

- Recap of last week: Solomon strikes a deal with King Hiram of Tyre (a city in Lebanon) to provide their famous trees for construction material. Solomon drafts a lot of people from Israel to help out. (I Kings 5). Solomon builds a temple and a palace (I Kings 6 and 7). Solomon gets the Ark of the Covenant in the temple. (I Kings 8) God promises that He will continue to be with Israel as long as they walk in His ways. (I Kings 9) Solomon keeps God at the forefront and he amasses great wealth that even impresses faraway rulers like the Queen of Sheba.
- Solomon falls in love with women from other countries and God warns him against marrying them. Solomon marries them anyway, in fact he had 700 wives and 300 “concubines” (mistresses). His wives turn Solomon away from God and he even builds some temples to their Gods. (I Kings 11:1-8)
- God tells Solomon that because he disobeyed God in this matter the kingdom would be taken away from him. God tells Solomon that because of his father David he would wait until Solomon passed away and take it from his descendants, but he would leave one tribe for his son. (I Kings 11:9-13)
- God immediately starts raising adversaries to Solomon. The first is a guy named Hadad the Edomite. David’s military commander Joab had killed all the males in Edom but Hadad escaped to Egypt and got in good with the Pharaoh there. When he heard that David and Joab were dead, he wanted to go back to Israel. (I Kings 11:14-22) The second is a guy named Rezon who became King of Syria and was always causing Israel problems. (I Kings 11:23-25)
- The third adversary that we read about was named Jeroboam. Jeroboam was a servant to Solomon who Solomon saw as very industrious, so he promoted him. (I Kings 11:26-28)
- A prophet named Ahijah comes to Jeroboam and cuts his own garment into twelve pieces. He tells Jeroboam to take ten of them because God will give him ten tribes to rule over. He tells Jeroboam that God will give Solomon’s descendant one tribe. (I Kings 11:29-36)
- There are different views of why only 11 tribes are referred to. The one tribe that God promises will remain loyal to Solomon’s descendants is most certainly Judah, where Jerusalem is also. The most probable explanation for the “unaccounted for” tribe is that it is the priestly tribe of Levi, which had no political voice and no land – they were a tribe of priests. Because of their alignment with David it is most likely that they choose to stay with Solomon’s son, even though they are not mentioned here.
- Solomon tries to have Jeroboam killed but he flees. Solomon dies. His son Rehoboam takes over for him. (I Kings 11:37-43)
- Ecclesiastes is a book of wisdom most likely written by Solomon to explain the conclusions of his rule.
- Solomon introduced the book by explaining that there really is not anything new and that the accumulation of wisdom is pointless if one doesn’t know God. (Ecclesiastes 1)
- Extreme self-indulgence is pointless. (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11)
- Trying to live wisely on the earth is pointless. (Ecclesiastes 2:12-17)
- Hard work for its own sake is pointless. (Ecclesiastes 2:18-26)
- It is important to realize that the key to all this being pointless is doing it for its own sake. For example, later in chapter 9:10 we see a different attitude, that “whatever your hands find to do, do with all your might.” In the context of slaves, Paul is going to explain that when we work we are working as “unto the Lord.” (Colossians 3:23) Paul is basically saying that our reward for our hard work is not here on this earth.

- There is a proper time for everything. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-9)
- God is eternal, and because man is created in God's image, we have "eternity in our hearts." (Ecclesiastes 3:10-15)
- We are all going to end up dying, so nothing on this earth really matters. (Ecclesiastes 3:16-22)
- There is a lot of loneliness, injustice, and oppression in this world. Solomon compares attempting to get ahead in this environment to grasping at wind. (Ecclesiastes 4:1-16)
- God is a lot higher than we are so we should let our words be few, and a vow before God is a very serious thing. (Ecclesiastes 5:1-7)
- We should always take all our material blessings and honors in this life as blessings from God. He who loves material things like money will have problems (Ecclesiastes 5:8-20 and chapter 6)
- Some people think that being blessed with material possessions is wrong. That in and of itself is not wrong; it is getting that out of proportion and loving money ahead of God that is wrong. (I Timothy 6:10) The temptation to appreciate these things too much makes it very hard to put God first. Jesus makes this clear. (Mark 10:25). A lot has been written about what Jesus might have meant by it being easier for "a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." There are a lot of possible explanations for this, but I tend to agree with the one that says the original Aramaic word for "camel" here is actually the same word for "rope" and it is better translated this way. It may even have been a pretty common expression at the time. Source: [http://www.eyeoftheneedle.net/eye\\_of\\_a\\_needle.htm](http://www.eyeoftheneedle.net/eye_of_a_needle.htm)
- It is better for a person to be serious and guarded than superficial. True wisdom is the person who is always looking out for temptations and not being too haughty. (Ecclesiastes 7) Pride goes before a fall (Proverbs 16:18), and as soon as we think we are standing strong, we are most vulnerable (I Corinthians 10:12)
- We are to respect our earthly authorities. (Ecclesiastes 8:1-9) (Romans 13:1-8) (Hebrews 13:17)
- Those who fear God will do well. (Ecclesiastes 8:10-13)
- We cannot figure out the works of God. (Ecclesiastes 8:14-17)
- Death comes to us all. (Ecclesiastes 9:1-6) All flesh is like grass but the word of the Lord endures always. (I Peter 1:24-25) Life is like a vapor, which is why we should not place our confidence in things that happen tomorrow. (James 4:13-15). This whole thing reminds us of the parable Jesus told in Luke 12:16-21
- Enjoy life with the one you love. (Ecclesiastes 9:7-10)
- Wisdom is still preferable to folly, even with its limitations. (Ecclesiastes 9:11-18)
- A lot of sayings about the virtues of wisdom are covered in analogy. (Ecclesiastes 10)
- It is best to cast your bread upon the waters, meaning make wise decisions about the spreading of good things and trust that you will be repaid for your decisions. (Ecclesiastes 11)
- Remember your creator while you are young. (Ecclesiastes 12:1-8) Remember, you may not get the chance to later on.
- There is no end to a search for wisdom, so Solomon's conclusion to this book of wisdom is simple "fear God and keep His commandments." (Ecclesiastes 12:9-14)

## Questions

1. Why did God warn Solomon against intermarriage?

2. How many wives did Solomon have?
3. What did Solomon's wives get him to do?
4. What is Solomon's punishment?
5. Why does God say He will reduce the severity of the punishment a bit?
6. What does God say the lightened punishment will be?
7. Who was Hadad the Edomite?
8. Who was Rezon?
9. Who was Jeroboam?
10. What was the significant of Jeroboam's status?
11. What does Ahijah do to his garment? Why?
12. What is the significance of the fact that the garment has twelve pieces, and there are twelve tribes, yet Ahijah only tells Jeroboam he is going to get ten, and one will go to Solomon's house?
13. How does Jeroboam get away from Solomon?
14. Who takes over for King Solomon?
15. Who wrote Ecclesiastes? Why?
16. How is Ecclesiastes introduced?
17. What three things does Solomon say in Ecclesiastes 2 are pointless?
18. Is Solomon saying we should not work hard?
19. Why do things on this earth not really matter that much?
20. What does Solomon compare attempts to get ahead in this world to?
21. Why are our vows before God so serious?
22. Why is it hard for a wealthy person to enter the kingdom of heaven?
23. What two things do New Testament writers compare life to in order to emphasize how short our time is here?
24. What is Solomon's conclusion about wisdom?
25. What does it mean to "cast your bread upon the waters?"
26. Why does Solomon say to "remember your creator in the days of your youth?"
27. What is Solomon's conclusion to Ecclesiastes?