

**ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD,
AKURE
BIBLE STUDY, 7/11/2007**

STUDY 8

WISDOM FOR ENDURING EVIL AND OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENTS

Ecc. 8:1 – 17

Solomon, in this study, comes to recommend wisdom to us as the most powerful antidote against both the temptations and vexations that arise from the vanity of the world. Here is, the benefit and praise of wisdom (v. 1). Some particular instances of wisdom prescribed to us. 1. We must keep in due subjection to the government God has set over us (v. 2-5). 2. We must get ready for sudden evils, and especially for sudden death (v. 6-8). 3. We must arm ourselves against the temptation of an oppressive government and not think it strange (v. 9, 10). The impunity of oppressors makes them more daring (v. 11), but in the issue it will be well with the righteous and ill with the wicked (v. 12, 13), and therefore the present prosperity of the wicked and afflictions of the righteous ought not to be a stumbling-block to us (v. 14). 4. We must cheerfully use the gifts of God's providence (v. 15). 5. We must with an entire satisfaction acquiesce in the will of God, and, not pretending to find the bottom, we must humbly and silently adore the depth of his unsearchable counsels, being assured they are all wise, just, and good (v. 16, 17).

1. The excellence of wisdom; the duty of subjects

Ecc. 8:1-5; I Chro. 12:32; Job 29:7; Ecc. 10:4; Prov. 30:32; Rom. 13:1-5; II Chro. 23:16; I Chro. 11:3; Prov. 4:8-9; 17:24; Acts 6:15; Deut. 28:50; Ezek. 17:18; Job 34:18; Luke 12:56-57; I Cor. 2:14-15

None of the rich, the powerful, the honourable, or the accomplished of the sons of men, are so excellent, useful, or happy, as the wise man. Who else can interpret the words of God, or teach aright from his truths and dispensations? What madness must it be for weak and dependent creatures to rebel against the Almighty! What numbers form wrong judgments, and bring misery on themselves, in this life and that to come!

2. The certainty of death

Ecc. 8:6-8; 3:1,17,22; Prov. 24:22; Ecc. 6:12; 9:12; 10:14; Psalm 49:6-7; Job 14:15; Deut. 20:5-8; Hebrews 9:27; Ecc. 8:13

God has, in wisdom, kept away from us the knowledge of future events, that we may be always ready for changes. We must all die, no flight or hiding-place can save us, nor are there any weapons of effectual resistance. Ninety thousand die every day, upwards of sixty every minute, and one every moment. How solemn the thought! Oh that men were wise, that they understood these things, that they would consider their

latter end! The believer alone is prepared to meet the solemn summons. Wickedness, by which men often escape human justice, cannot secure from death.

3. The evil of oppressive rules

Ecc. 8:9–13; 3:16; 4:1; Rom. 13:4; Deut. 1:17; II Chro. 19:6; Psalm 49:17; Isaiah 26:10; 3:10–11; Psalm 55:23; Mat. 25:34, 41; Isaiah 65:20; Psalm 10:6; 50:21

Solomon observed, that many a time one man rules over another to his hurt, and that prosperity hardens them in their wickedness. Sinners herein deceive themselves. Vengeance comes slowly, but it comes surely. A good man's days have some substance; he lives to a good purpose: a wicked man's days are all as a shadow, empty and worthless. Let us pray that we may view eternal things as near, real, and all-important.

4. Mysteries of providence

Ecc. 8:14–17; Job 21:7; Psalm 73:3,12,14; Ecc. 2:14; 7:16; 9:1–3; Jer. 12:1; Malachi 3:15; Ecc. 2:24; 3:12–13; 5:18; I Tim. 6:17; Ecc. 1:13–14; 3:11; Isaiah 40:28; Job 5:9; Rom. 11:33; Psalm 73:16

Faith alone can establish the heart in this mixed scene, where the righteous often suffer, and the wicked prosper. Solomon commended joy, and holy security of mind, arising from confidence in God, because a man has no better thing under the sun, though a good man has much better things above the sun, than soberly and thankfully to use the things of this life according to his rank. He would not have us try to give a reason for what God does. But, leaving the Lord to clear up all difficulties in his own time, we may cheerfully enjoy the comforts, and bear up under the trials of life; while peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost will abide in us through all outward changes, and when flesh and heart shall fail.