

# Evil and Wickedness in Ecclesiastes

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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] . . ."