

Ecclesiastes 8:10-15 "Justice Served"

Verse 1 of Chapter 8 says, A man's wisdom makes his face shine, And the sternness of his face is changed. And who knows the interpretation of a thing?



We know the wisdom of the gospel turns the frown of sin into the smile of grace.

Proverbs 15:13... A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.



Who is more merry than the one who's sins are forgiven and eternal salvation secure?

Onto verse 2 I say, "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God.



Romans 13 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

Our submission to authority on earth is one important part of our submission to Christ in Heaven.



One commentator adds, "People often wonder whether this obedience has any limits. Must I always submit to the governing authorities, or are there times when it is my duty as a Christian to disobey? The simple answer is the one that Peter gave when the ruler of Jerusalem told him to stop preaching the gospel: **"We must obey God rather than men"** (Acts 5:29). When it comes to a conflict between God and man, we must obey the higher authority."

Great wisdom is required to know when authority has called us to do something

contrary to what God has called us to do

We **do not** control our own destiny or determine the days of our lives. We certainly don't know how to interpret everything that happens in our lives. **What, then, is the wise way for us to live?**

In full surrender and obedience to the One who knows the end from the beginning and has our very best in view. PRAY!

He was pondering all these truths before us because he wanted to know the wise way to live. Suddenly he had an experience that shifted his whole perspective on **life and death**.

Verse 10 of chapter 8... “Then I saw the wicked buried,” I’m sure Solomon the Preacher actually attended the burial service of a wicked man. Great wisdom came as a result.

Death has a way of bringing perspective to life. “The sight of a funeral,” said Charles Spurgeon, “**is very healthful thing for the soul.**” Similarly, Columba Stewart said, “Awareness of mortality exerts a unique power to focus the mind and heart on essentials.

Remember Solomon has already said in Ecc. 7:2 Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties. After all, everyone dies—so the living should take this to heart.

Regarding the famous Rod Stewart “As a boy and as a young man Rod Stewart had always felt an almost irrational fear of dying. He had suffered nightmares about death from a very early age and so thought, as an impressionable teenager, that perhaps by getting as close as he could to death, actually digging out holes to be filled by real bodies, he could rid himself of that fear.” from “Rod Stewart: The New Biography,” by Tim Ewbank, Stafford Hildred, Page 13


Verse 10 again... “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. **Solomon reported on a funeral he had attended. The deceased was a man who had frequented the temple (“the place of holiness”)**

and had received much praise from the people, but he had not lived a godly life. Yet he was given a magnificent funeral, with an eloquent eulogy, while the truly godly people of the city were ignored and forgotten.

“This also *is* vanity” Solomon says, “that stinks, it doesn’t make sense!

T. M. Moore offers the following paraphrase: “*And then they die. The funeral’s nice enough: we give the guy his due; his loved ones weep; his friends all say they’ll miss him; then we bury him away from sight, and everyone forgets him.*”

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. As he reflected on the matter, Solomon realized that the deceased man had continued in his sin because he thought he was getting away with it. If evil deeds were punished right away, then people would be deterred from doing wickedness. If there are never any consequences, why not go ahead and sin?

 **Courson makes this wonderful point,** “Man thinks he gets away with evil only because God does not move quickly in judgment. Peter says God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Yet people make a dreadful error whenever they mistake the mercy of God for apathy, impotency, or approval.”

Sometimes Christians fall into this trap... I’m living in sin and God still is using me so I guess my sin is no big deal. **Pastors in the pulpit while still in sin**

12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times*, and his *days* are prolonged,

Using scripture to interpret scripture the Psalmist expands on what Solomon is saying Psalm 73:3-5 ... For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men.


In other words, God’s enemies seem to get all the blessing. They make more money, have more power, and experience more pleasure than people who try to do what God says.

Continuing verse 12... yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him.

UNBELIEVING BELIEVING... unsaved... Saved... **NON-CHRISTIAN... CHRISTIAN...** heathen... **Saint...** darkness... Light... unrighteous... Righteous... **Dead... now ALIVE!**

Incomplete... **Complete** going to hell... Going to heaven... **those who Fear God and those who don't!** yet I surely know that it will be well with

those who fear God, who fear before Him. **Verse 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. **Solomon may be suggesting that the long life of the wicked man is but a prelude to eternal darkness.** **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.



Ryken puts flesh to Solomon's complaint, "Oh, the injustice of it all! If God is righteous, then we would expect him to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Yet often he seems to do exactly the opposite. Good people have troubles that only bad people deserve, while bad people get what only good people deserve. Cruel dictators drive out free governments. The man who robs investors of their inheritance gets a huge bonus, while hardworking people lose their jobs and their homes. Suffering pastors are put in prison, while the persecutors of the church grow strong in their cruel power. To bring things down to the personal level, the student who cheated on a difficult exam gets an A, but all you get is a C-. The worker who stabbed you in the back gets the promotion, while you remain stuck at the same pay grade. Or you make a commitment to chastity, and although you are still single, the girl who throws herself at men gets a ring on her finger


and a long white dress.”

The Preacher called this “vanity.” The Reformation theologian Theodore Beza called it “repugnant to reason.” I would call it absurd injustice.


As frustrating as it is... seeing the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer we must understand eternal consequences for both the wicked and the saved.

Judgment is coming – maybe sooner than we think but God is giving man more time to repent.

So sad that many don't believe judgment will come: Cornell University's William Provine makes this argument in his book on Darwinism. **“When we die,” he says, “you're not going to be surprised, because you're going to be completely dead.”** Now if I find myself aware after I'm dead, I'm going to be really surprised! But at least I'm going to Hell, where I won't have all those grinning preachers from Sunday morning.” Then Provine summarizes his own worldview, which has no room for God or for a final judgment:

 There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That is the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning of life ... Since we know that we are not going to live after we die, there is no reward for suffering in this world. You live and you die.

In essence Solomon is reminding us that when people do not believe in God, they misunderstand why life matters and lose their foundation for righteous living. And therefore they turn their hearts toward evil.

 Hughes... Solomon says “One of the best ways to regain God's perspective on good and evil is to go to someone's grave, especially the grave of someone evil. In his struggle over witnessing injustice, the Preacher also needed to see the end of the story. So do we, if we hope to keep our spiritual sanity in a fallen world.”

Even if he does not explain exactly what happens after death, **Solomon knows that justice will be done.** Although he knows that the world is full of injustice, he also believes in the final justice of God.

William Provine says again, “Now if I find myself aware after I’m dead, I’m going to be really surprised! But at least I’m going to Hell, where I won’t have all those grinning preachers from Sunday morning.”

Jesus spoke more of hell than He did of heaven... does not want anyone to go there.

Matthew 25:41 “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”:

Matthew 13:49 “So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Why are we not afraid of hell? No one is afraid of a Painted Lion... But If one stood in front of you and roared

Let us face the Lion for a moment

So many don’t believe in hell because... 1. They don’t want to answer for what they do. 2. They don’t want to hear that what they are doing is wrong.

3. They don’t want to hear that Their sins will be punished.

➡ If you believe in the Bible you must believe in a literal hell

WHY IS HELL NECESSARY? A misunderstanding of the character of God and the nature of sin can easily lead to such questions.

The Great Evil in Sin and the Holiness of God. The difficulty most people have in understanding the necessity of hell is related to an incomplete and **inadequate understanding** of both how **awful sin is** and how **glorious and HOLY God is**.

Absolute holiness cannot tolerate the least sin,
Habakkuk 1:13 *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness.*

God's Infinite Nature. A single act of sin committed against a holy, infinite God deserves infinite punishment. It is an infinite evil to offend an infinite God even once.

Divine Justice. Not a good judge if you let a murderer go

One of the greatest preachers that ever lived, Jonathan Edwards, wrote, "The glory of God is the greatest good; it is that which is the chief end of creation; it is of greater importance than anything else. But this is one way wherein God will glorify Himself, as in the eternal destruction of ungodly men He will glorify His justice. Therein He will appear as a just governor of the world. The vindictive justice of God will appear strict, exact, awful, and terrible, and therefore glorious."

THE GRAPHIC TRUTH OF WHAT HELL WILL BE LIKE

Hell is a furnace of unquenchable fire, a place of everlasting punishment, where its victims are tormented in both their bodies and their minds. Hell is a place from which God's mercy and goodness have been withdrawn, where God's wrath is revealed as a terrifying, consuming fire, and men live with unfulfilled lusts and desires in torment forever and ever. **No parties going on in hell utter aloneness!**

There will come a day when the person who rejects God He will hear from God **"depart from me I never knew you "**

PHYSICAL TORMENT Hell will last a long as heaven does

Fire (Lake of Fire) Isaiah 66:24 And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

MENTAL TORMENT... Men's consciences shall be in torment in hell as well. Conscience is the worm that will not die which the Scriptures speak of (Mark 9:48; Isaiah 66:24).

Memories of shunned salvation opportunities Utter hopelessness (mind will NEVER know any hope)

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said: "In hell there is no hope. They have not

even the hope of dying—the hope of being annihilated. They are forever—forever—forever lost! On every chain in hell, there is written “forever”. In the fires there, blaze out the words, “forever”. Above their heads, they read, “forever”. Their eyes are galled and their hearts are pained with the thought that it is “forever”. Oh, if I could tell you tonight that hell would one day be burned out, and that those who were lost might be saved, there would be a jubilee in hell at the very thought of it. But it cannot be—it is “forever” they are cast into the outer darkness.”⁸

THE GREATEST JOY OF HEAVEN WILL BE GOD'S PRESENCE

The greatest agony of hell will be God's absence

ETERNAL damnation... Revelation 20:10 "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night **forever and ever"**

I read this years ago, "I do not believe anyone can be scared into heaven, but I do believe they can be scared away from hell, so that they might begin to seek God with all their hearts, and to beg Christ to have mercy on them. Men stand on the brink of the pit of hell and are ready to fall headlong into it and yet they are completely unaware they are in any danger. If hearing about hell can cause otherwise senseless men to consider eternal truths, then preaching about hell is valuable indeed. It is better to view hell now, while you are living, and be terrified by it, than to have to endure hell forever when you die."

Why Hell is so Horrible by Bill Wiese **23 minutes of hell**

Some people say God is mean for making hell and even sadistic for allowing someone to suffer for all eternity. But remember the God you're accusing of being mean is the same God who died a horrible death on the cross to keep us out. **What more would you want Him to do?**

Secondly, you wouldn't say the leaders of our country are mean for constructing prisons; no, it's our choice; we don't have to go there. Now Jesus said in Matthew 25:41 that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. He never intended for man to go to this horrible place, it was prepared for the devil.

But the reason hell is so terrible is because God has removed his goodness, or his attributes from hell. You see James 1:17 says every good and perfect gift comes down from above from the father of the lights. So all the good we enjoy in life comes from God. It's not automatic. So what God did in the preparation was, he simply removed his goodness.

You see hell is dark because 1 John 1:5 says God is light.

There is only death in hell because John 1:4 says God is life.

There is only hatred in hell because 1 John 4:16 says God is love.

There is no mercy in hell because Psalms 36:5 says the mercy of the Lord is in the heavens.

There's no strength in hell because Psalms 18:32 says it's the Lord who gives us strength.

There's no water in hell because Deuteronomy 11:11 says water is the rain of heaven.

And there is no peace in hell because Isaiah 9:6 says He is the Prince of Peace.

So you see if God removes his goodness, or His attributes, all the good goes with Him. You can't separate the two; you can't have the good without God.

So if a person says, "You know, I don't want anything to do with God." Well, then there is a place prepared that has nothing to do with Him. Now other than one thing... the fire in hell **does** represent God's wrath. He pours out his wrath on sin.

But God poured out His wrath on Jesus on the cross, so that you and I wouldn't have to take that wrath. But if you deny Jesus, then you have to take the punishment. It's your choice.

So before you accuse Him falsely, you may want to read the Bible and find out just how loving a God, He truly is.

Revelation 21:8 says all unbelievers will have their part in the lake of fire. So if you say, "You know, I don't believe the Bible," well, God just told us where we will all end up as unbelievers. **So you can see why** Jesus said in Matthew 12:37, our own

words condemn us. We send ourselves to hell by rejecting Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Savior, and not by repenting of our sins.

You may want to think about this now because one second after you die, it'll be too late. You have to choose now while you have the opportunity.

The Terrors of Hell by William Nicolas...I cannot leave without one final word to those who think they are converted, but are not; and also, to those who know themselves to be unconverted. Can you conceive of eternity? Stop now and try to imagine being tormented unceasingly, forever, without end. Does this not terrify you? Never a chance for a moment's rest. Never a drop of water to cool your parched throat. Think again of how long eternity is. Try to imagine it: day and night, forever and ever, burned with fire like a spider in a furnace of flames. Shrieking, howling, wailing, cursing the day you were born, and being cursed by the devils and damned souls around you eternally. Remembering, forever remembering, how you were warned on earth and how you ignored those warnings: self-satisfied and self-deceived that all was well with your soul. Job's wife told him to curse God and die. Unless you repent and flee to Jesus Christ, who is your only hope, you shall curse God eternally and **you shall never die. You shall never die. You shall never die! Eternity is forever!**

WE ARE AT WAR WITH GOD UNTIL WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD

Drop your spear!!! Ask Jesus to save you!

Solomon now knows that this earth was the only hell the Christian would ever know but is confirmed in the fact that this earth would be the only heaven the wicked would know.

✦ So do not envy the wicked, **even when they seem to prosper.** It will not go well for them on the Day of Judgment.

Verse 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 *a//* the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

Some teachers interpret this verse like this, "the Preacher is simply making the best of a bad situation, that Solomon is a cynic. If we are all going to die anyway, then

why not seize the day? This verse, they say, “can only be understood as the expression of resignation.” “Eat, drink and be joyful, for tomorrow we die!”

I like what Hughes says much better, “The problem with this view is that it does not do full justice to what the Preacher says. Nor does it recognize the genuine joy that we can experience while we are still waiting for final justice. Notice that the Preacher is giving us a God-centered perspective and that in verse 15 he is talking about the days of our lives as a gift from God. Notice as well that he mentions joy twice in this verse and describes it as something we can experience all through life. If God is always by our side, then we always have the deep contentment of knowing that he is near, even in our darkest trials.”

Here Solomon urges us to experience God’s joy for ourselves. “So I **commended** enjoyment” **Commended:** is a Hebrew word for praise (**shabach**). One man adds, “Yes, there is vanity under the sun. Yes, we see injustice that is hard to accept and understand. Yes, we have a lot of hard work to do. Nevertheless, there is joy for us in the ordinary things of life – eating, drinking, and sharing fellowship with the people of God.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Our life is not only a great deal of trouble and hard work; it is also refreshment and joy in God’s goodness. We labor, but God nourishes and sustains us. There is a reason to celebrate ... God is calling us to rejoice, to celebrate in the midst of our working day.”

Found among this pastor’s papers in Zimbabwe after he was martyred

I’m a part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I’m a disciple of His and I won’t look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed. My present makes sense. **My future is secure.** I’m done and finished with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don’t have to be right, or first, or tops, or recognized, or praised, or rewarded. I live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by **Holy Spirit** power.

My face is set. My gait is fast. My goal is heaven. My road may be narrow, my way rough, my companions few, but my guide is reliable and my mission is clear.

I will not be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice or hesitate in the presence of the adversary. I will not negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, or let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ.

I am a disciple of [Jesus](#). I must give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until He comes. And when He does come for His own, He'll have no problems recognizing me. My colors will be clear!