

Ecclesiastes 7:1-14

Poetic Interlude:

Comparisons

Study by Jason Labonte

I. Review

A. Theme: Life under the sun is emptiness.

B. Discourse I

1. Part A: Wisdom is better than folly, but both are emptiness.
2. Part B: Labor, too, is emptiness, but its profit is the good we find in it in relation to the eternal perspective of God.

C. Discourse II: A miscellany of disappointments further reveal the emptiness of life under the sun and our proper response to that.

D. Discourse III: Words are empty. Therefore vows should not be made. Rather, we should guard our steps, listen, and stand in awe of God in worship.

E. Discourse IV: Riches are empty. They encourage oppression, do not bring satisfaction, cause anxiety, and do not last.

Brief Restatement of Previous Points

II. The Proverbs

A. Reputation vs. Luxuries (7:1a)

B. Death vs. Birth (7:1b)

C. Sorrow vs. Laughter (7:2-4)

D. Criticism vs. Praise (7:5-6)

Bribes (7:7)

E. Patience vs. Pride (7:8-9)

Focusing on the Past (7:10)

F. Wisdom vs. Money (7:11-12)¹

G. Good Times vs. Bad Times / Focusing on the Future (7:13-14)

¹ The term "preserves life" can also mean "renews life".

III. Application & Discussion

- A. How often do we consider our reputations? Do we ever consider that we also have an affect on Jesus' reputation?**
- B. Obviously, death is especially better than birth for Christians. Do we really live like we believe this?**
- C. Proverbs says good things about laughter, so clearly it is not bad. What then is this benefit in mourning?**
- D. How willing are we to seek genuine criticism from others? Do we seek counsel from wise sources?**
- E. Do we see impatience as a lack of humility as v. 8 indicates?
What are a number of reasons is it foolish to ask questions about the past?**
- F. Keeping in mind the Hebrew view of wisdom, in what way(s) can wisdom renew life where money and possessions cannot?**
- G. What are a number of reasons it is foolish to worry about the future?**