

## Study Guide-Ecclesiastes 8:2-9:10

### Hope

Why Advent?

During the **Advent** season we **anticipate** together the **arrival** of the Christ-child.

It's good to anticipate. Without the wait, there would be no wonder. Into the darkness a great light has appeared! In our study we will see some of the hopeless perspectives from 'under the sun' and then consider together that **Hope is a Person!**

A. Discuss together some of the hopeless situations that Solomon describes. Can you relate? Have you felt some of what he shares?

1. When authorities abuse their powers (8:2-6).
2. When we can't predict future outcomes (8:7-10).
3. When we see injustices (8:11-14).
4. When we have big unanswered questions (8:15-9:3)
  - A. Why am I here? (8:15-17)
  - B. Where are I going when I die? (9:1-3)

B. Read Eccl. 9:4-10. What recommendations does Solomon make since life is so meaningless under the sun?

C. How does Isaiah 9:6, the promise of the Christ-child, address the hopelessness Solomon describes (injustices, unknown futures, unanswered questions...)?

Isa. 9:6- "For unto us a child is born...and the **government will rest on His shoulders**, and he will be called wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

D. How does it affect you to know that Hope is a Person? Is He personal to you?

During Advent we exercise what it means to wait in hope. (Luke 12:35-40). What are some helpful tips on how to wait well for the coming of Christ? Share some practical examples.

## Message Slides

### Ecclesiastes 8:2-9:10

#### **I. Hopeless- When Authorities Take Advantage (v.2-6)**

**2** Obey the king's command, I say, because you took an oath before God.

**3** Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not stand up for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he pleases.

**4** Since a king's word is supreme, who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

**5** Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm, and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.

**6** For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter, though a person may be weighed down by misery.

#### **II. Hopeless- When We Can't Predict Outcomes (v.7-10)**

**7** Since no one knows the future, who can tell someone else what is to come?

**8** As no one has power over the wind to contain it, so no one has power over the time of their death. As no one is discharged in time of war, so wickedness will not release those who practice it.

**9** All this I saw, as I applied my mind to everything done under the sun. There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own hurt.

**10** Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless.

#### **III. Hopeless- When We See Injustices (v.11-14)**

**11** When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people's hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong.

**12** Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him.

**13** Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.

**14** There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless.

#### **IV. Hopeless- When we Have Big Unanswered Questions (8:15-9:3)**

**15** So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

#### **A. Big Question- Why am I here?**

**16** When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night—

**17** then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.

### **B. Big Question- Where am I going? (9:1-3)**

**1** So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them.

**2** All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good, so with the sinful; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.

**3** This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead.

### **V. At least You're Still Alive! (9:4-10)**

**4** Anyone who is among the living has **hope** —even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

**5** For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their name is forgotten.

**6** Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.

**7** Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.

**8** Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil.

**9** Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.

**10** Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

### **Hope is a PERSON**

Isa. 9:6- "For unto us a child is born...and the **government will rest on His shoulders**, and he will be called wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

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1. Abusive Relationships- *Government rests*
2. Unknown Future- *Everlasting Father*
3. Injustices- *Mighty God*
4. Big Questions- *Wonderful Counselor*