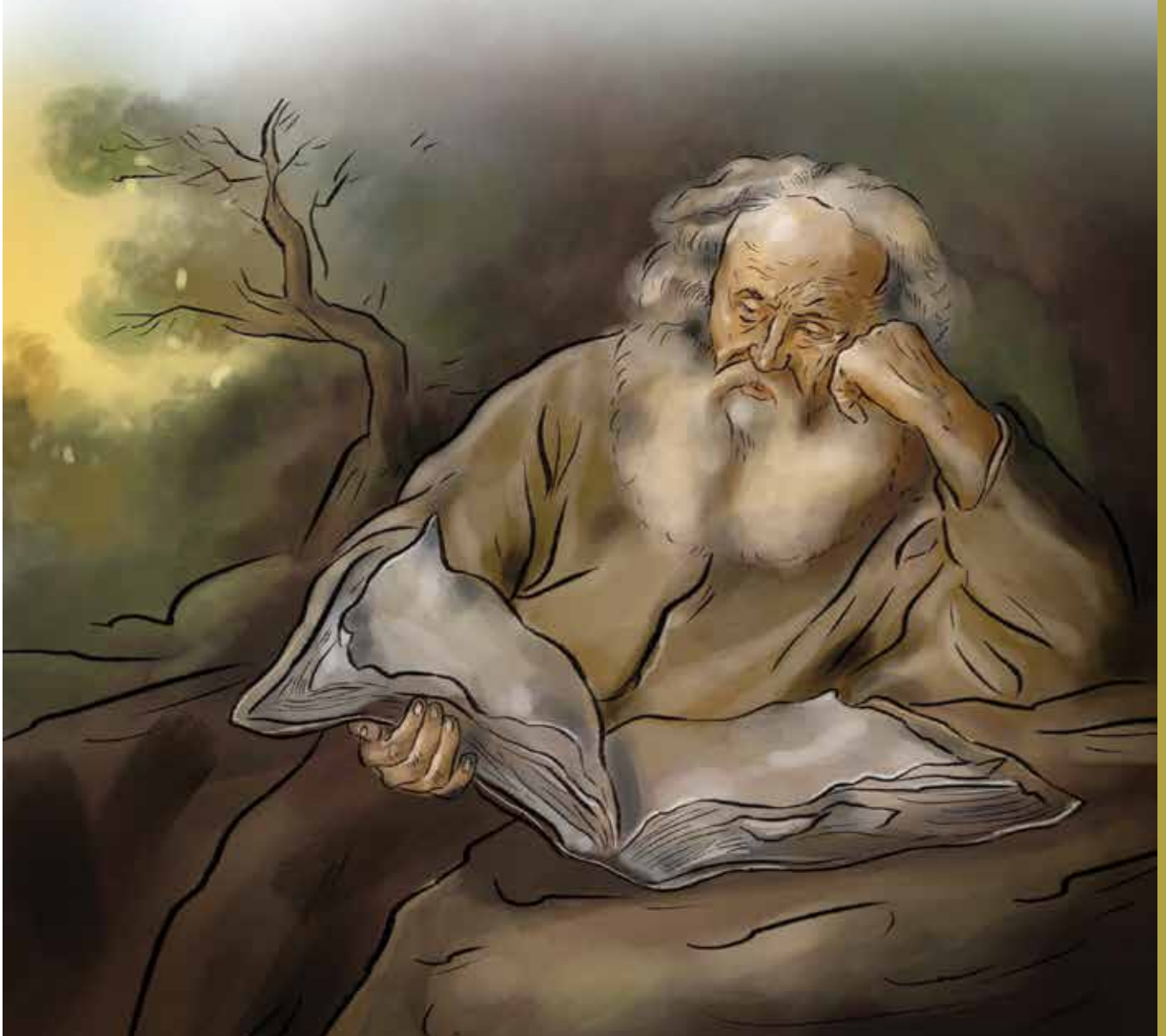




Ecclesiastes

Unlike Job, the author of Ecclesiastes was not affected personally by any misfortune or tragedy, but like a philosopher he wrote about the futility of the human quest for wisdom and meaning of life.

No one knows for sure who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. The word itself means 'the preacher' and the book indeed is a collection of wise sayings by someone who, having reflected on his experiences, lamented on the fact that humans are unable to understand so many things that happen in their short and unhappy lives.



Ecclesiastes' own search for wisdom had ended in disappointment and he concluded that human experiences are like vapour that vanishes in air. There was only one fate reserved for all humans – death, which destroys both the wise and the foolish.

The preacher also believed that life cannot be ordered or structured and was bound to be a mixture of the opposites. Life and death, love and hate, health and sickness exist simultaneously. Life is a game of chance. So one must enjoy; eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die.

Ecclesiastes was full of contradictions and wrote likewise. On the one hand he says that God has made everything beautiful in His time, and on the other writes: who can make straight what He has made crooked?

Ecclesiastes, however, asserted that God is the giver of all the good things and that he believes in the goodness of God. In fact, the goodness of God is a reason for accepting and living a life. He admitted his search for the meaning of life remained incomplete and humbly bowed down to the Creator.



Word of God

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 9

Everything that happens in this world happens at the time God chooses. He sets the time for birth and the time for death, the time for planting and the time for pulling up, the time for killing and the time for healing, the time for tearing down and the time for building.

He sets the time for sorrow and the time for joy, the time for mourning and the time for dancing, the time for making love and the time for not making love, the time for kissing and the time for not kissing.

He sets the time for finding and the time for losing, the time for saving and the time for throwing away, the time for tearing and the time for mending, the time for silence and the time for talk. He sets the time for love and the time for hate, the time for war and the time for peace.

What do we gain from all our work?

Insight

Missionaries As Social Reformers

The Christian missionaries – Catholic as well as Protestant – have played the role of social reformers in India in the 18th and 19th centuries. They contributed towards growth and enrichment of the local languages. Most important, the missionaries played an important role in opening schools for girls, dalits and children belonging to the oppressed sections of society. This role of missionaries in introducing revolutionary changes in society has been widely acknowledged.



Notes



BOOK: Ignatius Catholic Study Bible – Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon by B, Curtis Mitch, and Scott Hahn.

my TASK this week

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Read Ecclesiastes 4