

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 21  
Ecclesiastes

Objects to have:

The sign for the new Bible book: ECCLESIASTES  
The Preacher

A heart mounted on construction paper, prepared: Have a continuous strip of paper that can be pulled through two slits in the heart. Have JESUS written on the strip, vertically, so that at one time the name can all be seen but so that only part of the name can be seen when you pull the strip. Have the part of the strip that will follow the name JESUS be black.

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Tell the children that the new Bible book which we are going to study for today is called Ecclesiastes. Show them where this book is located and that it is in the Old Testament. Be sure to pronounce the name two or three times very slowly and very distinctly. Have the children repeat it with you. Then have the children say the books of the Bible we have studied thus far. Act out the following paragraphs.)

King Solomon was a very old man. He was so old that he could hardly see. He was so old that his hands shook. He was so old that his back was no longer straight; it was bent. He was so old that he had lost most of his teeth. He was so old that he could not hear very well. He was so old that he was very nervous and would become frightened at loud noises. He was so old that he could not eat very well. King Solomon as an old man started to think about the life that he had lived. He remembered when he was a young man. He also remembered what he did as he was growing older.

I think that King Solomon was sitting with his head in his hands as he remembered his past life. I think he was saying, "Oh, I remember that. Why did I do that!" And then he sat still and remembered some more, and he said, "Oh, how sorry I am that I did that! I wish I had not done that." As Solomon was thinking and thinking about his past life, he was deciding that he had done many, many things that were bad.

I think that he jumped up from his chair and said to himself, "I do not want my loved ones to make the same mistakes which I made. I do not want my children nor their children to make the same mistakes I made. I do not want the people who work for me to make the same mistakes that I made."

"I know what I will do. I will have a meeting with all these people. I'll gather together all my family, my children and all my relatives; I'll also ask all those people who work for me to come, too. I'll tell them to come to a meeting. I'll tell them that I have something very important to tell them."

Solomon had his meeting. (Hold up your Bible which is opened to the book of Ecclesiastes.) The book of Ecclesiastes tells us what Solomon told all these people in this meeting. Last Sunday we heard about sayings which Solomon wrote down for his son; that was the book of Proverbs. Today we're going to hear about what Solomon said in this meeting. These words are written down in the book of Ecclesiastes. (Hold up the sign reading: ECCLESIASTES, THE PREACHER.)

Telling the story:

(Put down your Bible.) King Solomon told the people, "When I was a young man, I learned to trust the Lord. I knew that I was a sinner. I learned that I needed to ask Jesus to be my Saviour. One day, therefore," Solomon said, "I bowed my head. I told God that I knew I was sinner. I told the Lord that I wanted to be saved from my

sins, and I asked Jesus to save me." (Hold up the heart so that the name JESUS is not visible to the class.) Then he had Jesus in his heart. (Pull the strip of paper through the heart so that the name JESUS appears.)

King Solomon continued to tell this story: “After I asked Jesus to be my Saviour, I thought about the job that I would have to do as king. I did not know how to be king. I prayed, and I asked God to give me wisdom and understanding.” Solomon said, “God heard my prayer, and He answered it. He gave me wisdom and understanding. Oh, how happy I was! I wanted to please the Lord.

“I, King Solomon, wanted to do something extra special for the Lord. I wanted to build a new temple for the Lord. I wanted to build a big, fancy, expensive building where people could come to hear the Word of God read and preached, and where they could come to pray. I was happy as I planned to build the temple. How busy I was,” King Solomon said to all these people in the meeting. “I happily ordered supplies for the temple. I was busy as I got workmen together to build the temple. I was happy as I watched the temple being built. What a joyous time in my life.

It took seven years for the temple to be built; there was that much work to do in building it! It was beautiful! Solomon was completely living for the Lord.

But, children, the Lord wanted Solomon to have nice things for himself, too. That’s the way God is! God gave Solomon riches. God also let Solomon draw up plans for his own house. So, Solomon began to think about his own house. King Solomon said, “I thought about how beautiful my house ought to be. The king of Israel ought to have a nice house, so I thought and thought and thought about the house. I thought about it so much that I did not think about anything else. I gathered together materials and workmen for my own house. It was so fancy that it took 13 years to build my house. It had taken only seven years to build God’s house.”

Oh, oh, children; it seems as if Solomon was pushing Jesus out of his heart a little bit. (Pull the strip of paper with the name JESUS on it so that some of it goes behind the heart and a little of the solid black appears.) Oh, Solomon was saved because he had asked Jesus to save him, but then he stopped serving Jesus completely. He began to think more of himself than he did of Jesus.

Listen! Solomon was talking to the crowd of people. We know what he said because we have the book of Ecclesiastes to tell us. Solomon was saying, “Then I began looking for a wife. I saw a young lady in another country. I wanted her for my wife. I forgot that God said, ‘Do not marry anybody who does not love Me.’ I disobeyed God,” Solomon said. “I married this young lady.” (Pull the name JESUS further out of the heart.) “I was getting more and more unhappy. I thought, ‘If I marry another young lady, I will be happy.’ So I married another young lady, and I married another, and another. Instead of finding happiness, I became more and more unhappy. All these young ladies worshipped other gods. I began to bow down and worship their gods, too, trying to find happiness.” (Pull the name JESUS farther out of the heart.)

“Then I thought,” said Solomon, “I know what would be nice! It would be nice to have parks, and it would also be nice to have some zoos. So I began to order people to build beautiful parks. I also sent my ships to other countries to bring back animals to put into the zoos. When the parks were finished and the animals were in the zoos, I still was not happy.” (Pull the name JESUS further out of the heart.)

Solomon said to the people who were in the meeting, “I thought, ‘If I only had more beautiful clothes, that would make me happy....’” So Solomon had more beautiful clothes made for him. He had jewels. He looked fancier than any person in the whole land. Solomon still was not happy. In his meeting with his family and the people who worked for him, he remembered that all these things did not make him happy. He was unhappy.

Solomon said, “Then I decided that I needed to be very well educated.” He studied and studied. He read and read. He then decided that he should have time to play. That’s all he did for a while; he just played and played and did not do any work. Maybe he played games a lot, like bowling or golf, or riding horses. He was busy doing things and going places. He was busy trying to have a good time.

- 3 -

Look at his heart now. (Put the strip through so that the name JESUS is not visible, and so that the heart is completely filled with black.) Solomon was unhappy! He was not happy at all. He had completely gone against the Word of God. He was completely disobedient. That is what made Solomon so unhappy. He had no

happiness because he was not living as Jesus wanted him to live. That is what he told all the people in the meeting. He was saying, “Don’t look for happiness for yourself. Think of things you can do to make God pleased with you. Look for things you can do to help other people.” And that is what we read in the book of Ecclesiastes.

God is really the only Person Who can make us happy! Let’s not push Him out of our hearts. Let’s hear the last words that King Solomon said in his meeting: “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” (Put the name JESUS back, so that it is visible to the class.) It was really too late for Solomon to do a lot of good with his life, but it’s not too late for you to do a lot of good with your life! It is certainly a good thing that at the end of Solomon's life he let everybody know that there is a better way to live than he did.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Ecclesiastes 12:13, “...Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”