

Evil and Wickedness in Ecclesiastes

This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of May 28, 2022.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled "Evil and Wickedness—Part 3." The focus of this study was about evil and wickedness in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Author of Ecclesiastes

I believe that the author of the book of Ecclesiastes was Solomon—but in his later years as king.

- Ecclesiastes 1:1— The words of the preacher, the son of David.
- 1 Kings 3:3-10—These verses show Solomon's good behavior in his early days.
- 1 Kings 11:3-4—These verses show Solomon's bad behavior in his later days.

Two Hebrew words

There are two major Hebrew words in the book of Ecclesiastes that define evil and wickedness.

The first word is *ra* (*Strong's* No. 7451)—which means "bad, disagreeable, inferior in quality; by extension evil."

The second word is *rasa* (*Strong's* No. 7563)—which means wicked or evil.

The first word has a wider range of definition—sometimes being a strong form of behavior and sometimes being a lesser form of behavior.

The second word generally refers to a strong form of behavior.

Lesser forms of behavior

Let me give you three statements of how the first word can mean lesser forms of behavior than wickedness.

- Someone may be mean without being wicked or evil.
- Someone may be thoughtless without being wicked or evil.
- Someone may be rude without being wicked or evil.

A few scriptures

Let's notice some scriptures that use *rasa* as wicked and *ra* as evil.

Ecclesiastes 3:16—"Moreover I saw under the sun: In the place of judgment, wickedness [No. 7562, a variation of No. 7563] was there; and in the place of righteousness, iniquity was there."

Ecclesiastes 3:17—"I said in my heart, 'God shall judge the righteous and the wicked [No. 7563], for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.'"

Ecclesiastes 7:15—"I have seen everything in my days of vanity: There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked [No. 7563] man who prolongs life in his wickedness [No. 7451]."

Ecclesiastes 8:11—"Because the sentence against an evil [No. 7451] is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil [No. 7451]."

Ecclesiastes 8:12—"Though a sinner does evil [No. 7451] 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."

Ecclesiastes 8:13—"But it will not be well with the wicked [No. 7563]; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God."

Ecclesiastes 8:14—"There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked [No. 7563]; again, there are wicked [No. 7563] men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous."

Ecclesiastes 9:2—"All things come alike to all: One event happens to the righteous and the wicked [No. 7563] . . ."

Ecclesiastes 9:3—"This is an evil [No. 7451] in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil [No. 7451] . . ."