

What Do You Value?

Ecclesiastes 6&7

BABY DEDICATION

10:30 AM SERVICE - Ellie Sue Mendez DOB 3/1/2024 Parents Vince & Crystal Mendez

ISRAEL

We need to pray for and keep our eyes on Israel this week.

Zechariah 12:2-3 (NKJV) 2 “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3 “And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it.

- Yesterday, Iran launched active drones and missiles against Israel in response to what they claim was Israeli aggression against one of their embassies in Damascus.
- The attacks came from Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Iran.
- Thankfully, both American and Israeli defenses took out 99% of the drones and missiles.
- Russia is having a fit. Iran is attempting to say, "We'll call it even," in order to quell an Israeli or American response, even though Iran has been working through Hezbollah and other terrorist groups to be a thorn in Israel's side for ages.

Why is this important? Of course it has regional implications and raises the level of instability, but there are biblical implications regarding Israel in these last days.

- Ezekiel 38-39 records a massive regional battle that draws in Israel's surrounding nations, and it doesn't end well for them. According to Isaiah 17, Damascus will eventually be utterly wiped off the map.
- I don't know when these things will occur, but the Bible clearly says they will.

We need to be praying for Israel's peace and salvation through all of these things taking place. And we need to wake up to the times and seasons we live in, knowing the coming of our Lord may very well be at the doorstep.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Ecc 6:1-12 NKJV] [1] There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: [2] A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction. [3] If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he-- [4] for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. [5] Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man, [6] even if he lives a thousand years twice--but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place? [7] All the labor of man is for his mouth, And yet the soul is not satisfied. [8] For what more has the wise man than the fool? What does the poor man have, Who knows how to walk before the living? [9] Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind. [10] Whatever one is, he has been named already, For it is known that he is man; And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he. [11] Since there are many things that increase vanity, How is man the better? [12] For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?

APPLICATION

As we approach chapters 6 & 7, Solomon hits on an incredibly important observation: The satisfaction of the body and the satisfaction of the soul are not the same things. Some things that are good for the soul aren't always equated to material possessions.

- Ultimately, the famous confession of Augustine still encompasses this the best, ***"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."***

But under the sun, Solomon continues his list of vanities and injustices as well as making some conclusions about what is best in life in order to have internal happiness, not merely external possessions.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ecc 6:1 NKJV - There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:

APPLICATION

NOTE: Common among men - The things that Solomon is about to describe are common among men.

EXAMPLE: Do you ever feel that you are alone in your struggles, temptations, ambitions, and dreams? You and I are not alone. You would be shocked at how many people are experiencing something similar to you right now. This is one of the reasons why we really need one another.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ecc 6:2 NKJV - A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.

1 Life must be more than wealth

APPLICATION

Here, Solomon once again hits on the fleeting nature of material wealth. A financial empire can take a lifetime to gain and only a moment to lose.

- Here, we find a man who has built wealth enough to ensure that all of his worldly needs and desires are met in abundance. Yet, in a moment of a foreign invasion, a change in political power, or some unfortunate twist within society, everything he acquired shifted hands and became the possession of another.
 - **HAVE YOU NOTICED:** Money doesn't equal security. Money is nice to have, and we need it. We should be wise with it and good stewards of it... but ultimately, it can take wings and fly. And if your hope is in money, it will fly away along with it.
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BIBLE PASSAGE

[Pro 23:5 NKJV] [5] Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.

APPLICATION

Next, there is another example of someone who "almost" gets everything this world has to offer but just falls short.

2 Life must be more than longevity

ILLUSTRATION

Bryan Johnson, a wealthy entrepreneur based in Venice, Calif., who is 45 going on 18—is enamored with the idea of being biologically young again. So much so that he is on the path to spending over \$2 million this year alone on a host of medical interventions and tests aimed at helping him be younger.

Bryan claims that his goal is to help engineer the human species to a future without death... That was Jesus' goal, too; he just happened to achieve it by beating death forever!

Solomon looks at the possibility of living 2000 years, and sees it a pure vanity if your life is not filled with goodness.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ecc 6:3 NKJV - If a man begets a hundred children (that's some worn out parents right there) and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he.

Ecc 6:4 NKJV - for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness.

Ecc 6:5 NKJV - Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man,

Ecc 6:6 NKJV - even if he lives a thousand years twice but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place?

APPLICATION

- At that time, a true legacy was not only material wealth but also the status of your family. If you had wealth, family, and a long life, you fit the top three things in life!
- Here is a man who has two out of the three: He has a lot of children, and he ends up living a long time. Sadly, he can never acquire the wealth to be remembered in life. His kids eat him out of house and home, he never has enough, and to add injury to insult, when he dies, none of his kids show up for his funeral, and he doesn't have the assets to afford him an honorable burial.

Solomon paints a crude illustration comparing this next man to a stillborn child. And what's his overall point?

- **Better a short life that knows nothing but peace than a long life that knows nothing but pain.**
- **At the end of the day, they both end up in the same place, buried in the earth, but only one had to endure the pain and vanity of a life that went awry.**

IN CHRIST

But in Christ we have a different perspective:

We know that the pleasures of this world are fleeting and that there are many injustices.

- That's why Jesus told his disciples that we will face tribulations in this world, but to be of good cheer, for He has overcome the world.
- Even in times of trouble, we can have joy and hope that come supernaturally through the Holy Spirit.

Life will always seem unfair if all you have to live for is what you're able to see with your eyes of grasp with your hands.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[2Co 4:8-10 NKJV] [8] We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- [10] always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Jhn 11:25 NKJV] [25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

3 Life must be more than physical fulfillment

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ecc 6:7 NKJV - All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not satisfied.

APPLICATION

We all work our tails off to fill our stomachs, yet no matter how much we put in our belly, there's still a gaping hole in our soul.

In the New Testament, Paul likens the stomach to our carnal, fleshly urges. He is talking about those who have turned from Christ. He says in Philippians:

Phi 3:19 NKJV - whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.

Solomon recognizes this fact. People spend all their time trying to satisfy a void in their souls by gratifying their flesh, and it doesn't work.

QUOTE

“*That which fills our stomachs was not designed to satisfy our*

2:17



BIBLE PASSAGE

Ecc 6:8 NKJV - For what more has the wise man than the fool? What does the poor man have, who knows how to walk before the living? Ecc 6:9 NKJV - Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

APPLICATION

One of the key questions he asks in this chapter is, **“Do you enjoy and appreciate what you have?”** In Solomon's perspective, the wealthiest people are not the ones who have everything but the ones who enjoy what they have in three categories: wealth, family, and health.

Verse 9 sums up the theme of chapter 6:

Ecc 6:9 NKJV - Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of desire. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

If I could paraphrase that: Life is short! If you constantly live your life for “what might be,” you will never realize the blessings of “what now is.”

In other words, **“It's better to enjoy what you have rather than to desire what you enjoy.”**

APPLICATION

It is better to be a poor man who can hold what he has in his hands than a rich man who is always pointlessly grasping in the realm of his desires.

- Solomon would say it's better to look at your little apartment and say, "That's beautiful" than to look at someone else's mansion and say, "That's what I really need to get."

APPLICATION

How many times have you missed the beauty and joy of a moment that was never promised to you yet is happening while you pine, worry, and labor to catch a dream that may never come?

- I'm not suggesting that we don't have goals or plans or that we lazily "live in the moment" and never diligently prepare for the future. Just keep in perspective that your child will never be six years old again, your aging mother might not be here next year, you're not guaranteed that night out with your wife, and it might not be bright, sunny, and cheerful next week in Missouri!

DESIRES

DESIRES: are interesting. Desires are not evil within themselves. In fact, godly desires are good and drive us to follow Jesus and know Him deeply.

Psa 37:4 NKJV - Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

When desire exits the realm of our position in Christ, our desires can become distractions and even idols. **The lustful, fleshly desire for more, bigger, and better, can sometimes drown out our appreciation for the blessings that God has given us now.**

Pro 13:12 NKJV - Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

A KID DOESN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "NO" AND "NOT YET."

- So what do we do when we have an earthly hope that has not been fulfilled?

THE BEST WAY TO BALANCE DESIRE IS WITH CONTENTMENT:

Phi 4:11-13 NKJV - Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Luk 12:22-32 NKJV] [22] Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. [23] "Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. [24] "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? [25] "And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? [26] "If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest? [27] "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [28] "If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? [29] "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. [30] "For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. [31] "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. [32] "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

4 Life must be more than coincidence

BIBLE PASSAGE

Ecc 6:10 NKJV - Whatever one is, he has been named already, For it is known that he is man; And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he. Ecc 6:11 NKJV - Since there are many things that increase vanity, how is man the better? Ecc 6:12 NKJV - For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he passes like a shadow? Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?

APPLICATION

Solomon closes this chapter by stating that no matter what you have or don't have today, you can never know what tomorrow will hold.

Only God really knows what life holds for every person. Who can contend or fight against God?

Deuteronomy 29:29 – the secret things belong to the Lord.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Jas 4:13-16 NKJV] [13] Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; [14] whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. [15] Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." [16] But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.