



WEEK 21 – STUDY QUESTIONS

5/27 – 6/3

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ECCLESIASTES
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The word vanity or meaningless occurs 35 times in this short book. It refers to something insubstantial, temporary or passing. The author writes that everything “under the sun” is vanity. “Under the sun” refers to life that is apart from God.

- **From page 678-683 (May 29th), list the different human pursuits that are “vanity.”**
- **What “under the sun” are you most attracted to, and most tempted to believe that in *it* true life is found?**
- **What are the “false Christ’s, false Messiah’s, false hopes” that are most advertized and promoted today?**
- **Why is it important for Christians to read Ecclesiastes?**
- **Is everything “under the sun” really meaningless?**
- **What is the truth that Ecclesiastes clearly presents to the reader? What or who are we to live for and how are we to live?**
- **How does Christ bring meaning and life into a dead and meaningless world?**

Ecclesiastes 12:13 *“The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”*

- **Who or what do you fear other than God at times?**
- **What’s the relationship between those things we pursue (vanities) and the things we fear?**



WEEK 22 – STUDY QUESTIONS

6/3 – 6/10

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1 KINGS 18
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Read 1 Kings 18:16-25 (pg.706-707).

- **It's easy to criticize the people of Israel for their idolatry and following Baal. However, the reality is that in many ways we are just as guilty as they. What current day "idols" do we often find ourselves following?**
- **What's so appealing to us about those "idols"? What do they promise us? How do they offer us hope?**
- **Extrabiblical sources give evidence that Baal was thought of as a god who controls fire and lightning (and Mt. Carmel was regarded by the people as his sacred dwelling place) Where else in Scripture have we seen the Lord associated with fire?**

Read 1 Kings 18:26-29,

- **Today there are also millions of people crying out to false gods who are unable to respond. How do people try to get the attention of their gods? What do they give their gods? What does what they give to their god say about what they value as most important?**
- **What does this scene reveal about the condition of all mankind?**
- **How does the God we serve differ from the god of the prophets in this passage? What difference should this make in our lives?**

Read 1 Kings 18:30-40.

- **What was the Lord's motivation for answering Elijah's prayer?**
- **Contrast how Elijah approached the Lord with the prophets' approach to their god. What does this teach us about the God we serve and how we should or should not approach him?**
- **Was the slaughtering of the prophets a just penalty or too severe?**
- **In what ways does Elijah foreshadow the role of Christ?**

WEEK 23 – STUDY QUESTIONS

6/10 – 6/17

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JOEL
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The name Joel may be translated, “Yahweh is God.” God sent Joel to proclaim “the day of the LORD” or judgment on Israel and all nations. He offers a message of hope and reconciliation for those who truly repent and turn to God, but for those who do not repent God promises utter destruction. Joel’s message is that we must choose whom we will follow, God or man. God rejects apathy. He demands and is worthy of our worship.

Read Joel 2:12-17 (*pg.745*).

- **God is again described as gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting over disaster; we are comfortable with this description. But do we believe that God will judge all who do not worship him alone? Do we approach God as a God of judgment and wrath, who will punish mankind for their sins?**
- **How does a person/church return to God with all his or her/their heart?**
- **Why does God require fasting, weeping and mourning?**
- **Why does God want them to “rend” (tear) their hearts and not their garments? What does that mean?**

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JONAH
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God relentlessly pursued Jonah in the midst of his rebellion so that he might relent from destroying Nineveh upon their repentance. In other words, God showed Jonah grace and mercy so that He might show Nineveh grace and mercy. Yet, Jonah did not want that to happen; fear did not prompt his disobedience, a lack of compassion and hatred did. Just as God treated the people of Nineveh better than they deserved, He had treated Jonah better than he deserved!

Read Jonah 2 (*pg.756-757*) and Jonah 3:10-4:11 (*pg.757-758*).

- **What does it mean for God to be gracious and merciful?**
- **Compare Jonah’s reaction to God’s mercy and grace for Nineveh with the older brother’s reaction to the father’s love for the younger brother in Jesus’ parable of the two lost sons in Luke 15:25-32. What sin does Jonah and the older brother share?**
- **How might we cultivate hearts of compassion like God’s rather than copying the heartlessness of Jonah?**
- **What are our “plants?” What blessings from God have we turned into idols such that if they were taken from us we would be “angry enough to die?”**
- **How do we respond when the Lord removes our comforts?**



WEEK 24 – STUDY QUESTIONS

6/17 – 6/24

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HOSEA
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The nation of Israel was God's chosen people, and he gave them commands and promises of blessing if they would obey him and be his. But Israel instead gave themselves to the gods and the peoples of the nations around them. Amos and Hosea both prophesied against the Northern Kingdom (Israel). They delivered to the people God's coming response (judgment) to the manner in which they had chosen to live and dishonor him.

Read Hosea 4:1-9 (pg.762).

- **Many sins listed here are simply manifestations of a deeper sin problem. What is the real, deeper root of the matter according to this passage?**
- **How is this similar to what we see in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned?**

In Hosea 6:6, God says: *"For I desire mercy [steadfast love], not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings."*

- **Is having an intimate knowledge of God and simply "not sinning" or "doing good deeds" the same thing? In other words, does "not sinning" imply that we have a true knowledge of God? Explain your answer.**
- **What does it mean for us to know God?**
- **How does this point us to the gospel and our need for a Savior?**

Read Hosea 14:1-9 (pg.774-75).

- **From the words Israel has been suggested to use, what elements can we see that should be present in hearts that return to God?**
- **In what ways can we seek to be a people of faithfulness and steadfast love?**
- **The unfaithfulness of Israel calls for a more permanent remedy, which will come in the faithfulness of Christ to the Father and the faithfulness that Christ then works through the Holy Spirit in his people. How does the Holy Spirit enable us to remain faithful to God?**
- **God's love for Israel foreshadows Christ's love for the church. How has God specifically shown you love despite your unfaithfulness?**

WEEK 25 – STUDY QUESTIONS

6/24 – 7/1

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MICAH
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Micah continues in the theme established by Hosea and Amos – God will judge his people for their sins. The book takes on the feel of a lawsuit. God's people are in the dock and God himself will bring about judgment. However, judgment is not the only note sounded in this book. Restoration is also a major theme: God will show his covenant faithfulness by finally redeeming his people.

Read Micah 4:6-5:5 (*pg.808-809*).

- **Idolatry brought judgment upon Israel. Why does God judge idolatry so harshly?**
- **In light of the messages from all the prophets, who continually proclaimed that Israel was being unfaithful to God, what kind of Messiah or Savior did they need?**
- **Israel thought the Messiah would be a conquering king who would rid the land of invaders and establish ethnic Israel as a powerful kingdom on the earth. But how does this passage tell us about the Messiah and his actual role?**

God began his indictment by reminding Israel of how he has always been faithful to keep his covenant promises; yet, they were unfaithful. God has and always will be faithful to his children; yet, we so often turn from God and sin against Him.

Read Micah 6:1-8 (*pg.810-811*).

- **Seeing and knowing that our God is always faithful, that there is no one like our God, why do we turn from him and sin against him? Why do we at times pursue the things of this world instead of worshipping God alone?**
- **What are some examples of “saving acts of the LORD” that we have seen so far this year in our chronological reading of the Bible?**
- **What does it mean to act justly? Provide some practical examples.**
- **How do we love mercy?**
- **How do we walk humbly with our God?**
- **Is it possible to these good deeds in such a way that they become a form of “works-righteousness”? If so, how?**

Micah ends the book by providing his readers with a description of the character and covenant faithfulness of God.

Read Micah 7:14-20 (*pg.813*).

- **What are the characteristics of God listed in this passage?**
- **Knowing that no one is like our God, how can we as a local church body continually remind one another of the character and faithfulness of God and stir one another to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God?**

WEEK 26 – STUDY QUESTIONS

7/1 – 7/8

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ISAIAH 24-26
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The book of Isaiah was written in approximately 750-700 B.C. During that time, five different kings reigned in the southern kingdom of Judah, the kingdom built around Jerusalem. The Assyrian empire had grown in strength and ambition. It destroyed the northern kingdom and eventually pushed its borders to within eight miles of the walls of Jerusalem. The king at that time, Ahaz, then made a bad decision, deciding to put his trust in the Assyrian emperor. So he made a treaty with him, paid tribute to him, and even sent Israelites to Assyria to study their styles of worship to bring back to Jerusalem. Following Ahaz's death his son Hezekiah followed him and reigned twenty-nine years as one of Judah's best kings, but the threat of Assyrian invasion was alive and well. Therefore, the people in Judah faced a crisis of belief; do they trust in God to deliver them or the surrounding nations for protection. It's within this context that the prophet calls for the people to make a commitment to honor God and trust him for deliverance and victory.

- **What thoughts and feelings come to your mind as you read through the descriptions of judgment and the destruction of God's enemies in Isaiah and the prophets?**
- **In what ways would the truths of God's ultimate judgments provide hope and encouragement to the people of Israel? How about for us today?**

Read Isaiah 25 (pg.845-846).

- **What are the reasons given in this chapter for praising and worshiping God?**
- **The previous chapter contains announcements of future judgment on sinful humanity and the devastation of the earth. How are we to praise God for his righteous judgments against sin and sinners, yet balance that with a desire to see sinners come to repentance and faith in Christ?**
- **In what ways are the events described in chapter 25 partly fulfilled today? In what ways are they yet to come?**
- **Of the events described in this chapter, which do you personally most anticipate? Explain.**
- **How should the future hope found in Isaiah 25 affect your present choices and attitudes?**

Read Isaiah 26 (pg.846-47).

- **As you listened to the words of this chapter, what works of God are mentioned?**
- **What does it mean *in practice* to trust the Lord?**
- **In 26:10, Isaiah says that the wicked person ignores God's majesty and upholds his own pride, despite the "grace" God shows him. How do even wicked people experience God's grace?**



WEEK 27 – STUDY QUESTIONS

7/8 – 7/15

2 KINGS 18-19 / 2 CHRONICLES 32 / ISAIAH 36-37

During the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah and laid siege to its cities. He sent his military officers and commanders to Hezekiah with a message to be read in the hearing of all the people of Jerusalem. This message was intended to discourage the inhabitants of Judah, to entice them to turn their back on God (who, according to the Assyrians, was no better than the gods of all the nations they had destroyed) and become subjects of the Assyrian empire.

Read 2 Kings 19:9-13 (*pg.875*).

- **How is Sennacherib's letter to Hezekiah similar to how Satan tempts and attacks us?**
- **What has been Satan's plan of attack since the Garden of Eden, even used against Jesus Christ himself?**

Read 2 Kings 19:14-19.

- **What stands out the most to you about the way Hezekiah responds to Sennacherib's threats?**
- **In what ways do unbelievers tend to respond to hardship? How about believers?**
- **In light of his response and his prayer, what godly character traits do we see displayed in Hezekiah?**
- **How does Hezekiah pray? What can we learn about prayer from this example in Scripture?**

Read 2 Kings 19:20-36.

- **What do we learn of God's absolute sovereignty from his response to Hezekiah's prayer?**
- **Do we tend to see conflict, suffering, and hardship in light of God's sovereignty or simply as the work of the enemy? How can we find a balance between these two realities?**
- **What strikes you the most about how God miraculously delivered his people in this story?**
- **How does this story point to Christ and the gospel?**



WEEK 28 – STUDY QUESTIONS

7/15 – 7/22

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ISAIAH 52:13-53:12
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In John 12:21, a group of Greeks approach Philip and say, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” The term “see” means far more than to view merely with the eyes. It carries an investigative quality. The seekers wanted to discover what Jesus was all about. In verses 23-24, Jesus discloses to his disciples that He is all about bringing life through death. In order to understand Christ, then, we must seek to understand h

is death on the cross. This passage from Isaiah is a prophetic portrayal of the salvific death of Christ.

Read Isaiah 52:13-53:3 (*pg.906*).

- **What do we find attractive? What would we describe as being glorious? Why?**
- **To empathize means “to identify with and understand somebody else’s feelings or difficulties.” How does Christ empathize with our fallen condition?**
- **How is Jesus’ suffering and undesirable appearance related to his being “lifted up” and “highly exalted”?**

Read Isaiah 53:4-6.

- **What does it mean for us to turn our own way, to have “gone astray”?**
- **Why did Christ die?**
- **How does Christ fulfill the role as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?**
- **What does seeing Christ’s death and suffering reveal about the nature of our sin?**
- **What kind of peace and healing did Christ bring?**

Read Isaiah 53:7-9.

- **Why is Jesus’ innocence important for our salvation?**
- **What does Jesus’ compliance teach us about the nature of grace?**

Read Isaiah 53:10-12.

- **How does v.10, “Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,” affect your understanding of God’s will, his wrath and judgment against sin?**
- **What does it mean to be guilty? What are we guilty of?**
- **How does Christ’s death remove our guilt?**
- **What does it mean “to be accounted righteous”?**
- **How does knowing Christ removed our guilt enable us to move forward from past disobedience?**
- **How does knowing Christ removes our guilt empower future obedience? How does knowing Christ removes our guilt encourage us to respond to sins committed tomorrow?**

WEEK 29 – STUDY QUESTIONS

7/22 – 7/29

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NAHUM

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Nahum's prophecy highlights the wrath of God in his response to sin and sinners. He speaks particularly of the destruction coming to Nineveh. There is relief promised to what is left of Israel (referring to the kingdom of Judah). But even with relief coming, there is still a reminder in the language that God had used Assyria to punish his people. From either perspective, Nineveh's or Israel's, the clear truth is that God is jealous for his glory.

Read Nahum 1:2-8 (*pg.929-930*).

- **The particular words used here and the subject matter discussed incite fear in those who reflect on them. Should this fear only be the response of unbelievers, or believers too?**
- **Do you hate sin and evil the way God does? How is this evident in our lives?**
- **A healthy fear of God can be a natural response of worship. The tendency may be to read these verses from the perspective of Nineveh. Reread verses 2-8 as a *song of praise and adoration* toward the God of all creation. Also read them *from the perspective of God's people who will be freed from the oppression of the wicked when they are destroyed*. What is your reaction to reading this passage from these different perspectives?**

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ZEPHANIAH

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Zephaniah's prophecy is directed toward Judah and all people. Where Nahum dealt more specifically with Nineveh, Zephaniah from the opening verses broadens the spectrum of those who will receive God's wrath to include the whole earth, and addresses a wider range of time. There are certainly parts of Zephaniah's declaration that speak of more immediate judgment, but there is great attention devoted to the final judgment on the "Day of the Lord."

Read Zephaniah 1:14-18 (*pg.936-937*).

- **Why do you think God's judgment is so severe against the whole earth and unbelievers?**
- **Are all fears good or bad? How do we fear things/people as opposed to how we fear God? Is there a difference in how you would describe these fears?**
- **We must always remember that we did nothing to put ourselves in right standing with God. A healthy fear may be the result of the realization that by all accounts we should be enemies of God. How can you make a habit or discipline of rehearsing these truths, developing a healthy fear of God?**

Reading Zephaniah 3:14-20.

- Discuss how God's judgment of the wicked contrasts with the eternal love, hope, and joy of God's people who have been saved from their sins. What stands out the most to you in this passage?



WEEK 30 – STUDY QUESTIONS

7/29 – 8/5

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HABAKKUK
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Read Habakkuk 1:1-4 (pg.995).

God answers that He has a plan for punishment, but it is far from what Habakkuk expected or wanted to hear. God speaks of raising up a nation that Habakkuk felt should be destroyed, yet God recognizes that this nation is a conceited nation with confidence in their own abilities; he calls them guilty and knows their “own might is their god.” Habakkuk continues his complaint:

Read Habakkuk 1:12-2:1.

- **Have you ever looked around you and questioned whether or not God was just? What makes us question God’s justice? Share some examples.**
- **What causes us to question God’s wisdom at times? In those moments of questioning, who/what do we actually trust in?**
- **Do you think God ever does good, wise, and perfect things that are beyond our present circumstance or understanding to even see? Explain.**

Read Habakkuk 2:2-5.

God is clear in verses 2 and 3 that his timing is perfect and must be trusted. Also, the center of the issue is ultimately exposed – the issue of faith. This is not only the central point God makes to Habakkuk but the central idea behind the teachings of the apostles in the New Testament, and the primary message of the whole of Scripture: “the righteous shall live by his faith” (v.4). Habakkuk was cut to the core with this reminder of the necessity of faith. He had been complaining about a mighty nation who put its confidence in its self and its own power, but he too had grown dependent on self, placing confidence in his own understanding and perceptions. After God had dealt personally with Habakkuk and his faith He gave him a word against Babylon. Following that revelation we see once again the condition of Habakkuk’s heart as he puts away his complaints and doubts to offer a prayer of praise and confidence.

- **What does Habakkuk’s final assessment at the conclusion of chapter 2 mean: “The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him” (v.20)? What does “be silent” mean?**

Read Habakkuk 3:1-19.

- **What can we learn from studying this account of the way God dealt with his messenger?**
- **How does a lack of faith affect our walk with God? Our worship? Our evangelism?**
- **What is the relationship between humility and faith?**
- **When you find yourself in times of despair, do you tend to reflect on other times you have suffered, or do you remember ways God has proved his faithfulness to you in the past?**
- **What is so striking about the final verses of Habakkuk?**