

3 March 2021

Ecclesiastes 8:9-11

Since we began Ecclesiastes, we have learned from Solomon's study of the ways of fallen humanity in the world:

Solomon "applied his heart by wisdom", giving himself (his heart) to the getting riches, vineyards, cities, and servants; he gave himself to wine, laughter, pleasures, and women; he sought to understand hard-work, folly and foolishness.

He studied the behavior of every human passion and experience to see if there was any profit in any of it...at the end of the day, he concluded that life in this world (LIVED) without God is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Previously: (C8), Solomon taught us how to live under a king; (we live under a Great King), now as we pick up in (V9), the effects of living under a tyrant.

Ecclesiastes 8:9: "All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one-man ruleth over another to his own hurt"

Certainly, the live under the rule of a tyrant is hurtful to the people who live under him; but the context of this passage, I think Solomon speaks of the tyrant hurting himself, and ruining his reign and his own life. Pharaoh, Herod, Saddam Hussein, Hitler, etc.

Rehoboam comes to mind; ironically, the son of wise Solomon, who immediately, (upon becoming King after his father) showed that he possessed NONE of his father's wisdom; he forsook the counsel of the aged and the wise to listen to his teenaged and immature friends.

There have been many wicked men, who ruled over others to their own hurt! James 5:1-8.

"And so I saw the wicked buried, (these wicked rulers), who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten"

in the city where there had so done: this is also vanity": Psalm 82

Oftentimes, brethren, we SEE the funerals of the great men and women of the earth who were wicked in their lifetimes; in their deaths, they are exalted and praised in pomp and pageantry; they are "immortalized" as if they the red carpet of heaven would be rolled out to receive them.

They had come and gone from the place of the holy, where they had been appointed by God to the place of judgment, as being God's entrusted ministers; but they executed their office in wickedness.

Job 18:14-21, Psalm 37:35-36, (112:5-6), Cp. Proverbs 10:7

As we read in Psalm 82: in their lives, they would be great in their own eyes, as gods, but now they died like men.

(V11): "Because 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"

This is one of those famous passages in the Word, (often quoted), many of you have read it and thought of it I'm sure.

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you read this passage? Don't answer, just consider.

Allow me to share with you what (I think) we ought to think of when we read and consider it:

If you're like me, you've thought, IF ONLY our judges and our judicial system would EXECUTE SPEEDY judgment against criminals and against the wicked in the world, things wouldn't be so bad. Criminals THEN, would NOT be emboldened to lawlessness; their hearts would NOT be fully set in them to do evil!

This is true; yet I would like us to see a deeper truth in what Solomon wrote here, in sentence NOT being executed speedily against the wicked:

Can you see: The Grace and Patience and Longsuffering nature of our God toward every one of us as sinners that He doesn't immediately execute wrath upon us!

At the FIRST SIN of our FIRST PARENTS, after Adam had been warned, God could have immediately judged Adam and Eve so that they would have immediately died. Genesis 2:16-17

After the sin of our first parents, God pronounced judgment upon them and to all their posterity; (sentence was passed upon them, but it was not executed); they were condemned as sinners, YET God showed them mercy, kindness, and love in their sin. Genesis 3:21

Sentence against their evil work was NOT executed speedily, so that God might show them grace and mercy, longsuffering and patience!

They were given space to repent!

It wasn't long after that, that God determined to destroy the whole world of sinners:

But the sentence against humanity was NOT executed speedily, so that God might show His love, mercy, and kindness to sinners in the world in Noah's day!

Genesis 6:5-13, 1 Peter 3:18-20, 2 Peter 3:9

The design of God in NOT executing justice speedily; that God might show that He is longsuffering to the world of sinners! Aren't you so glad God was longsuffering with you?

The great problem with fallen humanity is...they very often despise the mercy and goodness and patience and longsuffering of God.

Romans 2:4-5

God's patience regrettably often has the opposite effect on many a depraved soul; it emboldens them to sin rather than bringing them to conviction and repentance for their sins. Rather than seeing the goodness of God, they despise God's goodness!

Those that despise God's patience and longsuffering, those who are given "space to repent" but refuse, are then hardened in sin! Lost sinners in the world are deceiving themselves, THINKING that God takes no notice of their sins; they gravely mistake His silence and set themselves in array against the Almighty.

Psalm 50:16-21, 51:3, Nahum 1:1-3

But God DOES lead His elect people to repentance through His goodness and love and mercy and IN THAT HE IS longsuffering!

Aren't you SO GLAD, God didn't execute His sentence upon you speedily, but He gave you space to repent?