

Ecclesiastes 5.1-7 Church will not Change You...*but God Can!*

WELCOME to CHURCH! Room Full of People > Lots of REASONS why Here

Many of You EAGER to see FAMOUS BUPT HOTEL??

Many are LOOKING for Some BENEFIT – Selves or Family? – Now or Future?

Some have Come to get More ENCOURAGEMENT from Ecclesiastes

Hear More OBSERVATIONS about LIFE from person by TITLE: Qohelet

‘ONE who GATHERS the ASSEMBLY’ to TEACH? to QUESTION? MOAN?

HONEST Thoughts for ALL People about Life’s UNCERTAINTY

So FAR Nothing has MADE him TOO HAPPY, TODAY he goes to CHURCH!

1. Worshipper who is Worried

So Now our Jewish SEARCHER Comes to the HOUSE of God > CHURCH?

Two Interpretations:

1. Qohelet is GRATEFUL Worshipper of God of BIBLE > Reverent, Thoughtful
2. Qohelet is GRUDGING Acknowledger of a God he does NOT Know or Trust

Favor # 2 > YET, IRRELIGIOUS WORLD can TEACH RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

First Heard Good News 16 yr. > Lived for Weekends > Friends & FUN!

Went to CAMP and Believed > NOW Jesus had to FIT into MY WEEKENDS

PLASTERED on Friday and Saturday > PRAISE the Lord on SUNDAYS!

Sometimes Jesus FOUND His Way into My Fridays & Saturday

Became DRUNKEN Evangelist > Led a Few Friends to FAITH while DRUNK

Friend Jim Kuch – Son of Mormon Bishop – asked:

‘If you REALLY Believe in JESUS, why are you DRUNK?’

God used Jim to make me GIVE JESUS – Whole Weekend – WHOLE LIFE!
 WORLDLY Wisdom can HELP our CHURCH Behavior > Not Rocket Science!

Sad that I was Not Good Witness to Jim Kuch – Died of AIDS Decade after HS

WHY do you Come to House of God? – Sometimes Even We DON'T KNOW

Q. Not go to WORSHIP but to WATCH > Not to CONFESS but CRITICIZE

Paid CAREFUL Attention to DETAIL > NOT to DEVOTION

Goes to CHURCH to COUNT the HYPOCRITES > NOT Include HIMSELF!

Fake religion distressed him as much as proud wisdom, vain pleasure, abused justice, or hollow freedom.

David Allan Hubbard

a. Come but don't Commit

OPERATIVE Word for WORSHIP > '**NOT**' used 7 X's in 7 verses / DIVINE #!

v. 1 ...fools, who do **not** know that they do wrong

v. 2 Do **not** be quick with your mouth, do **not** be hasty in your heart

v. 4 When you make a vow to God, do **not** delay in fulfilling it.

v. 5 It is better **not** to vow

v. 6 Do **not** let your mouth lead you into sin

Common Sense View of Church > **Be Quiet, Be Discreet, Quick to Get Out!**

This writers target is the well-meaning person who likes a good sing and turns up cheerfully enough to church; but who listens with half an ear, and never quite gets round to what he has volunteered to do for God.

Derek Kidner

v. 4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow.

- You know what? Uh...that...commitment back there was a mistake.
- I made a mistake. I...I married the wrong person, you see.
- Oops! I shouldn't have said that I'd rearrange my priorities and spend more time with such and such.
- I...I didn't think that through. It was a mistake to commit myself to this project, especially since it's so time-consuming and exhausting.

It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.
Lisa Simpson of *The Simpsons*

**FULFILL your VOWS // Do NOT TRY to CHANGE WIRING of Your Apt.
'DON'T get self FRIED MESSING w/something you know nothing ABOUT'**

v. 5 It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.

BETTER YET > Do NOT even MAKE a Vow > Common Pattern of Qohelet

I declared that the dead, who had already died, are happier than the living, who are still alive. *But better than both* is he who has not yet been Ecclesiastes 4:2-3

RELIGIOUS GAMES R 4 FOOLS: PLAY it SAFE! Be Low-Profile at Church!

v. 6 Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?

Make a FOOLISH VOW you Will be CAUGHT by Your WORDS

T. MESSENGER?? > a Religious BILL COLLECTOR during time of Qohelet?

NO Biblical Examples of Such Office in Israel > maybe Priests? maybe Angels?

Do NOT Say **MISTAKE?! = INTENTIONAL Sin**, eg. UNFORGIVABLE

v. 6 “**destroy the work of your hands**” > *God! Do you see me!! In Church!*

Common IDEA – **EARN POINTS with God in House of God** – EARN MERIT

QOHELET, Like many CHURCH-Goers NOT Understand > **Play it SAFE!**

Do NOT Raise your Hand > Might Get JOB you DO NOT WANT

Do NOT Stick OUT your NECK > Might GET your HEAD Chopped OFF!

Member of ICF > As Youth Family Faithfully attended CHURCH in USA

When PRIEST spoke FINAL AMEN > His Father would BEGIN Stop Watch

How Quickly – Out Door – Into Car – Drive Home – Change Clothes – Front of TV

b. Pray but don't Expect Much

v. 1 Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

They're so FOOLISH > Not even AWARE their SACRIFICES are EVIL to God

Qohelet was Familiar with STRONG WORDS of God from PROPHET ISAIAH

Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me... When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Isaiah 1.13-15

FOOLS in Church think THEY'RE GAINING POINTS with God by Sacrifices

HONESTLY it is HARD to LISTEN – Even when Take-Off Headphones

Music – Movies – Podcasts – Re-plays STILL LOOPING around our Brains

Easy for THOUGHTS to WANDER – Preacher's TIE more interesting TRUTH

We go thru MOTIONS of Worship like HEADLESS CHICKENS

vs. 2 Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God.

One who talks, thinks, but one who keeps silent, thinks more.

Proverb from Uganda

v. 3 As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words.

Proverb UNKNOWN Today > PT. is CLEAR ONLY FOOL Prays MUCH

HARD WORK so WEARYING > Loose touch with REALITY

// Similar LOSS of REALITY to THINK Many Words INFLUENCE God

False worship is as much an affront to God as obscene insults are to a wife or husband. Better to bribe a judge than to ply God with hollow words; better to slap a policeman than to seek God's influence by meaningless gestures; better to perjure yourself in court than to harry God with promises you cannot keep.

David Allan Hubbard

HOW have you Come? > With your Saturday Night HANGOVER like I DID?

HEART of Gratefulness for BLESSED WEEK > Ready to Praise Him?

WHEN do you Come? ON Time? What if Jesus were Here...& you were LATE?

BIG NEWS > HE IS HERE! And He wants your BEST esp in Worship

WHAT do you Come with? Tithes? Willing Heart? Encouragement? Teachable?

WHO do you Come For? For GOD or YOURSELF? Your Name? Your Will?

v. 7 Much dreaming and many words are meaningless.

Common Theme: FANTASY > DREAMS and MANY Religious WORDS

...the dreams appear to be daydreams, reducing worship to verbal doodling.

Derek Kidner

HEY!!! Are YOU Daydreaming RIGHT NOW!!!??

ONLY a FOOL WOULD Speak MANY Words in RELIGIOUS Gathering

‘HEY!! I RESEMBLE that REMARK!!’

Every time a mouth is open, a heart is on display, and we are as likely to hear a word from Hell as a word from Heaven. Philip Ryken

2. Deity who is Distant

Reason Church DID not MEAN Much to Qohelet > God did not MEAN MUCH

Coming to HOUSE OF GOD > Entering HOSTILE TERRITORY

a. Heaven Above

v. 2 God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.

God is IN HEAVEN > Emphasizing DISTANCE and perhaps DISINTEREST

ALL peoples “under the sun” or “under heaven” or “on earth” more than **35 X**’s

LIMITED Horizon Line of HUMAN Search, HOPE beyond RADAR Screens

8 References to God in Chapter 3: NONE are WARM & FUZZY

3.10 I have seen the burden God has laid on men.

3.14 everything God does will endure forever...God does it so men will fear him

3.15 God will call the past to account

3.17 God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked

3.18 God tests men so that they may see that they are like the animals

NOT a HAPPY CLAPPY Day at Church > Dreaded Visit to HOUSE of GOD

Better Keep MOUTH SHUT, HEAD DOWN, GET OUT FAST as Possible!

b. Hostile Territory

v. 1 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God > Walk on HOT COALS

Go into CHURCH like going into DENTIST'S OFFICE for a ROOT CANAL

Might be TORCHED like NADAB/ABIHU or SLAIN like Ananias/Saphira

DEADLY Lessons for GOD'S People in NEW ERA's of WORSHIP

God looking for HOLINESS Not HYPOCRISY

v. 7 Therefore stand in awe of God. = FEAR GOD > define FEAR of God?

1. REVERENT TRUST: Biblical, HOLY AWE before Great & Gracious God

2. RAGING TERROR: Fright before Powerful, Dangerous, Unpredictable Deity

c. Uncertain End Life is UNCERTAIN, UNCONTROLLABLE, then OVER!

HAUNTING Theme of Q.: DARK DOORWAY of Death > UNCERTAINTY

vs. 6,7 Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?... Therefore stand in awe of God.

NO Hope or CONFIDENCE things will be PUT RIGHT in the END

Statements about END / FUTURE are RESIGNATION not AFFIRMATION
NOT Leading READER to Edge of Cliff and Handing PARACHUTE of HOPE
CLIFF > JUMP NOW or LATER > One way or Another > YOU ARE TOAST!

There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. Ecclesiastes 8:14

Mediocre Living > Daily Grind > Doing Best, but NOT Know Enough

3. Savior who has Come

OT > HOLY REALMS > HOLY PLACES where GOD IS, Increasing Amounts

Tabern/Temple > Had HOLY Place and MOST HOLY PLACE > God's HOUSE

a. Words of Jesus

"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. John 4.19-23

HOT Afternoon in Samaria Woman hears PROPHET, Knows NEEDS a PRIEST
HE Knows She is SINNER > perhaps He knows WHERE can FIND a SAVIOR?

FORGIVENESS was GEOGRAPHIC, Must Come to GOD at 1, RIGHT Place

JEWS > TEMPLE Jerusalem / SAMARITANS > Strongest WI-FI Mt. GERIZIM

Jesus WELL AWARE of Samaritan Thinking > Spoke Woman's 'Language'

BUT Jesus did not PROPOSE Samaritan Religion as ACCEPTABLE Preparation

OT: HOLY REALMS / NT > HOLY RELATIONSHIPS: w/ God ANYWHERE

Going into MEXICAN Restaurant does NOT MAKE you and ENCHILADA

Going into FASHION BOUTIQUE does NOT MAKE you a SUPER MODEL

Going into UNIVERSITY does NOT MAKE you a SCHOLAR

Going to CHURCH does NOT MAKE you a CHRISTIAN

MEETING JESUS makes you a CHRISTIAN > We can do that ANYWHERE!
 WORSHIP God for what HE HAS ALREADY DONE > SAVED us in CHRIST

GOD'S NOW has BEGUN > Worship in CATACOMBS or CATHEDRALS

In the BUPT or Your BEDROOM > GATHERED in HIS NAME!

NT Worship of God is NOT matter of GEOGRAPHY but of GRACE

COME to GRACIOUS SAVIOR, ANYWHERE in World He Made & Rules

b. Work of Jesus

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Matthew 27:50-51

CURTAIN hung to KEEP PEOPLE AWAY from God in Most Holy Place

God DESECRATED His own Temple, torn from TOP to BOTTOM > HE did it!

OPEN arms of Jesus ready to EMBRACE > Open WIDE to WHOLE WORLD

Want to CHANGE your LIFE NOT Come to CHURCH > Come to CHRIST

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body

Hebrews 10:19-20

Coming to Church > Makes you WHATEVER you CAME IN AS!

Greedy? Happy? Mad? Glad? Sad? Loving? Hating? Impatient? Unfulfilled?

BICF – this Service – SURELY MY SERMONS > CANNOT CHANGE YOU!!

COME to Jesus > WHO can MEET Right Now in Service – by Word & Spirit

HE CAN Make you NEW > RENEWED > and FOREVER NEW in Him!

Access to God is through the body, or human nature, of Jesus that he offered up in death to God as a sacrifice for sin. The temple veil that was torn from top to bottom, as if by an unseen hand, made it clear that people could enter God's presence with boldness and confidence through him... This way will always be open and never be closed because the one who died has atoned for sin and is forever alive.

Hywel R. Jones

HOPEFULLY you will FIND a CHURCH that tells you ABOUT this JESUS

c. Worship of Jesus

Ask OT "Most EXALTED Vision of God in ALL Scripture" > soon hear Isaiah 6

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Isaiah 6.1-4

THEN to SURPRISE HEBREW Scholars – 700 yrs Later – Ap. JOHN writes...

Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. John 12.41

When ISAIHAH saw GOD High and Lifted Up: Holy, Holy, Holy

I believe He saw JESUS, JESUS, JESUS

If Q. was that SERIOUS to FEAR God he DID NOT KNOW

How MUCH MORE we who KNOW HIM should Watch our WALK with HIM
No amount of emphasis on grace can justify taking liberties with God, for the very concept of grace demands gratitude; gratitude cannot be casual. Derek Kidner

If you HAVE NEVER COME to Jesus > Missed Point of Coming to CHURCH

Today you can come boldly to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ and find grace to help your need. You do not have to make a pilgrimage to present your sacrifice. You do not need to change your race. All that you have to do is abandon your efforts at salvation and come alone by faith in Him who declared Himself to be the way, the truth, and the life. James Boice

INSTEAD of DREADING a Visit to CHURCH > It can be GREATEST JOY!

I Pray we HAVE the REDEEMED HEART of Psalmist as we Worship JESUS

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Psalm 122.1

Ecclesiastes 5:¹Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. ²Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. ³As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. ⁴When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. ⁵It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. ⁶Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the [temple] messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? ⁷Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God.

1. Sometimes we fail to apply the fundamentals of wise speech to how we talk to God. Why is this?
2. Why is listening so difficult at times?
3. In what ways do you struggle with speaking hastily to the Lord?
4. How did Jesus display perfect wisdom in His worship and speech to His Heavenly Father? How does this strengthen you to grow in wisdom in these areas?