

*'All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.'*  
2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

# The Book of Ecclesiastes

---

Chapter 7



## **Kerrville Bible Church**

Fall Semester 2023

Ken Johnson

---

# Ecclesiastes

## Review -

---



- In 1:4-11, Solomon says life is not worth living because it is brief, repetitive, aimless, futile and wearisome ...
- There's nothing new under the sun ... **Life is Monotony!**




# Ecclesiastes

## Review -



<sup>22</sup>I have seen that nothing is better than that man should be happy in his activities, for that is his lot. For who will bring him to see what will occur after him?

- ❑ But in 3:1 to 5:9 Solomon looked “Up, Within, Ahead and Around” – with **God in view** – and found that life was anything but Monotony!
- ❑ Solomon concludes: Man should be happy in his activities.
- ❑ Life is a gift from God!
- ❑ Enjoy it ... one apple at a time 
- ❑ We cannot see what will occur in the future but, knowing that God is in control, we can trust in Him and be at peace.





## Ecclesiastes Review -

---

- ❑ In 2:1-11, Solomon says life is not worth living because with his incalculable wealth he sought meaning and enjoyment through pleasure, great edifices, endless possessions, taking whatever he desired ...
- ❑ But he found emptiness ...
- ❑ Wealth brought no lasting happiness or satisfaction ...  
**Wealth is Futility!**





## Ecclesiastes Review -

<sup>18</sup>Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward. <sup>19</sup>Furthermore, as for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, He has also empowered him to eat from them and to receive his reward and rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup>For he will not often consider the years of his life, because God keeps him occupied with the gladness of his heart.

- ❑ But in 5:10 to 6:9 Solomon looked at Wealth – with **God in view** – and found that Wealth was anything but Futility!
- ❑ Solomon has demolished the delusions about Wealth:
  - Wealth cannot bring contentment, humility, friends, no worries, security, peace of mind, happiness, or satisfaction
  - We cannot judge the fairness or goodness of God's plan by observing external factors like prosperity

# Ecclesiastes

## Review -



<sup>18</sup>Here is what I have seen to be good and fitting: to eat, to drink and enjoy oneself in all one's labor in which he toils under the sun during the few years of his life which God has given him; for this is his reward.

□ And so, Solomon came to a familiar conclusion:

- Material Prosperity is God's gift -
- Accept your lot with gratitude -
- Enjoy life ... one apple at a time
- Use whatever gifts He gives you for His glory ...





## Ecclesiastes

### The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

---

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (v7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Remember that Solomon, in V1:18, had argued Wisdom, itself, did not make life worth living:  
*"in much wisdom there is much grief and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain"*.
- ❑ Now Solomon takes up the question of whether or not Wisdom – with **God in view** – can make life any better
- ❑ We closed 6:12 with the question: "What is good for a man?"
- ❑ In this chapter, he concludes that **God's Wisdom** can make at least three positive contributions to our lives



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

---

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (v7:1 – 10)

### **KOHELETH'S MIDTERM EXAM**



- ❑ T or F – I like laughter over crying
- ❑ T or F – I like weddings over funerals
- ❑ T or F – I like thinking of my birthday over my death day
- ❑ T or F – I like compliments over criticisms
- ❑ T or F – I like shortcuts over the long way around
- ❑ T or F – I like the good old days over the way things are now

What's going on here?





## Ecclesiastes

### The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

---

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ 7:1-10 are proverbs showing things that are “better than” prosperity, success – for the man who FEARS GOD
- ❑ This is **God’s Wisdom**, which is worldly thinking turned upside down
- ❑ Adversity strengthens a man’s character ...
- ❑ Our highest purpose in this life is not happiness, it is to grow more Christ-like through the trials, the disappointments, the suffering and the sorrows we encounter along the way.
- ❑ The wise man chooses “better than” – the fool chooses the opposite



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>1</sup>A good name is better than a good ointment, and the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ In Hebrew, name is *shem* and ointment is *shemen*.
- ❑ For the man who fears God, and who lives an upright life, his reputation is solid and enduring – **better than** a lovely but fleeting fragrance.
- ❑ His death may seem sorrowful – but it's not:
  - Death means he is released to eternal paradise.
  - Birth means life is beginning, full of suffering, anguish and pain – havel!
- ❑ Ending a good life is better than beginning a new life!



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>2</sup>It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, because that is the end of every man, and the living takes it to heart.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Solomon says it is better to look death and illness in the face and learn from them ... they come to us all
- ❑ Grief and sadness acquaint us with crucial issues of life:
  - Remind us of our mortality and need for righteousness
  - Draw us closer to God
  - Because death is coming for us
- ❑ Better than escaping reality through “feasting” with no lasting meaning

*“Teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom. (PS 90:12)*



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>3</sup>Sorrow is better than laughter, for when a face is sad a heart may be happy.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Sorrow is a “thoughtful sadness”
  - Takes focus off self
  - Gives time for reflection
  - Putting pieces back together
- ❑ “Happy” heart may be better translated:
  - “by a sad countenance the heart is made better” NKJV
  - “sober reflection is good for the heart” NET
  - “sadness has a refining influence on us” NLT



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>4</sup>The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, while the mind of fools is in the house of pleasure.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Here's the contrast between the wise man and the fool.
- ❑ The mind and heart of the wise man improves its spiritual health at a funeral
  - When wise men face adversity like death, disease, trouble, and disappointment, they learn fresh lessons from God.
  - They take those lessons to heart, and they become stronger.
- ❑ The fool dulls the impact of death on his mind by turning to revelry and hilarity. He gains nothing.



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>5</sup>It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man than for one to listen to the song of fools.  
<sup>6</sup>For as the crackling of thorn bushes under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool; and this too is futility.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Men love affirmation and don't like rebuke
- ❑ But most affirmation is insincere or manipulative
- ❑ Honest truth, even if hurtful, is better because it leads to wisdom
- ❑ Laughter of fools like "crackling of thorns" ... lots of noise but no heat ... empty, meaningless, futility
- ❑ Problem ...

*"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy. PROV 27:6*



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>7</sup>For oppression makes a wise man mad, and a bribe corrupts the heart.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Strange verse – three reasons ...
- ❑ Passive: If wise men are oppressed, they can go “mad” at the injustice – that is, become deceived in their minds, losing ability to be reasonable
- ❑ Active: If wise men in power are the oppressors, they can go “mad” with power, losing their ability to be reasonable
- ❑ Either way, a “Bribe” (using money or some other asset to get your way without earning it) will corrupt your integrity and destroy the purity of your heart.



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>8</sup>The end of a matter is better than its beginning; patience of spirit is better than haughtiness of spirit.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ When living according to God's wisdom, begin well ... but leave the results to the Lord:
  - If a beginning is in sin ... the value is havel!
  - If a beginning is in God ... the value is eternal!
- ❑ Patience in the Lord is better than Self-pride.
  - Humility vs. Soap Bubble

*"Wait for the LORD; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the LORD." (PS 27:14)*





# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>9</sup>Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, for anger resides in the bosom of fools.

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Why does man get angry?
  - Not being treated as he **thinks he** deserves
  - Not getting something he wants
  - Not being served ... His Will not being done
- ❑ In other words: Not being treated like God!
- ❑ Anger prevents clear thinking
- ❑ Anger blocks wisdom

*"The fool says in his heart,  
there is no God" Ps 14:1*



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>10</sup>Do not say, "Why is it that the former days were better than these?" for it is not from wisdom that you ask about this

- ❑ MAKE LIFE BETTER (7:1 – 10)
- ❑ Another wisdom block is discontentment
- ❑ "Good Old Days" is a combination of bad memory and good imagination. **NNUTS**
- ❑ Living in the past destroys man's ability to deal skillfully with today.
- ❑ Today is all we have – it is God's gift to man
- ❑ Accept it!
- ❑ With Thanks!



*"This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (PS 118:24)*



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>11</sup>Wisdom along with an inheritance is good and an advantage to those who see the sun. <sup>12</sup>For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.

- ❑ SEE LIFE CLEARER. Wealth.
- ❑ Better translation:
  - Wisdom is better than a generous inheritance
    - ❑ Money can lose its value or be stolen
    - ❑ True wisdom keeps its value and cannot be lost
  - Money can buy you out of trouble
  - Wisdom can keep you out of trouble because you will make wiser choices
- ❑ Wisdom helps you see life clearer



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>13</sup>Consider the work of God, for who is able to straighten what He has bent? <sup>14</sup>In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider -- God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him.

- ❑ SEE LIFE CLEARER. Sovereignty, Prosperity, Adversity.
- ❑ Wisdom helps us surrender to God's Sovereignty
- ❑ Watch and wonder in awe as His plan unfolds:
  - God gives prosperous times – Rejoice!
  - God gives adversity – Give Thanks!
  - God is author of both – it's His plan – Sing Praises!
- ❑ Man cannot understand/predict God's plan – walk by faith!
- ❑ Man's response is to draw closer and trust Him more



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>15</sup>I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

- ❑ SEE LIFE CLEARER. Righteousness and Sin (7:15-18)
- ❑ Solomon again observes that the length of a person's life does not depend upon his spirituality
- ❑ It is God who gives the good things in life and that includes controlling the time of one's death
- ❑ Because all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God, who is man to question God about the life span of any man?
- ❑ Wisdom tells us that is God's decision

*"None is righteous, no, not one;" Romans 3:10*



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>16</sup>Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself?

<sup>17</sup>Do not be excessively wicked and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time?

- ❑ SEE LIFE CLEARER. Righteousness and Sin (7:15-18)
- ❑ Are these two verses simply saying to act in moderation?  
Not too good and not too sinful? May it never be!!!
- ❑ This is a warning for man not to go to the **extremes.**
  - The extreme of Self-Righteousness
    - ❑ Becoming a Hypocritical, “Know it all”:
    - ❑ That’s pride and legalism.
  - The extreme of Wanton Sin
    - ❑ Give in to sin and let wickedness run wild
    - ❑ Gain the world but lose his soul



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>18</sup>It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.

- ❑ SEE LIFE CLEARER. Righteousness and Sin (7:15-18)
- ❑ The Man who Fears God is still a SINNER
  - Like Paul he always desires to do the right thing
  - But his flesh is weak, and he often fails
- ❑ So, he must maintain a strong grip on his Righteousness
  - Striving to grow in Righteousness, humility and the Fruit of the Spirit
  - Without getting puffed up in his pride



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>18</sup>It is good that you grasp one thing and also not let go of the other; for the one who fears God comes forth with both of them.

- ❑ SEE LIFE CLEARER. Righteousness and Sin (7:15-18)
- ❑ And he must also maintain a strong grip on his Sin
  - Striving to mortify his sin
  - Which continually tests him through the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the boastful pride of life
- ❑ This tension between Righteousness and Sin forces him closer to God, as he recognizes his total dependence on his Sovereign God





# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>19</sup>Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ The Wise Man FEARS GOD and therefore does not fear anyone or anything else! (Ps 112)
- ❑ A person with God-given Wisdom (*hokmah*) has the ability to gather up life's random bits and pieces and shape them into something that bears fruit
- ❑ It is the skill to deal with whatever life brings our way.
- ❑ Wisdom leads to strength, mastery and courage
- ❑ Ten city rulers hold no terror for the man with *hokmah*



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>20</sup>Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ Yet even the man who Fears God ... the man with Hokmah ... still sins
- ❑ Look at the facts:
  - No one is without fault
  - All fall short of the glory of God
- ❑ So, even that “righteous man” in Verse 15 is not as upright as Solomon thought
- ❑ Let us not label the providence of God as unjust



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>21</sup>Also, do not take seriously all words which are spoken, so that you will not hear your servant cursing you. <sup>22</sup>For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ The Wisdom in fearing God will allow you to **not** be concerned with GOSSIP - what other people think and say in their unguarded, foolish and unkind moments
- ❑ All men have thought and said bad things about people, even good people they love and admire
- ❑ Forgive those who have spoken rashly against you
- ❑ You've done it to others - don't be a hypocrite and fool



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>23</sup>I tested all this with wisdom, and I said, "I will be wise," but it was far from me. <sup>24</sup>What has been is remote and exceedingly mysterious. **Who can discover it?** <sup>25</sup>I directed my mind to know, to investigate and to seek wisdom and an explanation, and to know the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ Solomon sought the meaning and an explanation of all that God is doing in this world – all that exists, how God manages it, and what purposes He has in mind.
- ❑ Even with **his wisdom**, he found **no final answers**.
- ❑ Wisdom truly comes when man knows that he cannot know these things.
- ❑ And it gives him the power to live with what he doesn't understand and release it all to God.



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>26</sup>And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured by her.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ The wise man must deal with the sinfulness of humanity:
  - The harlot who traps men and leads them to death ...
  - Solomon was snared by many foreign women who led him away from God and into the worship of heathen gods
  - The way to escape those women is to FEAR GOD and seek to please Him above all else.



## Ecclesiastes

### The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>27</sup>"Behold, I have discovered this," says the Preacher, "adding one thing to another to find an explanation, <sup>28</sup>which I am still seeking but have not found. I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a woman among all these.

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ Solomon concluded that the whole human race was bound by sin:
  - Not one man in 1,000 is righteous and wise
  - Fewer women than that ... remember that the number 1,000 was a meaningful number for him (700 wives and 300 concubines)



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>29</sup>"Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ God made men upright
  - Before the fall – Adam only had knowledge of good. There was one prohibited tree – so man could only make one mistake out of the thousands of choices he could make. And he made it!
- ❑ They have sought out many devices
  - After the fall – man gained knowledge of evil also. He can now make countless evil choices. And he does!



# Ecclesiastes

## The Vanity of Wisdom (7:1 – 8:17)

<sup>29</sup>"Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."

- ❑ FACE LIFE STRONGER (7:19 – 8:17)
- ❑ That's why Wisdom is so important
- ❑ Wisdom is needed to help men avoid those evil choices
- ❑ Adversity is a key element of God's plan
  - Adversity drives man to FEAR GOD ... trust God
  - That is the beginning of Wisdom
  - That is the beginning of Sanctification



# The Book of Ecclesiastes

---



***"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Psalm 111:10"***

---