

## 02-02-11b Ecclesiastes

We're ready to engage and study once again in Ecclesiastes chapter 8. We've seen that this section begins in verse 2. I myself guard the mouth of the king for the sake of the oath or the contractual promise of God. Verse 3, as I mentioned, I've done some additional work. The Hebrew here is somewhat confused.

We talked about this before with regard to verse 2. And I mentioned before that in your English translation there for 3, it says, do not hasten to go from his presence. And that that would call for halak as an infinitive, do not hasten to go. The normal construction would be hasten and then you'd have the infinitive, to go, or halak, to walk.

But that is not what we have here. Instead, we have another imperative. The halak here, or telek, is a singular, which means you walk.

And it's not, and so this makes it awkward. And some have actually put a, because they understand this to be, the king can do whatever he wants, the king has given a command and you don't want to upset him. They put a period after, do not be hasty.

So they say, keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God, just as it is in the New King James. And then they say, do not be hasty, period. And of course then to go would not be to go.

But they say, go from his presence. Well, let me just give you my best understanding of what is going on here. And I've refined it from last week, as I say, by doing quite a bit of digging and checking to make sure that somebody besides me came to the same conclusion.

And they have, so we're not completely out in the weeds all alone at my behest. Verse 3, I'm going to translate this way. Do not hurry from his presence, that is his with a capital H. This is God who made the contractual promise.

He says, I myself guard the mouth of the king because of God's contractual promise. You do not hurry from his presence. Keep in mind, this contractual promise is a living thing.

Solomon received this. Many of the people to whom Solomon is writing were there on the day the temple was dedicated, if not most of them. This is not ancient history for them.

When he says the contractual promise, everybody knows what he's talking about. This is like saying the results of the last election. You remember the swinging chads and the hanging chads and the dimpled chads? If I started saying, don't forget about the dimpled chads, everybody here knows what I'm talking about.

That's in our recent memory. When Solomon says, for the sake of the oath of God, the contractual promise of God, everyone knows what he's talking about. This is in living recent

memory.

He says, do not hurry from his presence. And people remember the content of that promise. If you, the king, walk in my statutes and keep my commandments, I will establish you on your throne.

I will be with the people of Israel. If you depart, then the temple will be thrown down and so forth. So, 8.3, do not hurry from his presence, period.

We are going to put a period there because I was unhappy last week with the fact that this was not an infinitive. When we say, do not hurry to walk or to go, that ought to be an infinitive if these two verbs are linked. But this starts a new sentence, and there's a little bit of an emphasis here because of a lack of conjunctions.

But telek means walk. This can be taken as an imperative, or go. So, basically, I translate this as, of course, in my translation, I'm probably hyper-literal and I say walk, but you can translate go-do not stand in an evil matter.

If you find yourself in an evil matter, don't stand in it, go. Get out of it. So, you have two verbs here telling you to separate from an evil word or an evil matter.

Go, do not stand. The ventures back in the 60s had that walk, don't run type of thing. Well, this is go, don't stand.

Walk, don't stand, literally. Maybe we can have another guitar solo and call it walk, don't stand. Walk-do not stand in an evil matter, or go.

Do not stand in an evil matter for everything which he purposes he will do. And those should also be capital H's. Everything which he, God, purposes he, God, will do.

Now, verse 4 makes a little more sense. In which, you remember in the New King James it says, where the word of a king is, there is power, but several of those words are in italics. Basically, if you take the italics out of the New King James, it says, where the word of a king, power.

Well, the word power is not the normal word for power. This is shilton, which is from shalat, which is the same word we saw earlier when we talked about wisdom is better than ten rulers are to a city. And the word rulers there was from this same word.

It means that which is high or above, that which is prominent. You know, a ruler is someone who is above. I think I gave you a translation last week of supreme, because it means high.

But, in verse 4, after I've straightened out what's going on in verse 3, verse 4 starts out with ba asher. Ba is the Hebrew preposition signified by a bait, and it means in. And asher means which, in which.

And now, I had to try to take that a different way before, but now we can just give it its little translation. In which the dabar, and once again dabar is either word or matter, and you can take it either way, in which matter or in which word, the king is shilton, supreme or at the head, or I'm going to translate it foremost. What is our context here? I'm guarding my mouth, King Solomon says, because of the contractual promise of God.

You need to be doing the same. Don't hurry from His presence. Don't stand in an evil matter.

Walk away from it, because everything God stated that He would do in that contractual promise, He will do. Everything He purposes, He will do. And in this matter, the king is foremost.

And you remember the contractual promise of God? As goes the king, so goes the nation. The king is foremost. The king is uppermost in this matter, isn't he? In the contractual promise of God, the king speaks for the nation.

The king stands in for the nation. As goes the king, so goes the nation. So in this matter, the king is foremost.

He says, look, I'm setting an example for you. I'm not going to stand in an evil matter. I'm going to guard my mouth.

I'm not going to hurry from God's presence. You don't either. So follow my lead.

In this matter, I am foremost. God's going to discipline me, and He's going to discipline the nation. So I'm going to be obedient.

You be obedient also, is the idea here. And this is all leading out of the idea that the wise man has a changed countenance. And his face shines.

Who will say to him, what are you doing? This is the last part of verse 4. So now our question is, well, who will say to him, is him the king or is him God? Who will say to him, what are you doing? Well, we have this same phrase elsewhere in Scripture. We've already seen it, I think, in Job chapter 9 and verse 12, where we have the response of Job to statements of his friends. And Job answers in chapter 9. It says, Truly I know it is so.

How can a man be righteous before God? If one wished to contend with Him, he could not answer Him one time out of a thousand. We've just seen this one out of a thousand idea in Solomon, haven't we? In Ecclesiastes. He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.

God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered? Man can't go against God and prosper. Man can't argue with what God is about to do.

God removes the mountains, and they do not know, when He overturns them in His anger. He shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble. He commands the sun, and it does not

rise.

He seals off the stars. Of course, stars often echo or suggest to us the angelic creation. The stars sang together when God created the universe.

He alone spreads out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. The chaotic forces of darkness are often pictured poetically as the wicked like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked.

He treads on the waves of the sea. He made the bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. We studied those chambers of the south when we were looking at the arrangement of the tribes of Israel, when we were looking at Jacob's sons.

Verse 10, Job 9. He does great things past finding out, yes, wonders without number. If He goes by me, I do not see Him. If He moves past, I do not perceive Him.

If He takes away, who can hinder Him? Who can say to Him, what are you doing? This is our same phrase. And the book of Job was in existence in the time of Solomon. Who can say to Him, what are you doing? Same thing we have in 8.4. Who will say to Him, what are you doing? That's Job 9.12. We have the same phrase used after the time of Solomon in Isaiah 45.9. Woe to him who strives with his maker.

Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him who forms it, what are you making? Or shall your handiwork say, he has no hands? Making and doing is the same verb in Hebrew. You can just as easily translate this.

Shall the clay say to him who forms it, what are you doing? So, in both of these cases, the question, what are you doing? Who will say to Him, what are you doing? Is a reference to God. You have a similar statement made in Daniel 4.35. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. He does according to His will in the army of heaven.

And among the inhabitants of the earth, no one can restrain His hand or say to Him, what have you done? Talking about God. God is supreme over the heavens. God is supreme over the earth.

In three different places in Scripture, we have explicit statements that no one can say to Him, what are you doing? And I would submit to you that in Ecclesiastes 8.4, we have a fourth statement of the very same principle. Nowhere else in Scripture does it say, no one will say to the king, what are you doing? It is always a reference to God. We have God in this context.

And although it may be different by the time we translate this into English, 3,000 years after the fact, to follow Solomon's thread of thought precisely, what he's saying here is all about living before God in the light of God's contractual promise. God's contractual promise concerns the king first and foremost, and after that, the nation. Solomon says, look, I'm foremost in this covenant promise.

I'm guarding my mouth. You need to be sure and stand in God's presence. Don't be questioning God's actions as a result of this.

If God disciplines the nation, you're going to know that it's because we violated the contractual promise. We're not going to say, hey, what are you doing? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why have you made me thus? Remember we have that over in Romans? The same idea here. Who is going to say to him, what are you doing? It's an illegitimate question.

God said ahead of time what he was going to do. So it's silly. This is the argument in Malachi.

You remember that book? Over and over again, God says, you have profaned my altars. You have messed up my sacrifices. And they say, in what way have we done this? I don't understand why you're upset with us.

And God has to explain it. No one will say to him, what are you doing? Chapter 8, verse 5, Ecclesiastes. The one keeping the covenant command does not know an evil matter.

The one keeping the covenant command does not know an evil matter. Now, the new King James construes this a completely different way. But you can see that they've already started down a different path by assuming that this whole section is talking about pleasing the king.

We have instructions in the word of God that say, obey those who have the rule over you. But that's talking about leadership in the church. As those who must give an account to God, that goes on to say.

We know that we are supposed to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Render to God the things that are God's. But this is often taken to be pragmatic.

Pragmatic means practical, sort of Machiavellian type of things. Do whatever it is that will get you the furthest along. And that Solomon here is telling people, well, you're going to have to deal with human authority.

So, here's some suggestions on how to not run afoul of human authority. That's not what it's talking about at all. Solomon is here, having talked about the things that distract from the focus on God and God's judgment in the future and how hard it is.

There's not one man in a thousand that figures this out. The wise man, the one who is righteous before God, will escape from these traps and will focus on God. Now he's giving us the heart of the matter.

And it's so sad. It's like so many other places in scripture where just when you get to the most important part, it's been obscured by a faulty translation or by a misunderstanding on the part of interpreters. And Solomon is here giving us one of the pinnacles of the book.

And he's saying, in his day, what was the covenant promise of God? Keep my commands. Keep my law. Be obedient.

Don't go after other gods to serve them and worship them. And I will bless you. And I will be with you.

And I will establish my name in you. And I will reflect my glory in you. And it all, in the particular iteration of that covenant promise that was given to Solomon, focuses on the king.

He says, if you will, then I will bless you and make your posterity continue on the throne. And I will bless the nation. And that's what Solomon says in verse 4. In this matter, the king is foremost.

He's prominent. He's uppermost in that covenant promise that God made back there in 1 Kings. If I'm the king and I'm not questioning God's actions in this, I'm not going to say to him, what are you doing? Well, how much more you, who are not prominent in the covenant command.

You know, the king is uppermost. And the king is not questioning it. So what basis do you have for questioning it? You're not even the king.

The one keeping the covenant command does not know an evil word, an evil divar, an evil matter. We've already seen this evil matter. Remember up in verse 3? Walk away.

Do not stand in an evil matter. The one with a wise heart doesn't even know. He's going to... Remember Mission Impossible, Peter Graves? Good morning, Mr. Phelps.

Here's your mission. He's going through looking at all the different people he's going to use for it. The strong man and the black guy and the cinnamon carter and all these others.

And then at the end of the tape, he says, should any of your I am impossible mission force be caught or killed, the secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions. We don't know you. Like Schultz, I know nothing.

Well, this is what Solomon says here. The one keeping the covenant command does not know an evil matter. I disavow any knowledge of these evil words, these evil matters.

I just have pushed it out of my mind. Just like what we saw in Philippians chapter 4. We concentrate on the things that unite us, the things that are profitable, the things that bear fruit. When we look at each other, instead of concentrating on the flaw, we concentrate on what is good.

We're going to see a little bit later in Ecclesiastes, there's a great statement that Solomon makes coming up here in the next chapter. Actually, the chapter after next, chapter 10, verse 1. I think it's what I'm looking for here. Look at Ecclesiastes 10.1. It says, dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment and cause it to give off a foul odor.

Well, the idea here is you've got a pot of oil or a pot of perfume. It's kind of syrupy. Think about the oils.

They didn't have little diffusers and squeeze bulb things in the ancient world. This would be sort of a, not exactly a grease, but more of an ointment that had a sweet smelling savor. Kind of an oil that you would apply to yourself.

And this would be your perfume. So you've got it sitting here in a jar. And a fly buzzes around and he's attracted by the odor.

It smells like a flower or something. And he goes and lands on it and he gets stuck. And he sinks in and, of course, he dies.

And let me ask you something. All of us have seen dead flies. We've swatted flies.

We've found dead flies in the windowsill and all kinds of places. Did you ever smell a dead fly? Dead flies really don't give off an odor, do they? And no matter what you do to them, you can't. I mean, I've had whole piles of dead flies.

I remember my grandfather in his horse barn had some kind of purple stuff that he would paint onto burlap. And it was like a fly paper, like homemade fly paper. You'd paint this purple stuff and it attracted flies.

They would get there and stick and die. And we would go out there and there would be dozens and dozens and dozens of dead flies. I never smelled anything.

Dead flies do not smell. What does this say? Dead flies cause perfume to give off a foul odor. It's your perception, isn't it? You've got a whole pot of sweet-smelling ointment.

But when you go to dip your finger in it and put some on, you see this dead fly upside down in it. That perfume is no longer attractive to you. There are other phrases that we use having to do with punch bowls and things in the modern day that have the same idea.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump. One little flaw can spoil something for all of us. If you saw a dead fly, for example, in the punch bowl, are you going to dip yourself a big... I went to the International House of Pancakes once and they brought my hot cakes and I finished sipping my coffee and got all ready to dig in.

I looked and there was a dead fly in the lump of butter they put in the middle of the little feet sticking up. And, you know, it kind of spoils the whole... you kind of lose your appetite when you see a dead fly right there. Well, what he's saying is, here you've got this wonderful ointment, but your perception of it is completely changed by this one flaw that you see.

It doesn't mean it literally makes the whole pot of oil stink, but in your mind it's changed. Why?

Because you're concentrating on the fly and not on the 99.9% of the ointment that's unaffected by the fly. If somebody got that fly out of there and took it away before you looked, you'd be all happy with the ointment again.

Well, this is the idea. Think about Philippians chapter 4. Think about when we look at one another, are we looking at the fly or are we smelling the perfume? Don't let the fly make the whole pot of perfume stink. Do not stand in an evil matter.

The one keeping the covenant command does not know an evil matter. Takes the fly and dips it out of the ointment and throws it away and concentrates on the perfume. Let the perfume smell sweet.

Get the fly out of the ointment. How do you do this? Solomon does the same thing for us that Paul did in Philippians. He gives us the means.

It's one thing to say, just overlook that unhappy detail there. Just overlook that flaw or that thing that is tending to make you want to divide. The temptation you have to have a mental attitude of sin toward that person or that situation.

It's one thing to say, don't do that. It's something else to say, how am I supposed to bring this about? How can I get my attitude to change? How can I really get the fly out of the ointment? Solomon gives us the answer here in the last part of verse 5. The one keeping the covenant command does not know an evil matter. The time and the judgment the wise heart knows.

We looked last time at this word time. It's the same that's used in chapter 3. There's a time for every purpose under heaven. There's a time for this and a time for that all the way through that poem.

Well, the wise heart knows the time. When is it a time to cast away stones? When is it the time to gather stones together? When is it a time for war? When is it a time for peace? You go back through that list that we saw of the advantageous and disadvantageous things in Ecclesiastes chapter 3. The wise heart knows the time and the wise heart knows the judgment. There's a time for every purpose.

Who sets these times? God does. If we have a distraction, if we have a challenge, if we are brought in contact with someone and this fly crops up, that's God's time. God would not let you be tested above what you are able to bear.

There is a purpose for this time. There is an area in our soul that needs strengthening. You can't build a muscle if you don't flex it, if you don't push against some resistance.

And it wouldn't be there unless there was a purpose. The people that are in our periphery are there for a reason. They tax our patience, when they tax our patience, for a reason.

It's probably because we're weak in that area. You never know a weakness until you get tested in that area. Somebody with a bad back can walk around for weeks and feel fine.

First time you go to lift a piano, sometimes you're bending over to grab it, you slip the disc and you're walking around like an old man because there's a weakness there, but it didn't show up until... Have you ever done something? You go out and fly a frisbee or something, you haven't done it in a while, and the next day you wake up and you're sore. You think, oh boy, I didn't realize I was so out of shape until I did this unaccustomed activity. You find out why.

I wasn't as strong as I thought I was. I have a weakness. The wise heart knows the time and the judgment.

Mishpat. Remember Shafat? Judge? To render a decision on something. It's kind of like that phrase, the interpretation of a matter.

The time and the judgment, the wise heart knows. You've got to sit back and analyze this. You've got to do some logizomai here.

You've got to account. You've got to calculate. You've got to credit in order to do this.

What does he say in verse 6? For to everything there is a purpose. Kind of sounds like we're going back to chapter 3, doesn't it? To everything there is a purpose. There is a time and a judgment.

This is literally out of the Hebrew, how the word order goes. For to everything a purpose. There's not even a verb there.

To everything a purpose. There is a time and a judgment. Because the evil of man increases greatly.

To everything there is a purpose. There is a time and a judgment. Because the evil of man increases greatly.

Now, why do we need to keep this in mind? Because the evil of man increases greatly. It's the same word we had before, ra, an evil matter. Where do these evil matters come from? They come from man.

People create these evil matters. Psalm 1, how many times have we reviewed that? Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. How does he stay out of their way? How does he not walk in their way, or stand in their way, or sit in their way? He heeds what Solomon says.

Walk. Don't stand in an evil matter. There is a purpose.

There is a time and a judgment. Because the evil of man increases greatly. There is going to be a time that we've got to walk.

There is going to be a time that we've got to depart. Because the evil of man is proliferating. Now, verse 7, in your New King James it says, For he does not know what will happen, so who can tell him when it will occur? It seems a little bit disjointed.

My translation of this, is for he does not know what will be, for according to that which will be, who can tell it to him? The idea is, he doesn't know what will be, because when you're talking about what will be, who's going to tell you? This is talking about our situation under the sun. We don't know the outcome. You can't go back to the Proverbs and say, well, see this evil man? He's going to come to destruction.

You can't say, see this righteous man? He's going to be blessed and prospered. I used to think, when I was younger in the faith, and was getting a certain form of teaching, that if I was faithful, and if I did everything I was supposed to do as a believer, if I was walking the narrow road, heading for the straight gate, that I would have professional prosperity, I would have material prosperity, I would have certain things. They would come, because that was the promise of God.

That this was part of the covenant promise of God, that if you do what you're supposed to do, you're going to be among the best. I figured, I'm going to be at the top of my class. I'm going to be at the head of my platoon.

I'm going to be an exemplary officer as a midshipman or as a marine. I'm going to excel in every area, because I'm going to be blessed by God in all of these areas. That is not the case.

Because you are faithful does not mean that you are going to excel in every area. You don't know what will be. That might be the advantage that God is going to use to float you to the top of your profession, or to the top of your area of endeavor.

You may become prosperous, but you don't know. Nobody knows what's going to take place in this life. Man does not know what will be.

We tend to say, I'm not going to get involved in that evil thing, because those people are going to get hammered by God. The big shoe is going to drop, the big hammer is going to fall, and lightning is going to strike from heaven. Those people are not going to prosper.

They might. They might prosper from a human perspective. Under the sun, I saw a case where there was money from the government given for lodging when we all went to Beirut.

It was a lot of money. It was hundreds and hundreds of dollars. The place where we found for lodging didn't cost hundreds and hundreds of dollars.

Individuals I was with decided that they would just pocket the difference. I thought, not only is this

morally wrong, but there is a danger here if this comes out that you can get in serious trouble. This is against the UCMJ.

This is in violation of regulations. There are regulations that say you can't do this. And these people were doing it.

Well, I took a different path, and I found a way to do what I needed to do without implicating them, which was difficult, but I found a way to do that. Basically, if I turned my money back in and I was staying at the same place they were, then that pretty well rats them out because, well, gee, this guy turned in all this money. How come you guys didn't turn in your money? And I had foolishly made a statement that I didn't fully understand at the time.

Suffice it to say, what I did is, I went to the person from whom we were renting, and I said, the government gave me this money to pay for lodging, so here it is. And I gave them all the money, even though they were willing to take a lot less. This way, the money that the government gave me for lodging, I paid for lodging.

And I was square, and I didn't pocket the difference, nor did I shine a light on the people who were paying far less and keeping the difference. It was the only way I could figure out to resolve this. My point is, I did not know what would happen.

And as it turned out, it was not ever looked into. These people just made hundreds of dollars. I would have done the same thing regardless, but I didn't know what would happen.

Maybe they will get caught, maybe not. That's what Solomon is saying. There is a purpose, there is a time and a judgment, because the evil of man increases greatly.

But we don't know when that judgment is going to be. We don't know when all of the rectification of wrongs, and when the judgment is going to come for what is done right and what is done wrong. Sometimes it's in time, and sometimes it's not.

Nobody knows. And you can't operate on the basis of, well, if I get into this wrong thing, I will be court-martialed, or I will be held to account. Maybe you will and maybe you won't.

Nobody knows. Sometimes the wicked prosper. We've already seen that in Ecclesiastes.

Sometimes the righteous are oppressed. It doesn't always seem to work out according to principle in this life, because for everything there is a time, for everything there is a purpose. And it's not confined to under the sun.

And this is one of the great breakthroughs that Solomon makes in his Old Testament understanding of the plan of God, because heretofore, in the wisdom literature, if you do well, you'll be blessed. If you do evil, you'll be cursed. And it's all in time.

And this is what the Pharisees never figured out in Jesus' day. They said, hey, I'm blessed, therefore, working backward from that, I must be pleasing God. They didn't understand what Solomon is saying here, that you don't know what's going to happen.

You can be prosperous and you're not blessed by God. And you can be righteous before God, and you may be poor. You may be the widow.

No one knows what will be. This is verse 7. The evil of man increases greatly, for he does not know what will be. And people say, well, I must not be doing wrong, because I haven't been hammered by God.

If what you say is true, and I'm doing evil, how come I haven't been hammered? How come I haven't been disciplined? How come I haven't reaped the fruit of unrighteousness here? What sore man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that sows to the flesh will reap corruption. I'm not reaping corruption, so I must not be doing wrong.

He does not know, he man, does not know what will be. For according to that which will be, this is literal out of the Hebrew, when you're talking about what will be, who can tell it to him? We don't have Sears, and we don't have the Oracle of Delphi. You can't go read tomorrow's newspaper.

They've got a thing where the guy gets tomorrow's newspaper, and he has to try to change the headlines. No one can tell you what's going to be. And this is the point.

We have to concentrate on knowing the time, and knowing the judgment. We know that there is a judgment. Sometimes it's in time.

Sometimes it's after time. Remember, I don't remember the address of it, but the passage that says it is appointed to man once to die, and after that, the judgment. After that, the judgment.

So sometimes consequences come in time. Sometimes people die the sin unto death as believers because they know better, and they violate God's command anyway. Other times not.

They may be well thought of, and it's not until they get to the judgment seat of Christ they're going to discover how far afield they were. He does not know what will be, for according to that which will be, who can tell it to him? Why does Solomon bring this up? Because to everything there is a purpose. There is a time, and there is a judgment.

We go back to the covenant promise of God. If God says that we need to be obedient, that we need to be faithful, that we need to walk in His statutes and His judgments, that's what we need to do. You can't look around and say, well, what is the outcome in time? This is the big misunderstanding in the modern day, and it comes out when people evangelize, and they say, God will solve your problems.

God will fix your marriage. God will be the big band-aid. He'll be the big pain reliever for you.

You're having pain? Well, come to God, and the pain will go away. And so we look at God as the means to an end. My goal is alleviating my pain and getting rid of my problems, and God is the means.

That's not the case. God is the end. God is the goal.

Relationship and fellowship with God are the goal. And in pursuit of that goal along the way, one of the means for that is God is going to resolve problems in our soul, and God is going to remove obstacles in our circumstances so that we can come to closer fellowship with Him. But we just get it backwards.

And we say, see, I'll tell you what's going to happen in time. I'll tell you what will be. You come to God, and He will patch up your marriage.

He'll make your kids do better. He'll give you a better job. He'll prosper you.

The windows of heaven will open. Send us some money, and God will do the following. No one can tell you that.

You may sow your seeds of faith into some ministry. You may send them all the money in the world, and you're just out that money, and you don't get a hundredfold return, and the windows of heaven don't open, like the prosperity gospel people want to say. Who can tell man what is going to be? The only thing you can say for certain is what God has said for certain.

And God says there is a time, and there is a judgment, and it's not necessarily under the sun. So don't do what you do because you're expecting an outcome in circumstances. Do what you do because of the covenant promise of God.

Who's going to question Him? He will do it in His own good time. There is a time, and there is a purpose for everything. There is a judgment.

Verse 8 is going to go on to talk about... In the New King James it says, No one has power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit, and no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, and wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it. And we're going to have to reserve our study of verse 8 for next time because I'll give you my translation, and by looking at the difference you can see why we need to do some work.

There is not a man of mastery in spirit to restrain the Spirit, and no one has power in the day of death. There is not a company in battle, and evil does not deliver his lords. So let me give it to you next time in detail.

But for now, what have we seen thus far in chapter 8? Beginning at verse 2 and coming up through verse 7. What is it that gives us our frame of reference? It's the promises of God, not the cause and effect in time. No one can tell you that because you implement a certain cause, you're

going to get a certain effect. Maybe you will, and maybe you won't.

What you need to do is remember the covenant promise of God. If you stand in an evil matter, there is a judgment, and there is a time coming where that is going to have its consequences from God. So don't stand in an evil matter.

Walk away from it. Go from it. Be the wise man whose countenance is changed, whose face shines because of the wisdom that comes from God.

Don't dwell, don't even know an evil matter. Think about what Paul says in Philippians chapter 4. He mentions it in Ephesians, but Philippians chapter 4, account those things that are worthy. Look for the things that unite.

Find the things that lead to peace, that lead to rejoicing and thanksgiving. These are the things to reckon, to give credit to in our thinking. Don't spend time wondering about cause and effect in time because no one can tell you what cause and effect you're going to see if you limit your perspective to under the sun.

That's the reason we have hope. That's the reason Paul says in the last part of Philippians 3, we're looking for Jesus to come back from heaven. He's going to transform our bodies to be like his.

He's going to complete the loop of cause and effect. He's going to accomplish those purposes that David talked about. All of those desirable goals that were not caused to sprout in this life.

Remember David's last words the first time we looked at this word purpose in Hebrew? Every desirable goal, every purpose that didn't sprout in this life, life ended, the sun set, and these things were unresolved. There was a cause and there was no effect. Every purpose that was not caused to sprout, when the Lord returns, when the millennial kingdom comes, when God's plan reaches its fulfillment, everything will be resolved.

Every one of God's covenant promises will be fulfilled. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Faith is the evidence of things not seen.

If you wait for things to happen in this life, you're going to lose your faith because they just don't always work out the way you think. Solomon says, are you going to go question God and say, what are you doing? I don't see my five paragraph super grace blessing package hitting here. That's not the answer.

The wise heart knows that there's a time, there's a purpose, and there's a judgment. That's part of our hope. And hope is the motivation for living the life of faith that expresses itself in love.

And love doesn't credit faults. Love credits virtue. 1 Corinthians 13.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for the divine perspective that transcends time and lifts us above the mundane and the immediate and the superficial.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enable us to maintain that perspective as we make our decisions, as we perform the actions and live our lives before you. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.