

## Ecclesiastes 5:1-7: Interpretation Workshop

[Refrain: 3:22]

Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and, behold, the tears of those who were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. <sup>2</sup> Therefore I praised the dead who have been long dead more than the living who are yet alive. <sup>3</sup> Yes, better than them both is him who has not yet been, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. (4:1-3)

<sup>5:8</sup> If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent taking away of justice and righteousness in a district, don't marvel at the matter: for one official is eyed by a higher one; and there are officials over them. <sup>9</sup> Moreover the profit of the earth is for all. The king profits from the field. (5:8-9)

<sup>4</sup> Then I saw all the labor and achievement that is the envy of a man's neighbor. This also is vapor and a striving after wind. <sup>5</sup> The fool folds his hands together and ruins himself. <sup>6</sup> Better is a handful, with quietness, than two handfuls with labor and chasing after wind. (4:4-6)

<sup>7</sup> Then I returned and saw vapor under the sun. <sup>8</sup> There is one who is alone, and he has neither son nor brother. There is no end to all of his labor, neither are his eyes satisfied with wealth. For whom then, do I labor, and deprive my soul of good? This also is vapor, yes, it is a miserable business. (4:7-8)

<sup>7</sup> Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. <sup>10</sup> For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls, and doesn't have another to lift him up. <sup>11</sup> Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one keep warm alone? <sup>12</sup> If a man prevails against one who is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (4:9-12)

<sup>13</sup> Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king who doesn't know how to receive admonition any more. <sup>14</sup> For out of prison he came forth to be king; yes, even in his kingdom he was born poor. <sup>15</sup> I saw all the living who walk under the sun, that they were with the youth, the other, who succeeded him. <sup>16</sup> There was no end of all the people, even of all them over whom he was — yet those who come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vapor and a chasing after wind. (4:13-16)

### 5:1-7

<sup>1</sup> Guard your steps when you go to God's house; for to draw near to listen is better than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they don't know that they do evil. <sup>2</sup> Don't be rash with your mouth, and don't let your heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and you on earth. Therefore let your words be few. <sup>3</sup> For as a dream comes with a multitude of cares, so a fool's speech with a multitude of words. <sup>4</sup> When you vow a vow to God, don't defer to pay it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay that which you vow. <sup>5</sup> It is better that you should not vow, than that you should vow and not pay. <sup>6</sup> Don't allow your mouth to lead you into sin. Don't protest before the messenger that this was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice, and destroy the work of your hands? <sup>7</sup> For in the multitude of dreams there are vanities, as well as in many words: but you must **fear God**.

<sup>10</sup> He who loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase: this also is vanity. <sup>11</sup> When goods increase, those who eat them are increased; and what advantage is there to its owner, except to feast on them with his eyes? <sup>12</sup> The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not allow him to sleep. (5:10-12)

<sup>13</sup> There is a grievous misfortune which I have seen under the sun: wealth kept by its owner to his harm. <sup>14</sup> Those riches perish by misfortune, and if he has fathered a son, there is nothing in his hand. <sup>15</sup> As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing for his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. <sup>16</sup> This also is a grievous evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go. And what profit does he have who labors for the wind? <sup>17</sup> All his days he also eats in darkness, he is frustrated, and has sickness and weakness. (5:13-17)

### Refrain (5:18-20)

<sup>18</sup> Behold, that which I have seen to be good and proper is for one to eat and to drink, and to see the good in all his labor, in which he labors under the sun, all the days of his life which God has given him; for this is his portion. <sup>19</sup> Every man also to whom God has given riches and wealth, and has given him power to eat of it, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor — this is the gift of God. <sup>20</sup> For he shall not often reflect on the days of his life; because God occupies him with the joy of his heart.

## Ecclesiastes 5:1-7: Interpretation Workshop

Main Objective: Determine what Eccl. 5:1-7 is communicating and then what part it is playing in this section.

Remember: this is one of the Frustration sections, which we know because it is bracketed by refrains (3:22 and 5:18-20).

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 may help with Eccl. 5:4-6 regarding paying of vows.

Look for repetitions throughout these chapters; note whether they are just repetitions within the section or from other parts in the book or both.

There are most likely parallel statements with Proverbs. If you find some note any differences.