

**LESSON 17: Ecclesiastes,
Song of Songs**

LOGOS

A General and Light Survey of the Bible

By Dr. Steven Wood

(REVISED) TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Lesson 1:	Overview
Lesson 2:	Genesis
Lesson 3:	Exodus
Lesson 4:	Leviticus
Lesson 5:	Numbers
Lesson 6:	Deuteronomy
Lesson 7:	Joshua
Lesson 8:	Judges, Ruth
Lesson 9:	1st & 2nd Samuel
Lesson 10:	1st & 2nd Kings
Lesson 11:	1st & 2nd Chronicles
Lesson 12:	Ezra, Nehemiah
Lesson 13:	Esther
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Lesson 15:	Psalms
Lesson 16:	Proverbs,
Lesson 17:	Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs

--- SUMMER ---

September 4, 2024:	Isaiah
September 11, 2024:	Jeremiah, Lamentations
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October 2, 2024:	Hosea, Joel, Amos
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October 30, 2024:	INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT
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--- ADVENT / CHRISTMAS ---

January 8, 2025:	1st & 2nd Corinthians
January 15, 2025:	Galatians
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January 29, 2025:	Colossians
February 5, 2025:	1st & 2nd Thessalonians
February 12, 2025:	1st & 2nd Timothy
February 19, 2025:	Titus, Philemon
February 26, 2025:	Hebrews
March 5, 2025:	Ash Wednesday
March 12, 2025:	James
March 19, 2025:	1st & 2nd Peter, Jude
March 26, 2025:	1st, 2nd, 3rd John
April 2, 2025:	Revelation

Lesson 17

ECCLESIASTES

- Whereas The Book of Psalms was collected as a hymnal of worship, and Proverbs is a collection of divinely inspired practical life wisdom, Ecclesiastes is a philosophical reflection about life outside God's fellowship.
- Solomon is the author. While he calls himself "the Preacher," he could be called the Philosopher as he seeks satisfaction in a variety of things before concluding life without God is, "*Meaningless! Meaningless!*" ...*Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless*" (1:2).
- The word, "meaningless," ('vanity' in some translations) or a derivative, is used 37 times in the book.

OUTLINE

- The Futility of All Human Endeavor (1:1–11).
 - "*Meaningless! Meaningless!*" says the Teacher. "*Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless*" (v. 2).
 - *What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full... All things are weary-some... The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing. What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun... No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them.* (vv. 3-11)
- The Futility of Human Achievement (1:12–18).
 - *I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.* (1:14)
 - Wisdom: *I said to myself, "Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.* (1:16-17)
 - Pleasure: *I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless.* (2:1)
 - "*Laughter,*" I said, "*is madness...*" (2:2)
 - *I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly...* (2:3)
 - *I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water*

groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me... (2:4-9)

- *So, I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (2:17)*
- **Work: The futility of human labor. (2:17–3:22)**
 - *I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? (2:18-19)*
 - *...my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. (2:20-21)*
 - *What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless. (2:22-23)*
 - **Conclusions: No matter how hard a person may work, God's providence and power does not change.**
 - *His timing is perfect and ineffective throughout this life and all eternity. There is a time... (3:1-8)*
 - *He has made everything beautiful in its time... (3:11a)*
 - *He has also set eternity in the human heart... (3:11b)*
 - *I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. (3:12-13)*
 - *I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. (3:14)*
 - **Men and women often work with impure motivation. (Chapter 4):**
 - *oppression (vv. 1-3)*
 - *envy (vv. 4-6)*
 - *greed*
 - **A Proverb: Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will**

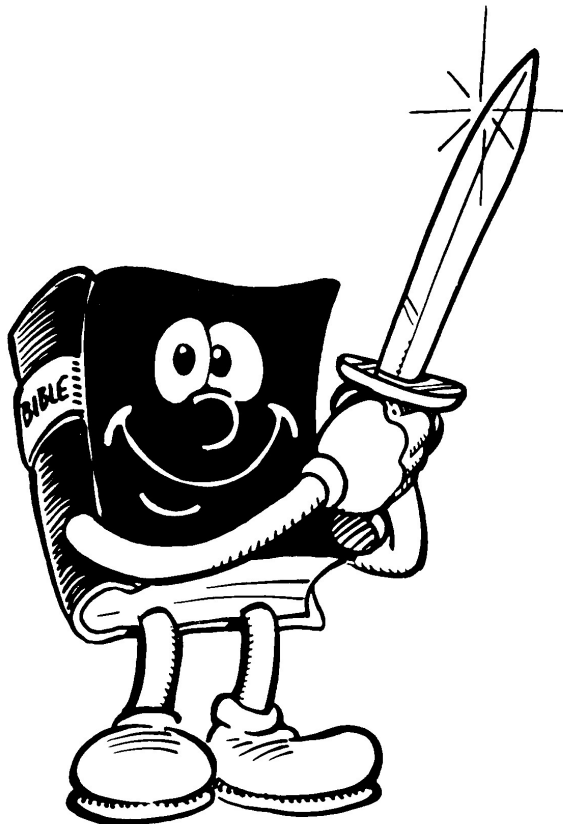
keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (vv. 9-12)

- Promises to God: The futility of religious practices (5:1–7).
 - *Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. (v. 1)*
 - *When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. (v. 4)*
- Wealth: The futility of financial security (5:8-6:12).
 - *Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. (5:10)*
 - *Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands. (5:15)*
 - *...that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot. Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God. (5:18-19)*
 - *God gives some people wealth, possessions, and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, but God does not grant them the ability to enjoy them, and strangers enjoy them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil. (6:2)*
- The futility of human wisdom (7:1-8:1).
 - A list of various proverbs (7:1-8:1).
 - *A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth. (7:1)*
 - *It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart. (7:2)*
 - *Frustration is better than laughter because a sad face is good for the heart. (7:3)*
 - *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure. (7:4)*
 - *It is better to heed the rebuke of a wise person than to listen to the song of fools. Like the crackling of thorns under the pot, so is the laughter of fools. This too is meaningless. (7:5-6))*
 - *Extortion turns a wise person into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart. (7:7)*
 - *The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride. (7:8)*
 - *Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools. (7:9)*

- *Do not say, “Why were the old days better than these?” For it is not wise to ask such questions. (7:10)*
- *Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: Wisdom preserves those who have it. (7:11-12)*
- *Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked? When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future. In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: the righteous perishing in their righteousness, and the wicked living long in their wickedness. (7:13-15)*
- *Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise—why destroy yourself? Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool—why die before your time? It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes. (7:16-18)*
- *Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins. (7:20)*
- *Do not pay attention to every word people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you—for you know in your heart that many times you yourself have cursed others. (7:21-22)*
- *A conclusion. All this I tested by wisdom, and I said, “I am determined to be wise”—but this was beyond me. Whatever exists is far off and most profound—who can discover it? So, I turned my mind to understand, to investigate and to search out wisdom and the scheme of things and to understand the stupidity of wickedness and the madness of folly... This only have I found: God created mankind upright, but they have gone in search of many schemes... (7:23-29)*
- *The futility of attempting to know the ways of God. When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night—then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it. (8:16-17)*
- *The futility of life itself (9).*
 - *So, I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God’s hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them. All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good, so with the sinful; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them. (vv. 1-2)*

- *This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. (v. 3)*
- *Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom. (vv. 7-10)*
- *Additional proverbs (9:19-12:8)*
 - *The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools. (9:19)*
 - *Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good. (9:20)*
 - *As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor. (10:1)*
 - *The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left. Even as fools walk along the road, they lack sense and show everyone how stupid they are. (10:2-3)*
 - *Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are consumed by their own lips. At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness— and fools multiply words. (10:12-14)*
 - *No one knows what is coming— who can tell someone else what will happen after them? (10:14)*
 - *Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks. (10:18)*
 - *If clouds are full of water, they pour rain on the earth. (11:3)*
 - *Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie. (11:3)*
 - *As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things. (11:5)*
 - *Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well. (11:6)*

- *You who are young, be happy while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment... Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them..." (11:9-12:1)*
- *"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Everything is meaningless!" (12:8)*
- *The ultimate conclusion. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. (12:12-14)*



SONG OF SONGS

(aka Song of Solomon)

- Song of Songs is a love poem.
- Apparently, Solomon who wrote the book was a romantic.
- The poem is broken parts of a conversation between a man, a woman, and their friends. In the New International Version this is signified with the headings, “He,” “She,” and “Friends.”
- As poetry, Song of Songs can be interpreted in at least two ways:
 - The beauty of romantic and physical love between husband and wife.
 - The metaphor of marriage as it applies to Jesus Christ and his Church, his followers.

OUTLINE

- Courtship (1:2–11).
 - Longing. (She) *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you! Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!* (1:2-4)
 - Insecurity. (She) *Dark am I, yet lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun. My mother’s sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I had to neglect.* (1:5-6)
 - Mutual Attraction. (He) *I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariot horses. Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels. We will make you earrings of gold, studded with silver.* (1:8)
- Love Grows (1:12–3:5)
 - Expressions of admiration.
 - (He) *How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves.* (1:15)
 - (She) *How handsome you are, my beloved! Oh, how charming!* (1:16)
 - (He) *Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women.* (2:2)
 - (She) *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.* (2:3)
 - (She) *My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.* (2:9)

- (He) *My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.* (2:14)
- Uncertainty. (She) *...I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him. I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So, I looked for him but did not find him.* (3:1-2)
- The Wedding (3:6–5:1)
 - The wedding procession (She) *Who is this coming up from the wilderness... Look! It is Solomon's carriage, escorted by sixty warriors... King Solomon made for himself the carriage... Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple...* (3:6-10)
 - The groom sees the bride (He) *How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats... Your teeth are like a flock of sheep... Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon... Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David... Your breasts are like two fawns... You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you... You have stolen my heart...* (4:1-16)
- Newlyweds (5:2–8:4)
 - Conflict:
 - (She) *I slept but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking... My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night. I have taken off my robe—must I put it on again? I have washed my feet—must I soil them again?* (5:2-3)
 - (She) *I arose to open for my beloved... I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer.* (5:3-6)
 - (She) *The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city,.. if you find my beloved, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.* (5:7-8)
 - (Friends) *Where has your beloved gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your beloved turn, that we may look for him with you?* (6:1)
 - (He) *I went down to the grove of nut trees to look at the new growth in the valley, to see if the vines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom. Before I realized it, my desire set me among the royal chariots of my people.* (6:11-12)

- Maybe a little groveling?
 - (He) *How beautiful your sandaled feet... Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of an artist's hands. Your navel is a rounded goblet that never lacks blended wine. Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies. Your breasts are like two fawns... Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon... Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon... Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel. Your hair is like royal tapestry... How beautiful you are and how pleasing... (7:1-9)*
 - (She) *I belong to my beloved, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom— there I will give you my love. (7:9-13)*
- The Marriage Matures (8:1–4)
- The Conclusion. (She) *Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love, it would be utterly scorned. (8:6-7)*