
QT Questions—for Ecclesiastes

(Here's a short introduction to the book of Ecclesiastes from my Study Bibles.)

- Ecclesiastes makes a point of showing that life is perplexing and short. It also illustrates the confusion of life, questioning why the wicked prosper and injustice abounds. The author shows the limitations of wisdom while affirming its importance. Absurdity will figure prominently in life because no one can really control their life. Human life involves mourning and dancing, silence and speaking, death and healing—and true wisdom is finding contentment in all of these times.
- Ecclesiastes exposes the utter emptiness of life without God. The pursuits often thought to give life meaning—wealth, work, power, knowledge and pleasure—are all fleeting. They are ultimately poor substitutes for serving God. Likewise, learning cannot result in a meaningful life, because there will always be something that doesn't make sense. As the author discovers, self-reliance and reason are deceptive devices. The pain of our struggles with futility and injustice should rightly prompt us to go to God. We must acknowledge that we cannot understand life, God or God's ways.
- Ecclesiastes highlights the incredible peace that comes with entrusting our lives to God. The best a person can do is to enjoy what is given to them, fear and obey the God who gives life, and stand alongside other people.

Eccl 1 (7/10/24)

(*If some of the questions are confusing, then it's ok to skip it. The intention of the questions is to stir you to think a bit more about the chapter, with the hope to help you to learn more who our God is and how He delights for us to think and live.)

1. What did the Teacher do to find everything so meaningless and how is meaningless described (vv. 14, 17); how can you reconcile this conclusion to your purpose of life, which will be to live for God's glory; what do you learn?
- When v. 18 is read simply on its own, then the message seems to be different than what God's word teaches, "For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief." We just read in Proverbs, that we ought to work hard to get wisdom and knowledge above all else. Yet, in our chapter, it sounds as if we are not to try so hard to get more, because they are ultimately meaningless. This is not a contradiction in God's word. God delights when His children seek and learn more wisdom and true knowledge, for with God's truth, we are better able to obey our God, freeing us from living in sinfulness. But, I believe the mindset or attitude or purpose of placing to seek more wisdom and knowledge, even above God's glory, is what's wrong, even though wisdom is precious. Wisdom must not be an even greater pursuit than God's glory for God's people. We desire more wisdom and knowledge so that we would learn how to better live for God's glory. In other words, all good things should be instruments that helps us to live better for God's glory, and not a competition with God's glory. There's only one purpose for God's people, and that is to live for God's glory at all times, in whatever we pursue. God's glory must be above and first at all times in our lives, that's the purpose of our lives all the days we live on this earth.

Eccl 2 (7/11/24)

1. How did the Teacher test life to find meaning and what was his conclusion and why; how do you understand vv. 24-26; what do you learn?

- Verse 16 ends with, “Like the fool, the wise too must die!” And because everyone, whether wise or foolish, all receive the same final fate, death, the Teacher’s conclusion is everything is meaningless. That would be true if death was final. So, evaluating life only with this life, then since death is final, the reasoning is to enjoy what we have and do, while still alive, for after that, nothing more comes of it. It is clear that the Teacher has yet to learn God’s eternity awaits the dead, which means, death after this life is not final. And as eternity is so much greater than life and death on earth, it is far more important and precious and enjoyable to live well in eternity than during the temporal life here, which ends with death. So, the question for us all is, do you believe in eternal life, or do you believe life ends with death here? Without answering it verbally here, we should see what our answer has been with the way we have lived our lives thus far. Our lifestyle speaks much more clearly than what we say with our words. Does our lifestyle reflect our true belief in God’s eternity for us, or do our decisions point far more to the life here and now? Where do we have our eyes looking to, as we live our lives, to eternity or here?

Eccl 3 (7/12/24)

1. What is the time you are going through these days and which other times have you gone through; what is the lesson the Teacher wants us to learn and why; how is your faith about and after death different than the Teacher and why?

- This chapter ends with, “So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?” The Teacher is teaching us how to live in the present, for many of us do not live well in the present. We drag too many hardship experiences of yesterday into our today and we also reach out to too many tomorrow’s concerns into our today. No wonder, some todays feel very heavy. So, I do believe it’s a wonderful lesson for us to learn and abide under. But, again, the Teacher has yet to learn about eternity, or perhaps, he probably just caught a tiny glimpse of it, as he wrote, “He has also set eternity in the human heart.” But, it does not seem that he understood it quite yet. He heard so he knows, but he doesn’t quite get it yet. We know a little more because we read and learned it in the New Testament. From the NT, we learned, that this life is precious and is meaningful, but the greater life is coming, and we will only enter it when we enter into eternity. And eternity’s door is opened only when the Eternal God came to our lowly world, to become a Bridge for His people to pass by over the unconquerable divide between this world and God’s eternal kingdom. Indeed, Jesus, our God, is the only Way that leads us to His everlasting kingdom, the only Truth that sets us free from the domain of sin we were shackled with, and the only Life that produces an everlasting life in God’s unending kingdom, with the Immortal and most holy and beautiful God. So, in some way, we can answer the Teacher’s question, “For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?” When we read the NT, we will see, Jesus is His name, for He opens the door into eternity for His people, for us, who believe Jesus died on the cross and was raised back to life.

Eccl 4 (7/13/24)

1. How do you understand vv. 9-12 among people and also with Christ; what more do you see in this chapter; what do you learn?
- Verse one reads, “... I saw the tears of the oppressed—and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors—and they have no comforter.” Neither the victim or the victimizer had comfort. They both needed comfort, but they couldn’t find it. The victimizers, the

oppressors, the troublemakers are all needing comfort, despite the pain they cause on others. In some sense, they make trouble for others because they are troubled. Of course, this does not in any way excuse them for their evil. But, we get it why they act so terrible; it's because they are hurting. Nonetheless, in their pain, they should not cause pain for others. However, what is clear is that both the oppressed and the oppressors need comfort, but they are not able to find it. Oh, how great is the need of the Wonderful Counselor and the Great Comforter. What the oppressed and the oppressors need the most is to meet the Counselor and the Comforter, for He invites, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will you rest" (Matt 11:28). To hear Jesus words, not as an information from a book, nor wonderful words to recite, but to hear the words as an honest invitation from the Living God, calling us to enter into His presence, not because we are qualified, but come humbly, simply because we need Him so desperately and come trusting that His invitation opens the way for us to draw near. Have we heard His invitation? Do we believe His invitation is enough to cause us to enter into His presence, though we are unqualified and undeserving of His goodness? In order to taste His goodness, we must draw near in faith, because we trust He is calling us. Please, let's go to Jesus, He is calling us.

Eccl 5 (7/15/24)

1. How are we taught to enter the house of God and why; how does God describe His gift here and how can you connect with God's glory and to seek His kingdom first for your life; what do you learn?
 - Verse 13 teaches us, "I have seen a grievous evil under the sun; wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners." This is not against having any savings accounts. Let me share one instance where I see wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners. God gifts us with the ability to produce wealth (Deut 8:18). So, God is not against producing wealth, for the ability comes from Him. What we must remember is the purpose of wealth, which for God's people, is about God's glory. In other words, for God's people, we must learn to gather and use our wealth for God's glory. Too often in our world, storing up wealth is about one's security and future, and if God's people followed the worldly ways, then instead of looking up to our God and placing our trust in Him, we will do so in wealth, and that's how it becomes an idol for us. Instead of trusting in God, it's easy to misplace it and trust in our wealth, and if that's the case, then the more wealth we accumulate, the more secured we feel, as misplaced that is. So, the issue with wealth is not about how much or how little we have, but why we want it. And if we work hard to gather our wealth to use it for God's glory, then the more we have, the better the use. On the other hand, if we seek and place our wealth as our security blanket or maybe even to influence others for my wellbeing, then we have become idol worshipers under wealth. It is my prayer that we will see wealth under God's light, and use it for God's glory, rather than have it usurp God's throne, and begin to rule our lives, for too many people have become slaves to this idol in our world. May I say, idol worship is alive and thriving today, and we need to humbly examine to see, if we are not one of its subjects. May our God alone be our only God.

Eccl 6 (7/16/24)

1. Can you paint a life that describes v. 2; what is the Teacher trying to teach us about life and how can we better live like that in our lives today; what do you also learn?
 - The Teacher says in v. 11, "The more the words, the less the meaning, and how does that profit anyone?" Indeed, there are a lot of chatter in our world that are devoid of meaning and profits no one. At times, we are guilty of that, when we speak. We say much but they carry

very little meaning. I don't think this is against all small talk or even jokes. In life, at times, there is a place and time for small talk, that will help us get over some huddles to eventually enter into a deeper place. But, again, in our world and in our lives, many times when we speak, they carry very little meaning, thus very little weight. May we be a little more purposeful with our words, so that when we speak, especially when we speak about the truth of God's word and His ways, others will see and hear and feel the weight of God's truth that we speak with, so they can be blessed to turn away from themselves unto our living God. So, as the saying goes, may we "say what we mean and mean what we say."

Eccl 7 (7/17/24)

1. What are vv. 2-3 saying and why would that be and how do you try to apply it into your life; of the many verses, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, which ones do you need to meditate more and how do you desire it to impact your life; what more do you learn?
- In v. 12, we are told both wisdom and money is a shelter, but ultimately only wisdom preserves us. Indeed, money brings us the security of convenience, giving us a way to escape the troubles we may face. Similarly, with wisdom, because we fear our God, we will not choose the ways of this world, so we will not enter the worldly travels, thus blessing us to escape the worldly result. Ultimately, money shelters us into convenience, but wisdom blesses us to hide behind our Almighty God, whose shield over us is so complete, that nothing that He does not allow will pass by Him. Oh Lord, bless us to learn and believe that wisdom is truly better than money, to fear You is better than all the conveniences and pleasures that money can bring us.

Eccl 8 (7/18/24)

1. What do you learn from vv. 6-8; what do you learn from vv. 14-15; from what you learn, how can you learn to live for God's glory well?
- We are told in v. 1, "A person's wisdom brightens their face and changes its hard appearance." Living in a world where many times, it's really difficult because of the many troubles, and on top of that, it's not easy to comprehend what's going on and why, so our faces hardens because our hearts are filled with anxiety, worries, and pain, which at times, causes us to feel overwhelmed, leading us to feel helpless and hopeless. Our faces are windows to our hearts. Our faces display what we feel inside our hearts. Of course, some of us have learned to hide and not show our true feelings in our faces before others. But, when we are alone, the hardened appearance is there. We know it; we don't need a mirror to show us what we know. But, what brightens our faces, what lightens our hearts is wisdom, knowing and believing the fear of the Lord is the pavement we walk on. We know we are not alone; we walk with our God, like Enoch did. We walk in the fear of the Lord, and since we have humbly learned to place our God above all things, including over all of our troubles, we know, we never stand alone, we never walk alone, we never live alone. God is with us, for He is Immanuel. And looking at our God at all times, including during the days of hardship and troubles, we know we are not the solution, but our God knows, He knows how to care for us, He knows how to solve all the troubles of life, and when we fall, He knows how to carry us, for He is strong, stronger than any problems, troubles, pain and weakness we may face. So, yes, gazing our eyes unto our God, our faces will brighten. The fear of the Lord is not gloomy. His presence in us will brighten our faces, for He lifts all of our concerns in our hearts unto His broad and strong shoulders that can carry all the weight of His people. Yes, He can. Yes, He is strong, stronger than all the weight of sin and misery and troubles and pain our lives can accumulate. Our God is really good to us and for us. PTL!

Ecc1 9 (7/19/24)

1. Why is the Teacher disturbed that everyone has a common destiny in v. 2 and what do you know that he doesn't because of Jesus; what lessons do you learn from vv. 10-12; what other lessons do you learn here and how can you learn to live it?
 - In v. 8, we are taught, "Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil." Throughout this book, it's easy to think that our lives should simply be enjoyed to the best of our abilities, while we are still alive. So, finding v. 8 was precious. We are to live our lives always clothed in white, and white is a reference to God's untainted holiness, meaning we are to learn to live our lives under God's holiness. In other words, we are not to simply do what's best for me, but to learn to live our lives striving and keeping God's holiness. Moreover, our heads are to be anointed with oil. God anoints King, Prophets and Priests with oil, to live, to lead and to serve God's people to live before our God humbly well. Again, we are not to simply live to the best of our abilities, but to live under God's anointing, which means, to live set apart according to God's truthful ways against the sinfulness of this world. May I remind us, God's anointing, as some people today might use, is not a God experience, like a high. God's anointing purpose is to set His people apart to live and lead others to live after God's truthful ways against the sinfulness we find both in ourselves and in our world. Once again, God's anointing is not an experience but a way of live, set apart to live and to lead others to live for God's glory alone. That's the purpose of His anointing His people, to set us apart to live only for Him and His ways.

Ecc1 10 (7/20/24)

1. In v. 1, why does a little bad outweigh the good and can you share couple of ways you see this; how are words different for the wise and the fools and how can you better live more like the wise (vv. 12-13); what more do you learn here?
 - From v. 10, we can learn, don't work harder, but work smarter. I would re-phrase it and say, let's work harder as well as smarter. Working hard is a good thing, for laziness is a bad thing (v. 18). But, as we know, it's not always about simply working hard, because when we sharpen the edge, then our hard work will bring even more success. Discerning when to stop work for a while, to sharpen the edge is wise and more productive. May we have God's wisdom to know when to stop to sharpen, and may we have more of God's grace to trust that others may have stopped to sharpen and not because they are simply lazy. And when we see the people who are lazy, may our God give us the grace to pray for their hearts to delight to be more obedient to God's way, rather than to seek their own conveniences. And if we are the lazy people, may our God bless us with a humble heart to repent of our foolish ways and pray that we will delight to obey our God more, to learn to work harder, than to do what comes naturally to me.

Ecc1 11 (7/22/24)

1. What guarantees do we have about the future and how should you approach it; in vv. 7-10, how are we taught to live the present, yet what should we be mindful of as we live so; what is the lesson you take away from this chapter?
 - Verse 6 reads, "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."

Our job is to be faithful and diligent at all times. It is not our job to guess which endeavors will be successful. Of course, this does not mean, we should not have any expectations, but the final decision is not in our control. Our job is to be faithful in the sowing the best possible seeds, in the best possible soils, in the best possible way for success, but the final decision is not in our control. It is in God's hands. And if we learn to trust in our God to know that His decision and His ways is always best for His glory and our benefit, then whatever the outcome might presently appear, we can humbly trust in our God's decision, and rest peacefully in Him. So, the satisfaction of our sowing and reaping is ultimately about our trust in God. Do we truly believe that our God knows and does what's best for His glory and our benefit? Can we trust in our God, when in our eyes, the present might look very troubling? Will we trust in what we see or will we trust in our God to know how to do all things well, for His glory, which He loves to include our benefit in His glory? What a wonderful God we worship.

Ecc1 12 (7/23/24)

1. In vv. 1-8, as the Teacher describes getting old, what are some of the ways you understand and most importantly, what are you to remember; in vv. 9-14, what is his conclusion to life; what do you learn?
- Before the Teacher concludes his teaching, he calls us to remember our Creator, our God who gave us life, and who keep us and sustains us all through life. Not only do our lives begin because it is He who gave us life, but all through life, there's never been a moment that He did keep us, protected us, shielded us, provided for us, guided us, and in the end, He will carry us to His everlasting kingdom. In short, we are able to persevere in our walk in this world because our God preserves us through every step we take. And when we remember our Creator, then we can thankfully and lovingly learn that the conclusion to all of our lives should always be, "Fear God and keep His commandments." Let's remember, keeping His commandments are not out of fear, as we may read these words here. The "Fear God" is not what many of us may understand about fear. Fear in this world, is usually a reaction of the frightening punishment result that we deserved because of our guilt in our ugly sinfulness. So, when we think of fear, we cringe, we try to flee or escape if we can. However, the fearing of God surely will have an element of frightening punishment, because we know, we are guilty of our sinfulness. We know our condemnation is just and deserved. But, despite such predicament, the amazing truth is that we, the guilty sinners, will not receive the deserving wrath, but will instead receive God's mercy, meaning we will not receive our due punishment, and somehow receive God's grace, an unmerited gift of love and new life. This mysterious exchange is truly so remarkable, that we can never receive it as our entitlement and neither as a token. Because we are in awe of God's amazing mercy and grace, we tremble, sure, out of bewilderment of how the holy God can us treat us sinners as such, but also out of irrepressible joy and gratitude and overflowing love in how our God can treat us, who deserve none of His goodness, and still be filled and overflow in His goodness. Simply amazing. So, we fear God because we have received a goodness that exceeds every goodness we or the world can ever duplicate, and so, in awe of His goodness, we fear God. And in this awe-filled fear, we delight and love to "keep His commandments." So, keeping God's commandments in our lives, is a response to God's incredible mercy and grace poured unto us, which is why, our obedience to God's word will always be bubbling with love and joy for our God and His goodness. Unlike the often mistaken attitude of fearing God and keeping His commandments out of duty, even begrudgingly at times, that's the last attitude we should have, if we only understood God and His goodness properly. So, may all of us, all God's people, love to fear our good God, and joyfully keep His commandments, as we remember our God is our Creator.