep his commands. To do so is man’s duty and to do so is having wisdom.

/Although life may be tough and although you may encounter hardships, if you leave it to God and trust in him, you are living by wisdom and are on the way to a life of pleasure.

/Ecclesiastes says remembering God and trusting in him through life’s difficulties is the important meaning of life.

/We will continue with Song of Solomon. /This Song of Songs is the Song of Solomon. It is a very beautiful song, the Song of Songs.

/What is the Song of Songs? What song is the greatest of all songs? /Solomon's song is a song about the love between a man and a woman. /Song of Solomon draws a picture of the beautiful love between Solomon and the Shulammitte woman.

/It talks of a love that is within the covenant relationship of marriage before God. /Song of Solomon also discusses the difficult conflicts that occur within a married couples' life. /The book informs us about the factors of temptation in married life.

/It can be a problem of the family, or it can be a problem of money. /The things that break down a married couples' love are society's customs and the structural evils of society.

/However, Song of Solomon, in 8:6, like Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, sings of the victory of love in God. /8:6 says that love is as strong as death.

/Many waters cannot quench love, nor can floods drown it. No money can purchase love, which is a precious thing. /A marriage put together by God displays a powerful and precious love.

/Therefore, a man and woman who love each other under God's system of marriage are wise, and they give glory to God. /Song of Solomon also shows us the beauty of life in marriage.

/The sex life of a married couple is not something to be embarrassed or ashamed of. Before God, married life is beautiful and holy, and it is very important. /In Song of Solomon, apart from King Solomon and the Shulammitte woman, other women of Jerusalem make their entrance.

/These women of Jerusalem are young women who haven't yet married. /Song of Solomon teaches young women and men about the beauty and carefulness of marriage. /It teaches them that having a holy family before God is true wisdom.

/The book of Song of Solomon is read in Israel during the Passover. /The book is not only about the relationship between a man and a woman, but it also symbolizes the relationship between God, who is the groom, and Israel, who is the bride. It is also a song of love between Jesus Christ and the believer.

/We can see this in the book of Hosea. /Thus Song of Solomon depicts the beauty of a man and woman's love in a marriage relationship. It is an expression of the beauty of the love between God and the people of Israel, a love that happens within the covenant relationship.

/There are numerous temptations and idols that tear apart the covenant relationship, the relationship of love, between God and the people of Israel. However, it is wise for the people of Israel to love God alone and to obey him.

/Song of Solomon is about God's love that is shown to Israel, who is the bride. /We can see this relationship of love between God and God's people in Revelation.

/There is a kingdom of God that will be made complete with the second coming of Jesus. This kingdom is seen as the marriage feast of God and his people. /Ephesians 5 describes the relationship of a married couple as the relationship between the Lord and his church.

/Ephesians tells us that a beautiful relationship of love means to submit to one another. /The church is wise and blessed when it obeys Jesus Christ, the groom.

/We will study the book of Psalms. /Psalms is composed of 150 psalms. /What is a psalm? /It is praise towards God. It is also a song of prayer.

/God's people, living as people of God's covenant, face hardships and sadness and have joy. Psalms praises God for these things in the form of prayer. /The book of Psalms also has its own flow.

/From Psalm 3 to 150, we discover a pattern. These psalms are psalms of praise to God during times of trouble, suffering, and misery.

/We find several characteristics of Psalms, and when understanding the book of Psalms, it is important that we look at the genres. /In Psalms, there are psalms of praising God, psalms of thanksgiving, and psalms of groaning in prayer during hardships.

/Moreover, there are psalms of wisdom, the king's psalms related to the kings, and psalms that reveal the Messiah. /Thus it is important that we analyze the genre of a psalm when we read it.

/Psalms 1 and 2 are an introduction to the book of Psalms. /They are important psalms that teach us how to read Psalms and guide us in the direction we should take.

/We can see that Psalm 1 is a psalm of wisdom. The words that appeared in the Wisdom Books appear in Psalm 1.

/Who does Psalm 1:1 say is the blessed person? It says blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. /We easily discover these expressions in Proverbs.

/Therefore this makes it a psalm of wisdom. /How does the psalm of wisdom develop? There is the way of the sinner and the way of the righteous. /The life of a righteous person is characterized by delighting in the law of the LORD and meditating on his law.

/Whoever meditates on the law and delights in it will always prosper. /However, verse 4 says that the wicked are shaken like chaff in the wind. /The righteous always meditate on the law of the word and plant their roots in it. But the wicked follow the trends of the world.

/The wicked are judged, and they are not acknowledged by God. /The righteous, however, enter God's congregation and are acknowledged by God. /In this way, Psalms compares one thing to another.

/As it was in the Wisdom Books, Psalms uses figures of speech and metaphors. /Psalm 1 represents the entire book of Psalms. This psalm requires the life of the righteous to be a life of delighting in God's law and obeying it.

/Psalm 2 is a psalm of the king, and it also is a psalm about the Messiah. /God sets his King on his dwelling place, Zion, and he makes everyone believe in the King. /Accepting the King raised up by God is having wisdom.

/Whoever does not accept this King, who is God's Son, will perish. /Therefore we must not only delight in God's word, but we must accept the King he has raised up.

/Of the many genres of the psalms, we will study the psalms of wisdom. /We will study Psalm 37, which is a psalm of David. /Psalms includes many of David's psalms, and a lot of them teach us how to respond to hardship as we live as God's people.

/37:1 says, "Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!" /The writer of this psalm was put into a difficult situation because of these evildoers.

/When we see evildoers prosper more than those who trust in God, we may become confused. /However, 37:7 says, "Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!"

/Verse 9 tells us that the evildoers will be cut off and that God will judge them. /Verse 10 says that in a little while, the wicked will be no more. /Verse 24 tells us that the righteous person will not fall down.

/The reason is God holds on to this person. /God does not abandon the children of those who trust in him. /Therefore seeking God, trusting in him, and keeping the word is having wisdom.

/Verse 39 says, "The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble." /In Psalm 49, we discover a similar psalm of wisdom. /In it, we find the psalmist who is in debt.

/49:5 reads, "Why should I fear in times of trouble, when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me." /In the midst of this, there are those who put their trust in their possessions and boast in their abundance. /Afterwards, the psalmist wrestles with the subject of death.

/What happens with this problem of death? /Verse 15 says that God will receive the person who relies on God while he lives. /In verse 17, however, we learn that someone who relies on his money will not have his glory go down with him. This person will be judged. /Therefore we need to understand the truth.

/We will now study Psalm 73. /We can figure out that the psalmist is in a more difficult situation. /73:2 says that the psalmist's feet almost stumbled and his feet nearly slipped.

/In verse 13, we learn that the psalmist has a clean heart, and he washed his hands to live a life of innocence. /He is someone who keeps his faith and lives diligently. /However, in all that he does, he encounters hardships.

/Things do not work out for the psalmist. /On the other hand, the wicked person, who lives without God, prospers, is healthy, and has lots of money. /The psalmist, who is having a hard time, is troubled in his heart.

/He even tried to fall into the temptation of abandoning God. /In verse 17, the psalmist enters the sanctuary of God. /As the psalmist worships God, God shows him the end result of the wicked.

/Verse 18 says, "Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin."  
/When the psalmist was troubled in his heart and was about to lose his footing, he came to realize something big. /He realizes that although he may not prosper in life, God's justice will be carried out even into death.

/God's justice is fulfilled even after his people die. Thus he confesses that being close to God is a blessing. /Conclusively, in verse 28, the psalmist realizes that being near to God is a blessing. He says he will make God his refuge and tell of all his works of justice.

/Through the psalms of wisdom in the book of Psalms, we come to know an important point. /The one who trusts in God does not always prosper. /Instead, those who do not trust in God may prosper.

/What do the psalms of wisdom teach us about this? /First, in a little while, God will judge the wicked, and those who trust in him will be blessed.

/Second, God's justice may not be carried out in this world. /The prideful people who do not trust in God may live happily on this earth without God's judgment until they die.

/However, Psalms teaches us that even after they die, God's judgment and justice will be carried out. /We cannot measure God's justice with the things that are visible. /God's justice happens after death.

/For this reason, we shouldn't complain when we see the wicked prosper in this world. /Drawing near to God and finding refuge in him is a blessing, and it is wisdom.

/By going to the fifth book of Psalms, Psalm 107, we learn about the form of the psalms of thanksgiving. /The first verse of Psalm 107 is a word of thanks to the LORD. /Why is the psalmist thankful?

/He is thankful because of God's goodness and his unchanging covenant love. /God delivered his people and saved them from the hands of the enemy. /Psalm 107:4 describes how God redeemed his people and rescued them.

/In verse 4, while the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, while they could not find the way and were tired, God remembered them. /When they were thirsty and hungry and cried out to the LORD, God delivered them.

/God guided them down the right way, and he led them to the city they would live in. /This is God's goodness and love. /In verse 10, we find another title of thanksgiving.

/It speaks of someone who is imprisoned and put into chains because of his wrongdoing. /He cried out to the LORD when no one was there to help him in his trouble. /This time again, God listened to him and brought him out of prison.

/This is the second title of thanksgiving. /From verse 17 on, we find other titles of thanksgiving. /A person almost died from sickness. /In verse 20, God healed him and brought him to life.

/Thus the person gives worship of thanksgiving to God, and he praises him. /Verse 23 tells us that while someone was doing business on the great waters, he encountered big waves. /He too cried out to the LORD in his trouble, and the LORD saved him.

/God guides us to safe harbors. /There are those who experienced these works deserving thanks. In verse 32, they come before God and praise him and give thanks to him with the other people of God.

/Verse 33 tells us that the God who saved them can turn rivers into a desert and springs of water into thirsty ground. /He gives the hungry a city to dwell in, he cultivates the vineyard, and he blesses them and makes them prosper.

/However, God also judges his people, and he can make them wander in the wilderness. /Therefore, those who have wisdom must through these things remember God and believe in him.

/Included in the psalms of thanksgiving is the factor of wisdom. /I told you that there are many different genres in Psalms. /In some cases, we can clearly distinguish the genre. However, Psalm 107 is a combination of thanksgiving and wisdom. There are many psalms that are a mix of genres.

/We need to distinguish the genres of these psalms and study them. Furthermore, figuring out the important themes of the book of Psalms helps to better understand it. /Tomorrow, we will have the lecture on the Prophetic Books.

/Thank you.