

Ecclesiastes 7-8 Wisdom and Advice

Unexpected Comparisons (7:1-8)

Solomon next turns to some practical sayings. This section includes several unexpected comparisons.

- How valuable is your reputation (v1, Prov 10:7, Prov 22:1)?
- How is our reputation like an ointment (v1)?
- How is the day of death better than the day of birth (v1)?
- How is mourning better than feasting (v2)?
- How is sorrow better than laughter (v3-4)?
- How is rebuke better than praise (v5-6)?
- How is the end better than the beginning (v8)?

Advice (7:9-14)

Next we see a series of short statements (almost like those in Proverbs) giving advice

- Why shouldn't we be quick to anger (v9, Prov 19:11, James 1:19-20)?
- Are we tempted to think that the former days were better (v10)?
- How is wisdom a defense (v12)?
- How should we look at what happens to us (v14, Philippians 4:11-12, Romans 8:28)?

Wisdom about Justice and Wickedness (7:15-24)

- Does righteousness guarantee everything will go our way in this life (v15)?
- What does Solomon mean by overly righteous and overly wise (v16)?
- If our wisdom and righteousness isn't the answer, what is (v18)?
- Is anyone always good (v20, Rom 3:10,23)?
- How concerned should we be about what people say about us (v21)?
- Even extensively seeking wisdom, what will be true (v23-24)?

Warnings (7:25-29)

Next some warnings, also with some similarities to Proverbs.

- Is it more bitter than death to be deceived by someone who pretends to care for us (v26)?
- Do we recognize sin as entrapping us, contrary to the world's view of sin as freedom (v26)?
- How rare are good people (v28)?
- Why isn't man good (v29)?

Obey Authorities (8:1-9)

We are instructed to obey authorities. We have similar New Testament instructions in Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17.

- Are we similarly bound to obey by a commitment to God (v2, 1 Cor 6:20)?
- Where does the king get his power (v4, Rom 13:4)?
- Is verse 5 a guarantee (consider Uriah and Jesus)?
- Do we often act like we know what will happen in the future (v7, James 4:14)?

Death Comes to All (8:10-17)

Returning to his theme of vanity under the sun, Solomon again reminds us that we all face death.

- We sometimes don't live that way, but will we all face death (v10, Heb 9:27)?
- The wicked in verse 10, did they start out evil?
- Why don't we react to evil speedily (v11)?
- What confidence do we have, even when surrounded by evil (v12)?
- Do bad things sometimes happen to good people (v14)? Give some biblical examples.
- Even seeing everything around us, what has God given us (v15)?
- Are there limits to what we can know (v16-17)?