

“What We See vs. What We Know”
Various Ecclesiastes Passages
August 20, 2023

I. What We See...

A. Life in this world is often unfair.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 - Again I saw that under the sun the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all.

1. Sometimes the reason for this just *seems* random.
2. Other times there are people making it so.

Ecclesiastes 10:5-7 - ⁵ There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler [“the sort of error that arises from a ruler” - NIV]: ⁶ folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. ⁷ I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on the ground like slaves.

B. Life in this world is often unjust.

Ecclesiastes 3:16 - Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness.

Ecclesiastes 4:1 - Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them.

1. Injustice reigns as oppressors dominate those they crush.
2. Even worse, evil oppressors appear to triumph even in death!

Ecclesiastes 8:10 - Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.



C. Life in this world often goes badly for God’s people and well for God’s enemies.

Ecclesiastes 8:14 - There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

1. Sometimes this is temporary for both.
2. But at times it’s not.

Ecclesiastes 7:15 - In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing.

II. What We Know...

- A. Things will ultimately go better for God's people (but not always in this life).

Ecclesiastes 8:12–13 - ¹² Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. ¹³ But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

- B. We know this because one day God will judge every person and every action.

Ecclesiastes 3:17 - I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 - For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

- C. God's people will then be eternally blessed (but only thanks to God's mercy and grace).
- D. Right now, we only know these things *by faith*.