

ECCLESIASTES CHAPTERS 6-8 – “THE VANITY OF GAIN AND HONOR; THE VALUE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM; OBEY AUTHORITIES FOR GOD’S SAKE; DEATH COMES TO ALL !”

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/>
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THE VANITY OF GAIN AND HONOR – Chapters 5:8-6:12

Ecc 6:1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:

Ecc 6:2 A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.

*Ecc 6:3 If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he—
Ecc 6:4 for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness.*

Ecc 6:5 Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man,

Ecc 6:6 even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place?

Ecc 6:7 All the labor of man is for his mouth, And yet the soul (appetite) is not satisfied.

Ecc 6:8 For what more has the wise man than the fool? What does the poor man have, Who knows how to walk before the living?

Ecc 6:9 Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

Ecc 6:10 Whatever one is, he has been named already, For it is known that he is man; And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.

Ecc 6:11 Since there are many things that increase vanity, How is man the better?

Ecc 6:12 For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?

THE VALUE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM – Chapter 7:1-8:1

(Second half of the Book – Solomon continues to wonder what life is all about. But without the Lord, all is vanity!)

Now Solomon is going have his experiment being a “good guy”!

He is now going to be speaking out of human wisdom, as a moralist – as a wise professor, but still in a back slidden state. It’s morally good but not doctrinally solid!

Ecc 7:1 A good name is better than precious ointment, And the day of death than the day of one's birth;

Ecc 7:2 Better to go to the house of mourning Than to go to the house of feasting, For that is the end of all men; And the living will take it to heart.

v. 1 That a man should have wealth and power and everything he wants and yet lacks the capacity to enjoy it, to partake of it. A person has a lot but yet doesn’t have the capacity to fully enjoy it, “It’s an evil,” Solomon said. He sees it all over the place – money is not secure!

v. 2 Riches - All sorts of riches. To eat - Because God gives him up to a base and covetous mind. Live now. Wealth can be lost in an instant.

v. 3 With goodness - He has not a contented mind and comfortable enjoyment of his estate. Is better - Which as it never enjoyed the comforts, so it never felt the calamities of life.

v. 4 Comes - Into the world. In vain - To no purpose; without any comfort or benefit by it. Departs - Without any observation or regard of men. His name - Shall be speedily and utterly forgotten.

v. 5 More rest - Because he is free from all those encumbrances and vexations to which the covetous man is long exposed.

vs. 3-6 Even if a man has a good number of heirs and lives a good number of years, if his soul is empty and he doesn’t have an honorable burial—that is, if his contribution during life doesn’t warrant much notice at his death—it is of no consequence that he was even born.

v. 7 Is - For meat. And yet - Men are insatiable in their desires, and restless in their endeavors after more, and never say, they have enough.

v. 8 More - In these matters. Both are subject to the same calamities, and partakers of the same comforts of this life. The poor - More than the poor that doth not know this. He means such a poor man as is ingenious and industrious; fit for service and business.

v. 9 Better to be content with little one has. **How content are you? Am I?**
v. 10 has been named - This is added as a further instance of the vanity of all things in this life. That which has been (man, who is the chief of all visible beings) is named already, by God, who, presently after his creation, gave him the following name, to signify what his nature and condition was.

v. 11 Things - Namely, the various circumstances detailed in the foregoing chapters, from the Preacher’s personal experience, and his observation of other people, ending with the comprehensive declaration in *Ecc 6:10* to the effect that vanity is an essential part of the constitution of creation as it now exists, and was foreknown. the better? - Rather, what is profitable to man?
v. 12 After him - On earth, in his own present sphere of action, after his departure hence. The important questions about life can only be from God. This is the real truth about riches, Solomon say.

v. 1 Precious ointment was the currency of the day. Solomon gives great worth to a good name. Your name was your character, your reputation! The aroma of you (your name) that remains is more important than perfume!
How is the impact of your reputation? Your aroma? Everyone is born, but not everyone who dies will be mourned.

v. 2 The house - Where mourners meet to celebrate the funeral of a deceased friend. That - Death. The living - Will be **seriously affected with it**, whereas feasting is commonly attended with levity, and manifold temptations.

Man has tried to be happy without God. It is being tried every day by millions of people. Ecclesiastes shows the absurdity of the attempt by Solomon, the wisest, richest and one of the most powerful of men. He had a wisdom that was God-given. He tried every field of endeavor and pleasure that was known to man. His conclusion was that all is vanity, empty, purposeless. Satisfaction in life can never be attained in the manner. Most people romanticize the past or fantasizing the future. But are not content with the present.

The experiments which Solomon made and his experiences are shown as follows:

(Session 1) Science – *Chapter 1:4-11*

Wisdom and Philosophy, - *Chapter 1:12-18*

Pleasure, - *Chapter 2:1-11*

Materialism (Living for the “Now”) – *Chapter 2:12-26*

(Session #2)

Fatalism – *Chapter 3:1-15*

Egotism - *Chapters 3:16-4:16*

Religion – *Chapter 5:1-8*

Wealth – *Chapters 5:9-6:12*

(This Session 3)

Morality – “being a good guy” – *Chapters 7:1-12:12*

(Session #4)

The Result of the Experiment/s – *Chapter 12:13-14*

Ecc. 6:9 (also 7:10) Most people romanticize the past or fantasizing the future. But are not content with the present.

v. 10 Don’t argue with God – you will never win!

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Ecc 7:3 Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better.

Ecc 7:4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

Ecc 7:5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise Than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Ecc 7:6 For like the crackling of thorns under a pot, So is the laughter of the fool. This also is vanity.

Ecc 7:7 Surely oppression destroys a wise man's reason, And a bribe debases the heart.

Ecc 7:8 The end of a thing is better than its beginning; The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Ecc 7:9 Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools.

Ecc 7:10 Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

Ecc 7:11 Wisdom is good with an inheritance, And profitable to those who see the sun.

Ecc 7:12 For wisdom is a defense as money is a defense, But the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to those who have it.

Ecc 7:13 Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked?

Ecc 7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him.

Ecc 7:15 I have seen everything in my days of vanity: There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, And there is a wicked man who prolongs life in his wickedness.

Ecc 7:16 Do not be overly righteous, Nor be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself?

Ecc 7:17 Do not be overly wicked, Nor be foolish: Why should you die before your time?

Ecc 7:18 It is good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; For he who fears God will escape them all.

Ecc 7:19 Wisdom strengthens the wise More than ten rulers of the city.

Ecc 7:20 For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

v. 3 People today do anything to avoid sorrow. Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit! Can you witness well at a “Lucy Show” rerun?

v. 4 The wise - Are constantly meditating upon serious things. Fools try to ignore death! Other religions may talk about death, but have no idea where we came from!

vs. 5-6 Solomon's point is this: Why not try both groups? Listen to the rebuke of a wise person, then go down and listen to a rock band and enjoy that also. One may be better than the other, but it is easier to go with both groups. This is the picture through the remainder of this chapter

v. 7 bribe - A bribe given to a wise man, deprives him of the use of his understanding. So this verse discovers two ways whereby a wise man may be made mad, by suffering oppression from others, or by receiving bribes to oppress others. And this also is an argument of the vanity of worldly wisdom that is so easily corrupted and lost.

v. 8 The end - The good or evil of things is better known by their end, than by their beginning. The patient - Who quietly waits for the issue of things. The proud - Which he puts instead of hasty or impatient, because **pride is the chief cause of impatience.**

v. 10 Better - More quiet and comfortable. For this is an argument of a mind unthankful for the many mercies, which men enjoy even in evil times..

v. 11 In the Book of Proverbs we see that “wisdom” is another name for Christ. Christ has been made unto us wisdom. Oh, how this do-gooder needs to have Christ!

v. 12 “Money is a defense”—this man wants plenty of money, but he doesn't want Christ.

v. 13 Consider - His wise, and just, and powerful government of all events, which is proposed as the last and best remedy against all murmurings.

v. 14 Be joyful - Enjoy God's favors with thankfulness. Consider - Consider that it is God's hand, and therefore submit to it: consider also why God sends it, for what sins, and with what design, purpose.

v. 15 My days of vanity - Since I have come into this vain life. Perishes - Yes, for his righteousness, which exposes him to the envy, anger, or hatred of wicked men. Wickedness - Notwithstanding all his wickedness.

vs. 16-17 do not be - This verse and the next have a manifest reference to Ecc 7:15, being two inferences drawn from the two clauses of the observation. Solomon here speaks in the person of an ungodly man, who takes occasion to dissuade men from righteousness, because of the danger which attends it.

v.18 Grasp this - Embrace and practice this counsel. Shall come - Shall be delivered from all extremes, and from all the evil consequences of them.

v. 19 Strengthens - Supports him in, and secures him against troubles and dangers.

v. 20 does not sin - Who is universally and perfectly good. **Rom 3:10 As it is written: "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE;**

Chapter 7 We come to the second half of the Book of Ecclesiastes—a book that chronicles Solomon’s struggle to find the meaning of life. In the first six chapters, Solomon was a **hedonist, hoping to find satisfaction, fulfillment, and answers by pursuing his own pleasures.**

But here, in chapter 7, he suddenly shifts gears. No longer a hedonist, he now becomes a moralist. No longer a wild and crazy guy, he’s now the quintessential nice guy. He becomes a family man, gets his act together, joins the Moral Majority, and votes Republican. And from this frame of reference, he’s going to share with us some good moral principles.

So beginning in chapter 7, until most of chapter 12, Solomon is giving his advice. Much of it centers around his being a “good guy”, a part of the “moral majority”!

His “proverbs”, **apart from taking God into account, are his guidelines for navigating through life “under the sun”. We can look at each “under the sun proverb” and decide whether it agrees with Biblical position or not!**

Solomon is saying, son, come over here and sit alongside me, and I’ll tell you what I’ve learned about life! (apart from God).

His developing of his own philosophy of life. **These philosophies of life have these things in common:**

1 - Everything in life is relative.

2 - The standard for righteousness is that of man. As long as I’m above average in the way I live, I’ll make it into heaven.

They don’t realize that the Biblical standard is for perfect righteousness, which includes no one!

Vs. 15 & 16 – The Greeks called it the “golden mean”. “Everything in moderation”. What did Jesus say to the church in Laodicea – **Rev. 3:15-16?** *“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. [16] So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

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Ecc 7:21 Also do not take to heart everything people say, Lest you hear your servant cursing you.
Ecc 7:22 For many times, also, your own heart has known That even you have cursed others.
Ecc 7:23 All this I have proved by wisdom. I said, "I will be wise"; But it was far from me.

Ecc 7:24 As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, Who can find it out?
Ecc 7:25 I applied my heart to know, To search and seek out wisdom and the reason of things, To know the wickedness of folly, Even of foolishness and madness.

Ecc 7:26 And I find more bitter than death The woman whose heart is snares and nets, Whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, But the sinner shall be trapped by her.
Ecc 7:27 "Here is what I have found," says the Preacher, "Adding one thing to the other to find out the reason,
Ecc 7:28 Which my soul still seeks but I cannot find: One man among a thousand I have found, But a woman among all these I have not found.

Ecc 7:29 Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes."
Ecc 8:1 Who is like a wise man? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom makes his face shine, And the sternness of his face is changed.

OBEY AUTHORITIES FOR GOD’S SAKE – Chapter 8:2-8:9

Ecc 8:2 I say, "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God.
Ecc 8:3 Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him."
Ecc 8:4 Where the word of a king is, there is power; And who may say to him, "What are you doing?"
Ecc 8:5 He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, (good!)

Ecc 8:6 Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, Though the misery of man increases greatly.

Ecc 8:7 For he does not know what will happen; So who can tell him when it will occur?

v. 21 Also - Do not strictly search into them, nor listen to hear them. Don't go eves dropping!
v. 22 have cursed - Rather, speak evil of ... spoken evil of. **I've done it and do it!**
v. 23 Proved - I have found to be true, by the help of that singular wisdom which God had given me. I said - I determined that I would attain perfection of wisdom. But - I found myself **greatly disappointed.**
v. 24 that - God's counsels and works, and the reasons of them
v. 25 search and seek - He uses three words signifying the same thing, to intimate his vehement desire, and vigorous, and unwearied endeavors after it. The reason - Both of God's various providences, and of the counsels and courses of men. The wickedness - Clearly and fully to understand the great evil of sin.
v. 26 I find - By my own sad experience. Shall escape - Shall be prevented from falling into her hands. Solomon snared by his dialogue with women? **Spiritually dialogue should be with one's own sex!**
v. 27 I have found - That I might make a true and just estimate.
v. 28 still seeks - I returned to search again with more earnestness. I find not - That it was so, he found, but the reason of the thing he could not find out. One man - A wise and virtuous man. A woman - One worthy of that name; one who is not a dishonor to her sex. Among - In that thousand whom I have taken into intimate society with myself. **Don't look for wisdom in those of the opposite sex, who are the people of God! Solomon looking for it in the wrong places!**
v. 29 this only - Though I could not find out all the streams of wickedness, and their infinite windings and turnings, yet I have discovered the fountain of it, Original sin, and the corruption of nature, which is both in men and women.
v. 1 Only Christ who is real wisdom can change a man's life. He can come into a life and bring excitement, joy, and peace. He can give us all the things that are needed today to deliver us from living a mediocre existence.
v. 2 your oath - Because of that oath which thou hast taken to keep all God's laws, whereof this of obedience to superiors is one.
v. 3 He is saying, "Be careful what you do. Don't get into trouble."
v. 4 Now the king can take a stand for what he believes because he has the liberty to do so. My friend, why don't you live like a king and take a stand for Christ?
v. 5 his command - Solomon passes to a new subject. Shall feel - Shall be delivered from those mischiefs which befall the disobedient. Discerns - Both when, and in what manner he must keep the commands of God.
v. 6 Because - There is a fit way and season for the accomplishment of every business, which is known to God, but for the most part hidden from man. Therefore - Because there are few who have wisdom to discern this, most men expose themselves to manifold miseries.
v. 7 For - Men are generally ignorant of future events, and therefore their minds are disquieted.

vs. 26-28 Spiritually dialogue should be with one's own sex! Don't look for wisdom in those of the opposite sex, who are the people of God! Solomon looking for it in the wrong places!

Ecc. 8:1 - Abraham Lincoln said that everyone over forty is responsible for his own face! Does your face shine because of God's wisdom?

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*Ecc 8:8 No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, And no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, And wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.
Ecc 8:9 All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.*

DEATH COMES TO ALL ! – Chapters 8:10-9:12

Ecc 8:10 Then I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of holiness, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This also is vanity.

Ecc 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Ecc 8:12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him.

*Ecc 8:13 But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God.
Ecc 8:14 There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.*

Ecc 8:15 So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor all the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

Ecc 8:16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night,

Ecc 8:17 then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it; moreover, though a wise man attempts to know it, he will not be able to find it.

v. 8 retain the spirit - To keep it in the body. This is added as another evidence of man's misery. No discharge - In that fatal conflict between life and death, when a man is struggling with death, though to no purpose, for death will be always conqueror. **You have no control over the days of your life! But there was One – Jesus Christ!**

v. 9 To his own hurt - There are some kings, who use their power tyrannically, whereby they not only oppress their people, but hurt themselves, bringing the vengeance of God upon their own heads.

v. 10 And so - In like manner. The wicked - Wicked princes or rulers. Buried - With state and pomp. Who - Had administered public justice, which is frequently signified by the phrase of coming in and going out before the people. The holy - The throne or tribunal seems to be so called here, to aggravate their wickedness, who being advanced by God into so high and sacred a place, betrayed so great a trust. **Elevation at funerals is vanity!**

v. 11 Therefore - God's forbearance makes them presumptuous and secure. **They make the terrible mistake of thinking that doesn't see or care, or is impotent and them maybe even that He is approving of what you're doing!**

v. 12 Though a sinner do evil a hundred times,.... That is ever so many times, a certain number for an uncertain; though he lives in a continued course of sin, being resolved upon the above consideration to give himself a swing to his lusts.

v. 13 A shadow - His life, though it may seem long, yet in truth is but a shadow, which will quickly vanish and disappear.

v. 14 occurs - Either by wicked potentates, who do commonly advance unworthy men, and oppress persons of greatest virtue and merit: or, by God's providence, who sees it fit for many weighty reasons so to manage the affairs of the present world. To whom - Who meet with such usage as the worst of men deserve. It happens - Who, instead of those punishments which they deserve, receive those rewards which are due to virtuous men. **Why do righteous people suffer? Solomon says it's vanity. But only here on earth! The view of a barracuda versus that of a bird!**

v. 15 To be merry - This he speaks of sensual delights.

v. 16 To see - To observe men's various designs and employments, and their unwearied labors about worldly things. that is - Having now mentioned the business which is done, or which man doth, upon earth, he further adds, as an evidence of man's eagerness in pursuing his business, for even by day and by night he (the busy man) sees not sleep with his eyes.

v. 17 I saw - I considered the counsels and ways of God, and the various methods of his providence, and the reasons of them. Find out - No man, though ever so wise, is able fully and perfectly to understand these things. And therefore it is best for man not to perplex himself with endless enquiries, but quietly to submit to God's will and providence, and to live in the fear of God, and the comfortable enjoyment of his blessing.

Under the sun, you'll never have answers why bad things happen to good people.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Php 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! [5] Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. [6] Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; [7] and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Pro 29:18 (KJV) Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

**“under the sun” – 6 times in today's study
Here is one time – “Under the SON or the Bright Heaven's Sun!!”**

BE THOU MY VISION – Dallan Forgail (8th Century)

*1 Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.*

*2 Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.*

*3 High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.*

*Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.*