

Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 – Desire to Prepare for Death

Stam, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Henry, Gill, Trapp, Poole, Geneva, INT, Delitzsch, Clarke, Barnes,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: I am not trying to be morose 忧郁 here, but the Lord is teaching in this passage that we just read that one of the desires you should have is a desire to think about death. But why should you think about death now? 1. Some people become frustrated because they don't know how to deal with death when it is at their doorstep. So they react poorly and don't know how to die. They blame others and complain. 2. Some people don't think about death, and never get their affairs of life in order. And then they leave more clean-up work for those left behind. 3. Worse of all, there are those, who never think of death, and so they never get their spiritual house in order – they never live their lives to please the Lord. So today God wants you to hear that as a Christian you should think about death and prepare for it– regardless of your age.

Our headings are: **Know the Certainty and Uncertainty of Death**, and **Arrange for the Certainty and Uncertainty of Death**.

Our goals are: That, **knowing that you absolutely will die, though you don't know when, and knowing that your future is sown up with Jesus, that you will then live your life in service to the Messiah, whose you are by redemption.**

Know The Certainty and Uncertainty of Death

7 Truly the **light is sweet**, And it is **pleasant for the eyes** to behold the sun; 8 But **if a man lives many years** And **rejoices** in them all, Yet let him remember the **days of darkness**, For they will be many. All that is coming is vanity.

1. Solomon used an autobiographical 自传 reference to teach that old people must be prepared for death that is certain.

Even though a man may enjoy the niceties of life, and even though death may seem far away, man will certainly die. **And all the niceties will become vain**. Solomon had enjoyed the **niceties of life in abundance**. But he realized that those things, though they may last for a long time, they didn't last forever – they were vanities. Today, those **niceties could be gone before even before your death – wasted, taxed, or stolen**. **But death was certain**. We used to say in my home country: “Every day the bucket goes to the well, but one day its bottom will fall off.” **Winter will come after summer**...you can count on it. There is usually an **eerie 怪异 calm before the tsunami hits**.

2. Why do old people forget to think and plan for death? They forget to think and plan for death because they are pre-occupied with niceties – those luxuries, pleasant to the eyes. They enjoy those pleasant things.

3. What is interesting here is that Solomon used “light” to picture the luxuries of life. Light was the first thing formed at Creation. (Maybe this is one of the reasons so many religion groups worship the sun.) And it is unique that the eye is one of the first organs formed in the baby. It is a blessed thing to have the gift of sight... for it brings joy. Most blind people would give up their greatest wealth – even all of it- if they could just see. Yet, Solomon warned that though this great luxury might continue for a while, but death will come. Job described death as darkness.

Job 10:21 Before I go to the place from which I shall not return, To the **land of darkness** and the shadow of death,

“Light” is used figuratively here to refer to the whole – all luxuries...just like when you called someone “a hand” you may refer to a “laborer.” (Synecdoche). (Ephraim, the largest tribe, is often used to represent all of Israel.)

There are some who spiritualize the text and say that the “light” here is the law of God, or even the Gospel. It is true that the Gospel and the law are lights, but the context does not allow that interpretation. Solomon contrasts “light” with “years of darkness after one dies” – until the Day of Judgment. He was speaking of physical death.

4. Now back to the text. What can you know about the darkness that man will experience at death? When you die you will die separated from God. There will be no preaching in death. There is no hope of salvation after death. You will experience a darkness that hurts. You won't be able to worship God in death nor earn his favor. Solomon's point was that if a man loved life too much, he would not make preparations for death and so he would be awfully disappointed when he died. The niceties of the earth would end. Life would end. Yes, the longest day still has a night. Whatever the circumstances of your life – good or bad (in this case “good”), you will die. You might die a scraggly old guy, but you will die and experience darkness. If you were an old rich, healthy, handsome guy, you will die and experience that separation from God. Consider this rhetorical question:

Psalms 88:12 Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

9 Rejoice, **O young man, in your youth**, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; **But know that for all these God will**

bring you into judgment.

5. Then **Solomon instructed the young** how they should also make preparations for and think about their own deaths. He did not do this to take away joy from being young. But he wanted young men and women to know that they would have to give an account to God for what they do with their lives. Now you will notice that Solomon wrote in a way that young people could understand – with sarcasm and irony. (Like Ezekiel 28:3-4) Literally translated: “You can do what you want – get drunk, waste your life, indulge 放纵 yourself- but you will have to answer to God for what you do.” Modern translation: “Live footloose and fancy-free, but you will be called to account.” This is what is called a “theological check.” So when the foolish youth say: “It is my life, I will do whatever I want,” you respond, “Your abuse of liberty leads to death, but God’s law leads to life.” **This is imperative for young people to remember.** You may very well die in the nest (as a young bird) and never get a chance to experience the fullness of life. There is a certainty of death, but there is an uncertainty in terms of time... Don’t be like these fools:

Luke 12:45 "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,

Remember these men: Absalom and Adonijah, Hophni and Phinehas, Nadab and Abihu. None of them was old. And do you now see why you need Jesus to live and die for you? You cannot meet God’s high standards. So knowing and loving Jesus is the greatest plan you could make in your entire life.

6. The fact is, those who reject God’s truth, young or old, and so refuse to live by it, will be destroyed. Death will be an “aw shucks” moment. The bad planners will say: “This is not what I planned.”

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. 7 "The more they increased, The more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame.

This is the jerk that in the fishing rod that tells the fish: “You were trapped by your lusts and will die.” No one who eats the bait of this world can avoid judgment. And remember: **Death does not always come with a “getting to know you” meeting** – slowly taking you. Death can come as a thunderbolt and take you immediately. And this applies to young and old.

Arrange for the Certainty and Uncertainty of Death

10 Therefore remove sorrow (strife, anger, impatience) from your heart, And put away evil from your flesh, For childhood and youth are vanity.

1. Solomon then urged the old and the young to manage their lives (body and soul) better – Solomon dropped his irony 反话 and sarcasm 讽刺. He needed to get to the substance of the matter.

2. To manage yourself better and prepare for the certainty of death and the uncertainty of death, you need to remove anger, wrath, spite, or disorder from your heart. (I am not sure why the word was translated “sorrow.” The translators probably wanted to show that things like anger and strife bring sorrow – but that is not in the original language.) Why did Solomon speak about getting rid of anger or strife? He knew that young people are prone to be impatient and angry when things don’t go the way they want. When they are angry they fight. Young people think they can fight everything; they think they are invincible. But they can’t fight death, try as they might. You see, to young people, life is more about satisfying their own desires...for food, for fun, for friends – lust flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. But preoccupation with self leads to death. And even if these things don’t directly cause death, they will bring judgment upon you when you die. So Solomon gave good warning. He warned young people to remove strife and anger from their lives. This is the same language the Apostle Paul used.

2Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

So young people: Put your trust in the Lord Jesus and keep it there so you can receive his benefits – benefits that travel with you to heaven-benefits that the government can’t tax.

3. You see a good example of the screaming university kids causing trouble in Montreal. They believe they have a right to virtually free education and they smash people’s cars to make the government will take money from others to give to them. How many of them do you think give thought to the fact that they will have to stand before God in judgment? Young people, only eternity is permanent. Live for eternity. Consider what the Scriptures say regarding the coming judgment:

1Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring

to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

2Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

Matthew 12:36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Jude 1:14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 "to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Those who reject God's way are like Balaam, going up to work for his own pleasure and profit. Were it not for his donkey, the Lord's sword would have parted Balaam's hair, as the song says, in earthly judgment. And he still had to face eternal judgment. You are saved from this judgment because Christ took it for you. You can plan on taking his credit as yours.

4. A good ground for Solomon's warning was that youth and good life are just passing fancies that disappear as dew in the sunshine...or like day lilies. Yes, it is okay to enjoy the blessings of this world in moderation. You may enjoy a cold drink, a fast car, a beautiful house, and a decent bank account. But you will die, so you need to make preparations for death. You may enjoy healthy food and may make healthy profits in your work, and you may enjoy them, but know that they are vanities that will one day be destroyed. So be better prepared for your life after death.

5. What is shameful is that many make all kinds of worldly preparations for their affairs on earth, but not for their lives after. They have their burial plot ready, the funeral home is paid, their will is made – everything is ready...but not preparation is made for their soul.

Conclusion:

You will absolutely die. Death is certain. And you absolutely don't know when you will die. That is certain. And then you will have to give an account for all the things you did and all the things you did not do. If you fail to serve the living God being too preoccupied with the joys and pleasures of this life (eat, drink, for tomorrow we die), you will be judged by a fair God and condemned.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Do not be lulled 麻痹 into sleep or into self-indulgence and coast in your Christian life. Yes, live and enjoy your life, but you have to make preparations for the future. And you have to begin doing so now. Every young man or young woman must make preparations now. How do you make preparations for death? In a way, you do it just like you make any preparation. You think of what you will need: You will need eternal life. You get that by putting your trust in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sins. "You might say: I have put my trust in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. But you also need to do more. You need to show you have trust in the Lord, and you do this by serving him in work and worship. You need to save up resources that you can use later – bank your good works in heaven. Store your treasures in heaven that you will be able to enjoy them in the future. But if you become over-occupied with this world, you will have nothing in the future – except hell! If you are a Christian you will be in heaven, but you won't have the kind of reward as you could!

Finally, hear these words of Scripture: Ps 84:11 "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly." For you to walk uprightly you need a change of heart and a change in direction. God can do that for you if you sincerely ask him to. He will give you a new heart, convict of your sins, and give you new desires. Only then can you enjoy his protection.