

UNDER THE SUN

Joy, Sorrow, Vanity, and What Really Matters in Life

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. -Ecclesiastes 12:13

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

(Ecclesiastes 8:1-17)

Ecclesiastes 8:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover *it*, yet he will not find *it*; moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to know *it*, he will not be able to find *it*.

"The Words of The Preacher"

ECCLESIASTES

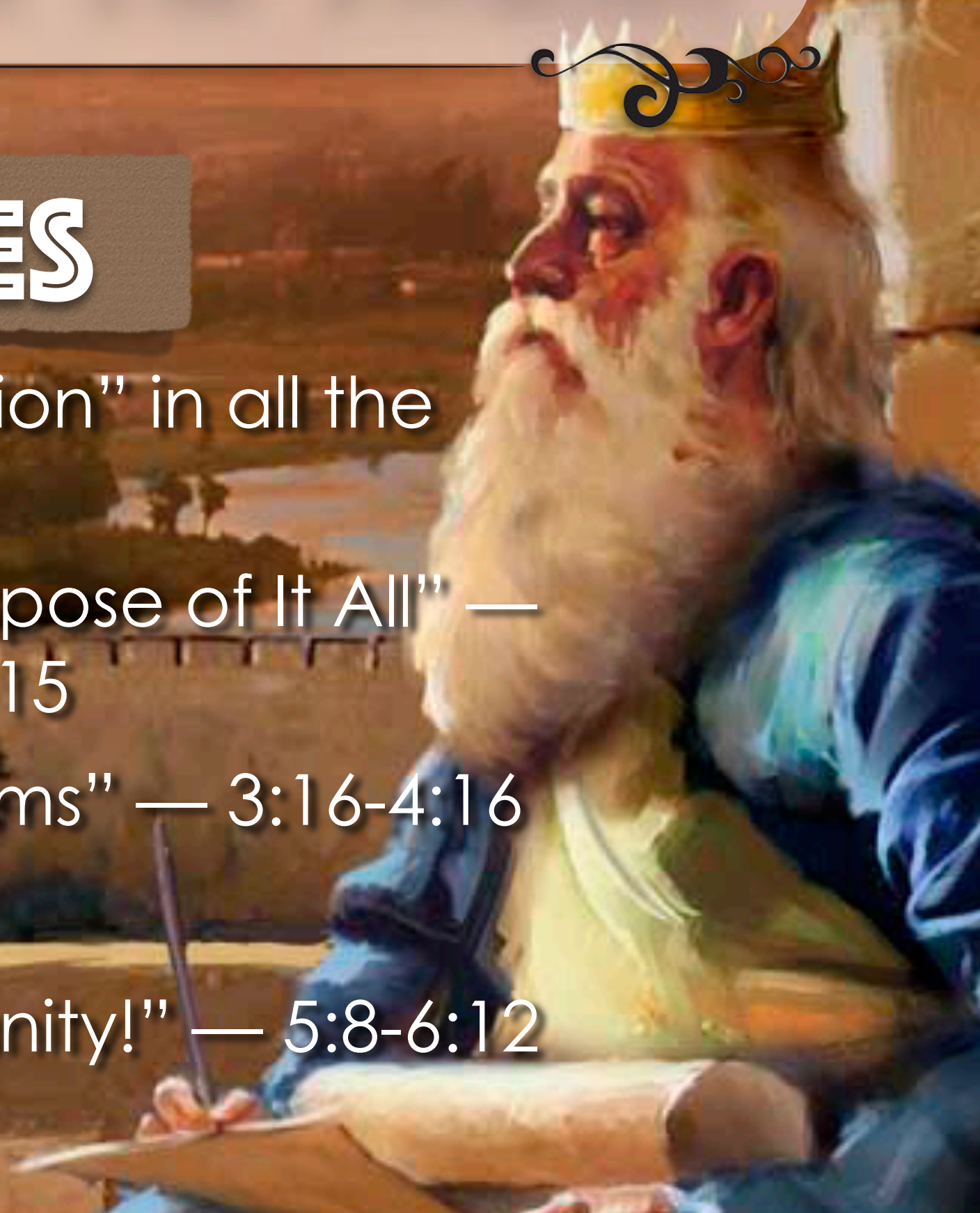
- The main focus of the book is the VANITY of of material, earthly things — 1:1-11:9
- The main point of the book is the importance of serving God throughout life — cf. 11:9-12:1, 13-14



"The Words of The Preacher"

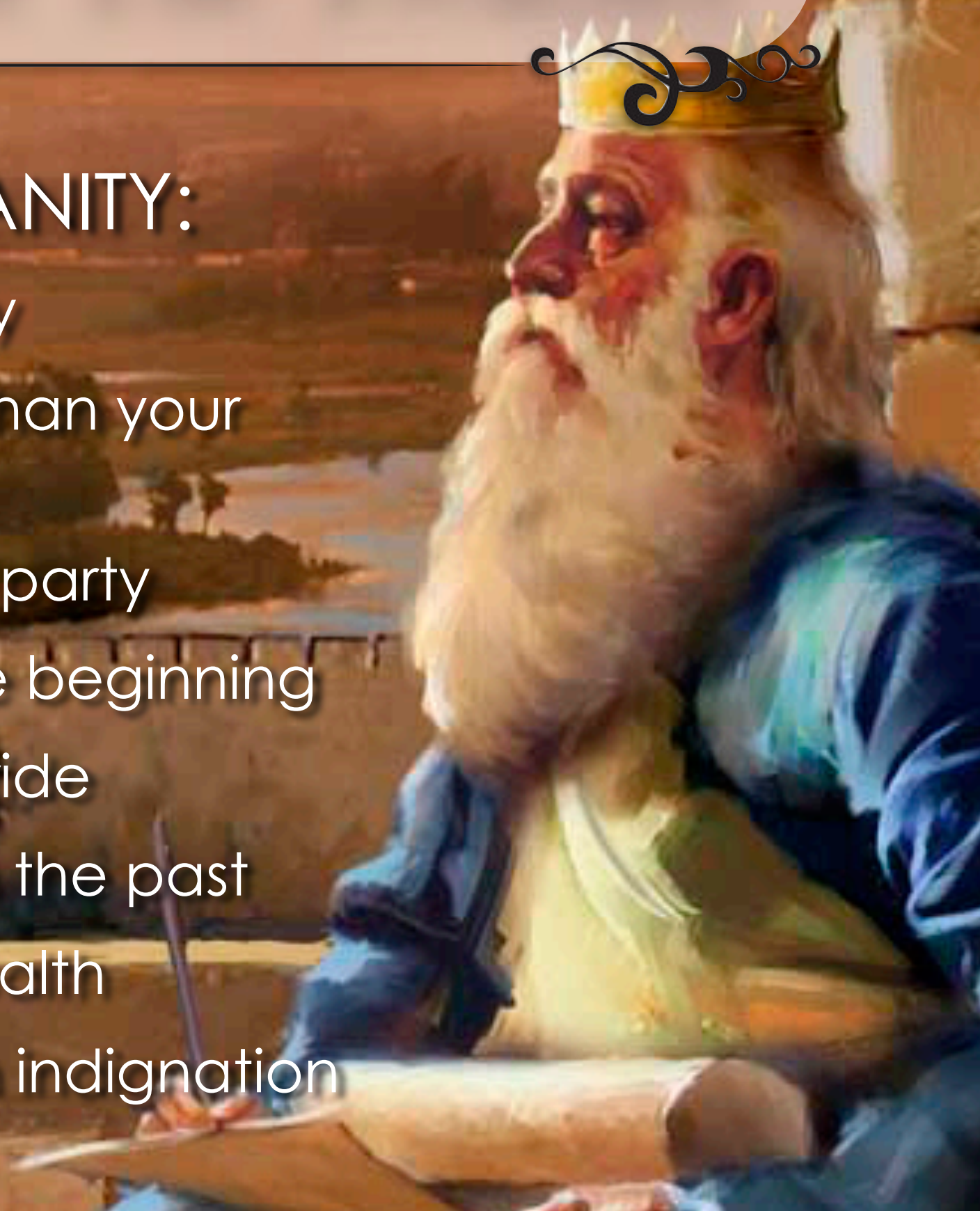
ECCLESIASTES

- "The Quest for satisfaction" in all the wrong places — 2:1-16
- "To Understand The Purpose of It All" — God is in control — 3:1-15
- "The Problem of Problems" — 3:16-4:16
- "Fear God" — 5:1-7
- "Everything Really Is Vanity!" — 5:8-6:12



"The Words of The Preacher"

- Things Better Than VANITY:
 - ✓ Honor is better than luxury
 - ✓ Your deathday is better than your birthday
 - ✓ A funeral is better than a party
 - ✓ The end is better than the beginning
 - ✓ Patience is better than pride
 - ✓ The present is better than the past
 - ✓ Wisdom is better than wealth
 - ✓ Resignation is better than indignation



“This World Is Unfair, Confusing & Dangerous”

- Be WISE - Ovoid Extremes -
- Do not be over demanding
- We all need mercy - for
we have all sinned -
- Wisdom will not find all the
answers!



Ecclesiastes 8 (NKJV)

¹ Who *is* like a wise *man*? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom makes his face shine, And the sternness of his face is changed. ² I *say*, "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God. ³ Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him." ⁴ Where the word of a king *is*, *there is* power; And who may say to him, "What are you doing?" ⁵ He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; And a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment,

Ecclesiastes 8 (NKJV)

⁶ Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, Though the misery of man increases greatly. ⁷ For he does not know what will happen; So who can tell him when it will occur? ⁸ No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, And no one has power in the day of death. *There is no release from that war, And wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.* ⁹ All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: *There is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.*

Ecclesiastes 8 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Then I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of holiness, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done. This also *is* vanity. ¹¹ Because the 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. ¹² Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times*, and his *days* are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. ¹³ But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

Ecclesiastes 8 (NKJV)

¹⁴ There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also *is* vanity. ¹⁵ So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor *all* the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 8 (NKJV)

¹⁶ When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night, ¹⁷ then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover *it*, yet he will not find *it*; moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to know *it*, he will not be able to find *it*.

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

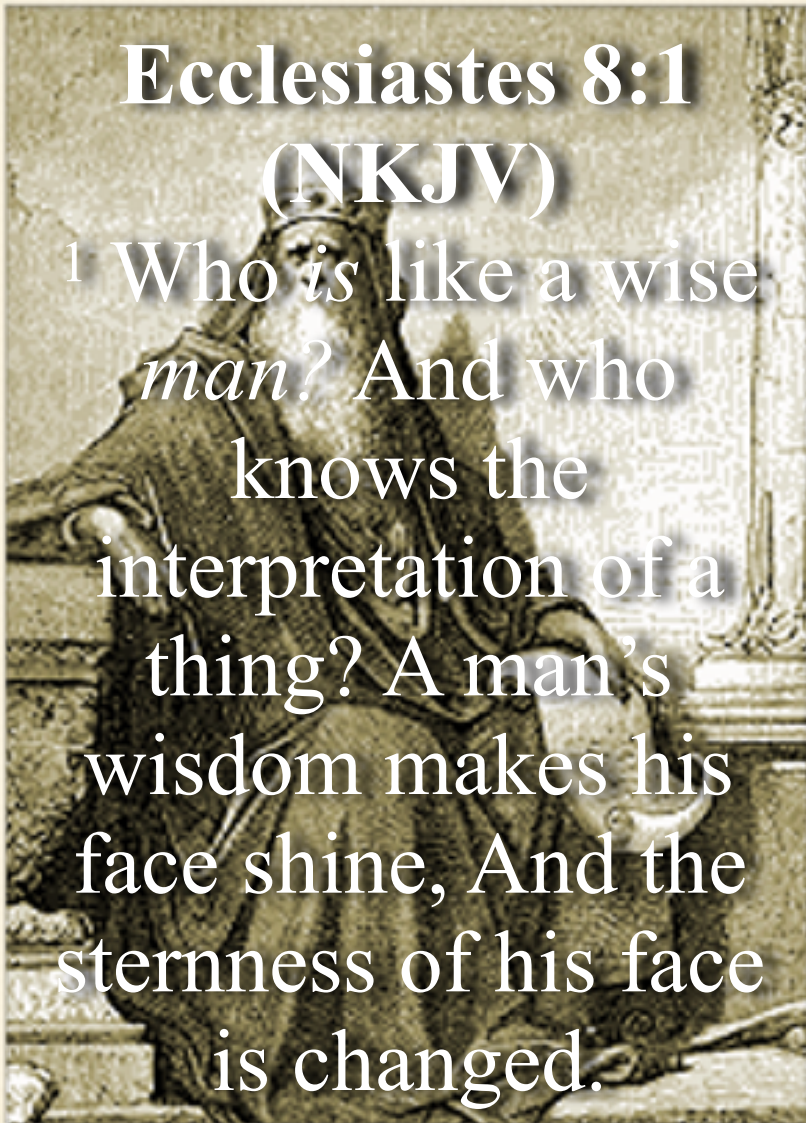
“BEFORE THE KING” – (8:1-7)

► Who is like a wise man? – (8:1)

- Solomon affirms only a wise man can size up situations properly and act accordingly w/ 2 rhetorical questions
- A wise person knows how to act graciously and avoid brash behavior which would lead to his harm (cf. Prov. 14:35).
- The face of the wise man reflects a gentle confidence (8:1).

**Ecclesiastes 8:1
(NKJV)**

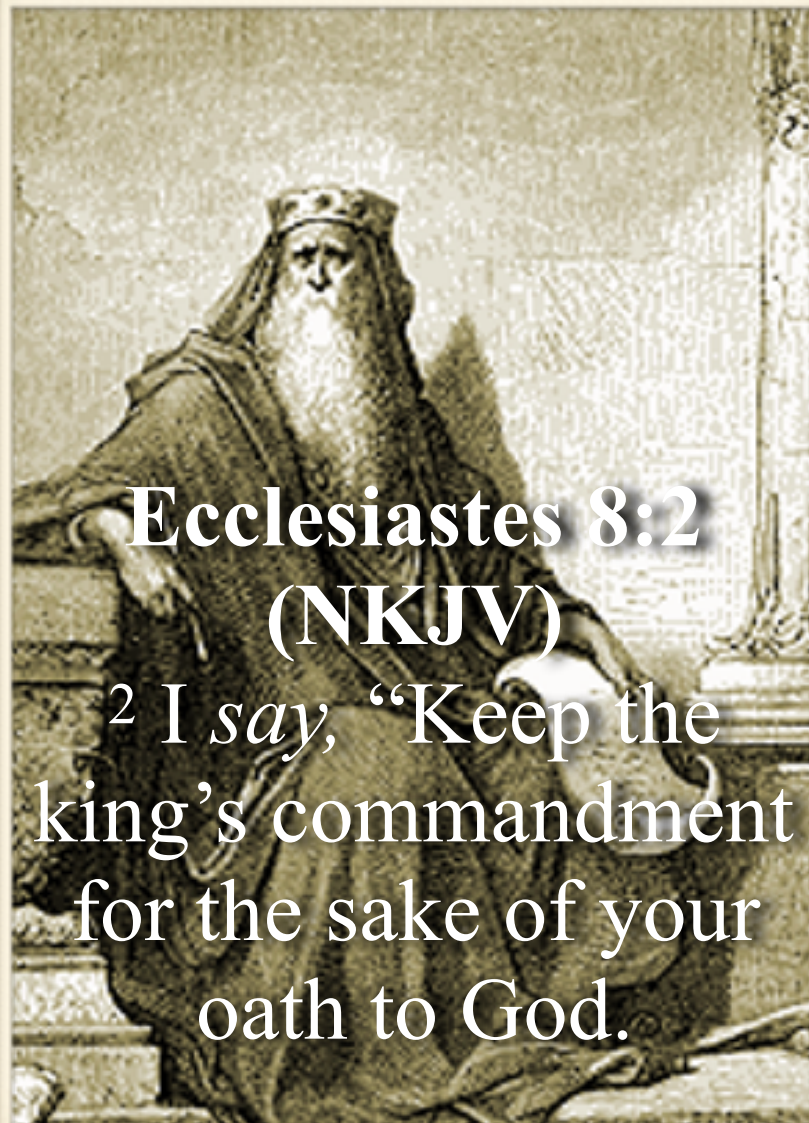
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“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

“BEFORE THE KING” — (8:1-7)

► “Keep the king’s commandment ...” — (8:2)



- The duty of believers in any generation. Civil government, (monarchy or democracy), is ordained of God. — (Rom 13:1).
- The government is God’s agent to protect the innocent and punish evildoers — (1 Pet. 2:13-17)
- Obey those of the Lord as to the Lord — (Col. 3:23-4:1)

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

“BEFORE THE KING” — (8:1-7)

► “Do not be hasty to go from his presence” — (8:3)

- To “go from his presence” has the sense of quitting one’s service & and deserting one’s post — (10:4)
- “Do not take your stand for an evil thing,” i.e., do not join in civil insurrection — 1 Ki. 1:50–52
- The king will “do whatever pleases him.” He will deal harshly w/ rebels — Pr. 16:14, 15



Ecclesiastes 8:3
(NKJV)

³ Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him.”

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

“BEFORE THE KING” — (8:1-7)

► “Where the word of a king is,
there is power” — (8:4,5)

Ecclesiastes 8:4,5
(NKJV)

⁴ Where the word of
a king *is, there is*
power; And who may
say to him, “What are
you doing?” ⁵ He who
keeps his command
will experience
nothing harmful;

- A king has great authority: he can do whatever he pleases, his word is supreme, and no one can say to him, What are you doing? (Cf. Job 9:12; Isa. 45:9 where the same idea is applied to God.)
- Submission to the king is a matter of “self-preservation.” — (there are exceptions — Acts 4:19,20; 5:29-32)

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

“BEFORE THE KING” – (8:1-7)

Ecclesiastes 8:5,6
(NKJV)

And a wise man's
heart discerns both
time and judgment,⁶
Because for every
matter there is a time
and judgment,
Though the misery of
man increases greatly.

► “And a wise man's heart
discerns both time and
judgment” – (8:5,6)

- A wise man will understand that judgment will come in its own time, so don't resort to wickedness (i.e., rebellion) to alleviate misery - 8:5b-6
- The reaction to misery often is rebellion which ends in disaster — The wise man is patient, for who knows the end of a tyrant. - 8:6,7

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

“4 IMPOSSIBLE THINGS – (8:8,9)”

**Ecclesiastes 8:9
(NKJV)**

⁹ All this I have seen,
and applied my heart
to every work that is
done under the sun:
*There is a time in
which one man rules
over another to his
own hurt.*

- ▶ No one, not even the king, can keep back the spirit that is about to depart from his body.
- ▶ A tyrant king cannot avert death by either sickness / accident / or assassination. - (1 Sam 26:11).
- ▶ The law of death is likened to a military obligation - can't escape
- ▶ No evil despot, however reckless, can go long unpunished. Certain retribution awaits (8:8; Gal. 6:7-9).

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

SUBMISSION TO PROVIDENCE — 8:10-15

► Anticipate wicked rulers - but keep a wise perspective - (8:9b–13)

- There will be times when men rule to their own detriment - 8:9
- But they will soon be forgotten after their demise - 8:10
- Why do some persist in their evil? Because their judgment does not occur quickly - 8:11
- Even so, it is FAR better to fear God - 8:12-13

**Ecclesiastes 8:13
(NKJV)**

13 But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

SUBMISSION TO PROVIDENCE — 8:10-15

Ecclesiastes 8:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also *is* vanity.

► Anticipate UNFAIR and apparent inappropriate Outcomes (8:14–15)

- Sometimes the righteous suffer, and the wicked prosper - 8:14
- The perception of unfair treatment can lead to bitterness.
- How to deal with inappropriate outcomes? - The advice here is to calmly enjoy such blessings and comforts as one possesses (cf. 2:24; 3:12, 22; 5:18).

“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

THE UNFATHOMABLE PURPOSES OF GOD – (8:16,17)

Ecclesiastes 8:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover *it*, yet he will not find *it*; moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to know *it*, he will not be able to find *it*.

► Solomon's CONCLUSION (8:16–17)

- “that man cannot discover the work which has been done under the sun.” - The finite mind cannot understand nor explain the workings of divine providence.
- There are limits to what a person can discover - many things are simply beyond us. (8:17; Dt 29:29).
- We MUST resign ourselves to trusting God — (Heb 13:6)

1 Peter 2:13–21 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood.

Fear God. Honor the king. ¹⁸ Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

1 Peter 2:13–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰ For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:



“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

- ❖ Do we truly recognize the value of a humble & submissive heart? (Mat 5:3)
- ❖ We are surrounded by wickedness and evil - life seems so unfair - TRUST GOD ANYWAY! -
- ❖ Fearing God is the ONLY response that makes sense - Be WISE!

Philippians 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

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“The Wisdom of a Submissive Heart”

(Ecclesiastes 8:1-17)

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