

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR READ THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY 4/10/13

1. "THE DAY OF DEATH (IS) BETTER THAN THE DAY OF BIRTH" (ECCLESIASTES 7:1). WHAT A STATEMENT TO THINK ABOUT AT CHRISTMAS TIME OR DURING THE EASTER SEASON. WHY WOULD A CHRISTIAN SAY THIS? READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10 AND PHILIPPIANS 1:21-23. WHY DOES SOLOMON FEEL THIS WAY? WHO OFFER MORE HOPE, SOLOMON OR PAUL?
2. "THE SAME DESTINY OVERTAKES ALL" (ECCLESIASTES 9:3). WHAT IS THIS "DESTINY" THAT OVERTAKES ALL, ACCORDING TO THE TEACHER? IT ESPECIALLY DISTRESSES SOLOMON THAT THOSE WHO DO GOOD AND THOSE WHO DO EVIL SUFFER THE SAME FATE. HE MENTIONS THE FATE OF THE POOR MAN WHO SAVED A CITY AS AN EXAMPLE (ECCLESIASTES 9:13-16). IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT HE HAS OBSERVED, WHAT DOES SOLOMON SUGGEST ARE SOME THINGS PEOPLE WOULD DO IN THE MEANTIME (SEE ECCLESIASTES 9:7, 9-10; 10, 19)? IN REALITY, WHAT TRUTH IS SOLOMON TEACHING (ROMANS 3:23)? WHAT IS GOD'S JOYOUS SOLUTION TO THIS SITUATION (ROMANS 3:22-25)?
3. AFTER CONTEMPLATING ALL THE SEEMING INCONSISTENCIES AND INJUSTICES IN THE WORLD, WHAT DOES THE TEACHER FINALLY CONCLUDE (ECCLESIASTES 12:1, 6, 13)? THIS IS A PASSIONATE PLEA, NOT JUST GOOD ADVICE. READ THE WHOLE CONTEXT OF THE FIRST PLEA (ECCLESIASTES 11:10-12:5A). WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE FIRST PLEA? THEN READ THE SECOND PLEA (ECCLESIASTES 12:5B-7). WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE SECOND PLEA? SOLOMON SAYS HIS PROVERBS WERE WRITTEN TO BE "GOADS" GIVEN BY THE SHEPHERD SO THAT HIS READERS WOULD "FEAR GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS" (ECCLESIASTES 12:11, 13). WHAT IS A "GOAD"? WHICH GOADS HAVE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL TO YOU? SINCE GOADS HURT, FOR HEALING READ THESE WORDS OF THE SHEPHERD (JOHN 10:11, 14-16) AND THE ASSURANCES OF PETER (I PETER 5:4). THEN PRAISE HIM FOR HIS LOVE AND EVERLASTING CARE.
4. AND "ADJURATION" IS A SOLEMN OATH OR ADVISING SOMEONE TO DO A CERTAIN THING. A FAMILIAR EXAMPLE OF AN ADJURATION IS THE JUDGE'S DIRECTIVE "TO TELL THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, SO HELP YOU GOD." SONGS OF SONGS 2:7 IS AN ADJURATION THAT IS REPEATED IN 3:5 AND 8:4 AND, IN A DIFFERENT FORM, IN 5:8. IT IS STATEMENT OF BOTH LAW AND GOSPEL. WHAT ARE PEOPLE (THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM) PLACED UNDER OATH TO DO? WHAT LAW OF GOD IS IT STATING (EXODUS 20:14)? THROUGH THE PHRASE "BY THE GAZELLES AND BY THE DOES OF THE FIELD" THE ADJURATION INVOKES THE WITNESS OF GOD. IT CALLS TO MIND THAT GOD CREATED THINGS TO BE DONE IN A CERTAIN ORDER. THE ADJURATION ALSO REMINDS US THAT BY FOLLOWING THIS COMMAND WE ARE RESPONDING TO THE LOVE OF THAT IS A MIGHTY FLAME OF THE LORD (SONG OF SONGS 8:6). TO WHAT CONTEMPORARY SITUATIONS DOES THE ADJURATION SPEAK? HOW DID GOD MOST CLEARLY SHOW HIS LOVE TO US?

5. SOLOMON DESCRIBES HIS WIFE-TO-BE IN SONG OF SONGS 4:1-7; SHE DESCRIBES HIM AFTER THEIR MARRIAGE IN SONGS OF SONGS 5:10-16 AND HE DESCRIBES HER AFTER THEIR MARRIAGE IN SONGS OF SONGS 6:4-9. WHAT DO THESE DESCRIPTIONS SAY ABOUT THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER? HOW ARE THEY A FITTING DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR HIS BRIDE, THE CHURCH, AND THE CHURCH'S LOVE FOR CHRIST? SEE EPHESIANS 5.

6. REVIEW SONG OF SONGS 7:1-8:14. THE LUTHERAN MARRIAGE LITURGY DESCRIBES MARRIAGE AS THE HONORABLE ESTATE, WHICH GOD HIMSELF HAS INSTITUTED AND BLESSED, AND BY WHICH HE GIVES US A PICTURE OF THE VERY COMMUNION OF CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE, THE CHURCH." THE MARRIAGE OF SOLOMON AND THE SHULAMITE IS A PICTURE OF CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH (EPHESIANS 4:23-25; COLOSSIANS 1:18). HOW DO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES DEPICT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHURCH? IN YOUR CLOSING PRAYERS, THANK GOD FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGES AND PRAY THAT GOD WOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR WITNESS TO HIS LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE.