

Ecclesiastes 7:15 - 8:1

Discourse V: Legalism vs. Licentiousness

Part A: An Introduction

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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

F. Poetic Interlude: Various Comparisons

II. Definitions

A. Hebrew קִדְּוָה *Tsaddik* “Found To Be in Order or True Legally; Righteous”

1. Root: קָדַשׁ *Tsadhek* “To Be in the Right, Legally Justified”
2. Related to Arabic Word for “Hard, Even, Straight, Perfect”
3. A Legal Term Primarily
4. Can Also Refer to General Orderliness or Conformity to Societal Norms
5. Approximately Synonymous with “Legalistic”

B. Hebrew עשׂר *Rasha* “Guilty”

1. Related to Arabic Word for “Loose, Abnormal”
2. Essentially the Opposite of *Tsaddik*

C. Hebrew רעה *Raah* “Evil, Harm, Wickedness, Crime”

1. Not Dependent on Laws
2. Can Refer To Distress and Calamity, But Usually Refers to Harm Caused By Others

III. The Discourse

A. Legalism and Licentiousness Compared (7:15-18)

1. The overly legalistic die in their legalism;
2. The overly licentious die in their evil;
3. So avoid extremes.

B. Parenthetical Thoughts

1. Wisdom is powerful. (7:19)
2. No one is fully righteous. (See also Ro 3:10-20.) (7:20)
3. Gossip (7:21-22)

C. Searching with Wisdom (7:23-8:1)

1. Full wisdom is unattainable (7:23-24)
2. Wicked women are a trap. (7:25-26)
3. We are no longer righteous because we have sought out improper things. (7:27-29)
4. Wisdom has an outward effect. (8:1)

IV. Application & Discussion

A. Do we seek balance in how we live our lives? Are we careful to avoid excess?

B. Are we careful not to be self-righteous? Do we overlook “minor” sins such as gossip?

C. Is Koheleth just being sexist? How do we interpret these latter verses? What is meant by vv. 27-29? What is wrong about the searching in v. 30? What is meant by 8:1?