

We Need Revelation, and Not Mere Observation, for This Life Under the Sun

Who is like the wise?

Who knows the explanation of things?

A person's wisdom brightens their face
and changes its hard appearance.

Obey the King

²Obey the king's command, I say, because you took an oath before God. ³Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not stand up for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he pleases. ⁴Since a king's word is supreme, who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

⁵Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm,
and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.

⁶For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter,
though a person may be weighed down by misery.

⁷Since no one knows the future,
who can tell someone else what is to come?

⁸As no one has power over the wind to contain it,
so ^{8a}no one has power over the time of their death.

As no one is discharged in time of war,
so wickedness will not release those who practice it.

⁹All this I saw, as I applied my mind to everything done under the sun. There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own ^{9a}hurt. ¹⁰Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise ^{10a}in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless.

¹¹When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people's hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong. ¹²Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. ¹³Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.

¹⁴There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. ¹⁵So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

¹⁶When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night— ¹⁷then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.

A Common Destiny for All

9 So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them. ²All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad,[Ⓜ] the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

As it is with the good,
so with the sinful;
as it is with those who take oaths,
so with those who are afraid to take them.

³This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in

their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. ⁴Anyone who is among the living has hope⁴—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

⁵For the living know that they will die,
but the dead know nothing;
they have no further reward,
and even their name is forgotten.

⁶Their love, their hate
and their jealousy have long since vanished;
never again will they have a part
in anything that happens under the sun.

⁷Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. ⁸Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. ⁹Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.¹⁰Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom. – Ecclesiastes 8:1-9:10

1. Wisdom is Beyond Our Grasp

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- A. Leaders are just like everyone else, except with power! (8:1-9)
- B. What I Can See Makes No Sense! Divine Revelation is More Trustworthy than Empirical Observation! (8:10-13)
- C. We Cannot Figure Things Out Don't Miss Out on What You Can Enjoy because You're Stressed Out Over What You Cannot Control! (8:14-17)

2. Death Comes to All!

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- A. Righteous or Wicked, Life Can be Pleasant or Difficult.
- B. The Only Certain Thing In This Uncertain Life is Death.
- C. So Enjoy What You Can While You Can.

3. Qohelet Needs a Fuller Revelation, And Its Found in Jesus Christ!

- A. Divine Revelation is More Trustworthy than Empirical Observation!
- B. Our Labor and Even Our Trials are Not in Vain!
- C. God Will Judge the Righteous and the Wicked....

I said to myself,

"God will bring into judgment
both the righteous and the wicked,
for there will be a time for every activity,
a time to judge every deed." – Ecclesiastes 3:17

- D. Resurrection!

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth,"¹ for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death'⁵ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." – Revelation 21:1-5