

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading For September 2:

Ecclesiastes 1:1-3:22:

The term “Ecclesiastes” is that which has been used by the Greek translation of the Old Testament and later the Latin Vulgate to translate the Hebrew word *Qoheleth*, which means preacher. The author of this book is one who proclaims or preaches the truth of God. Though many dispute that the author is Solomon, the introduction (1:1), the fact he is king in Israel (1:12), his unrivaled wealth and wisdom (1:16; 2:4-9), all argue for David’s son as the author of this book.

The message of the book is fairly simple. Though it is hard to know just when Solomon authored this work (it would have been long enough into his reign to have had some significant experience), the king shows that through all his projects, wealth, and power life without God (that which is lived merely on the horizontal plain under the sun) is empty or vanity (e.g. 1:2). God has given life to us to enjoy (e.g. 2:24-25), yet, we will not find our ultimate purpose and fulfillment apart from fearing God and keeping His commandments (12:13). Like Job and Proverbs, this is a wisdom book, which means it is teaching how to be skillful in godliness.

In today’s reading, after the introduction (1:1-2), Solomon argues that our true purpose and fulfillment will not be found in work or mere wisdom. A person can be involved in what appears to be the endless cycle of projects and toil, even doing them quite well, and yet what is really gained (3:9), unless that person responds to the sense God has placed in his heart of the eternal (3:11 [there is more than the mere daily cycle]) and finds purpose and pleasure in doing God’s work by His grace (3:12-15)? The answer is, “Nothing!” Additionally, Solomon says we do not find our ultimate purpose and pleasure in seeing things made right in this life or even in leaving a lasting legacy—at least, apart from God’s grace and work (3:16-22).

The book of Ecclesiastes is a good one for moving a person to ask why we are here and what our purpose is. It moves us to see that though life is a gift, it truly is meaningless apart from the worship of God. It drives the reader to be prepared for there being only one way to find our purpose and that is through the one way to God, Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

2 Corinthians 6:1-13:

In this brief reading Paul is drawing conclusions from what he has been arguing about the glory and superiority of the true gospel from chapters 2 through 5. He wants to make sure they all have truly believed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and if not, they would respond now. Paul explains that he and other true apostles (gospel ministers) have placed no obstacles in their way (as other teachers have). He explains true gospel ministers have been willing to suffer and have little in the world that they might be rich where it really counts. Paul wants them to be clear about Christ and the gospel, since this is the basis of their whole life in Christ—a subject to which he will turn in 6:14 and beyond.

The main points of application which keep arising in this section of 2 Corinthians have to do with our understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ and seeing that our source, our hope, are not found in self or methods. All we have and all we ever will be are because of Jesus Christ. We must learn how this is so and live it out by faith.

Psalm 46:1-11:

This psalm celebrates God's presence among His people which, at this time in Old Testament history, was recognized in the presence of the ark of the covenant within the Jerusalem temple. God's presence means that He is with His people to save, bless, and care for them. This psalm is a glorious reminder for the Christian that in Christ Jesus God is with us (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 21:3-7).

Proverbs 22:15:

Children are born with a sinful nature. As a result, they must be disciplined to learn the right and godly way. Parents, we must realize we do our children no favor when we fail to correct and discipline them. When we ignore this, we encourage them to be self-indulgent and to think there are no standards and no consequences for sin. In other words, we do not prepare them to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.