

“Wisdom in the Court of the King”

Sermon Notes

➤ **Wisdom shines, even in political affairs**

1. Let your light shine as someone...

1a. trustworthy (8:2-3) and

1b. prudent (8:5-8)

2. And detect the dangers of the political court:

2a. Authoritarianism (8:2-4)

2b. Arrogance (8:6-8)

2c. Abuse (8:9, 5-6)

Kiss the Son, the King of Kings (Psalm 2:10-12; Matt 28:18; Rev 19:16)

MEFC Community Group Study Guide

For the Week of February 14th - 20th

Let's use the COMA method of studying the Bible, with some adaptation to our text, Ecclesiastes 8:1-9. The method comes from David Helm in *One-to-One Bible Reading*.

Context

Ecclesiastes 8:1-9 is wisdom literature. What does this mean for understanding the text?

The Preacher: Are there any clues about the circumstances in which the Preacher composed these words (hint: how would he have known about kings & advisors? What might he have known about royal courts?)?

The original audience: Are there any clues about the Israelites who first heard these words? How would these words have landed on them? Are there idioms, phrases, or cultural ideas they would have quickly grasped but we don't? Further, think about the history recorded for us in the OT - Joseph in Pharaoh's court (Genesis 39-50); Moses and the Israelites in Egypt (Exodus 1-15); the book of Judges; the history of Israel's kings and divided kingdoms in 1 Samuel through 2 Kings; the books of Daniel, Nehemiah and Esther. What are the various ways that God's people behaved in the court of kings?

Observation

What ideas are repeated (e.g. command, evil, power, wisdom)? What is being communicated by these repetitions?

What images, illustrations, or metaphors does the Preacher use (e.g. the four in verse 8)? What does he mean by them?

What observations does the Preacher help us make about kings? About political advisors?

Meaning

What is the Preacher's main idea(s)?

How does the passage look forward to Jesus, and life under the Son (example: consider

Matthew 4:1-11; 26:57-68; 27:11-14; Luke 13:31-35; John 18:12-14, 19-24, 28-38; 1 Peter 2:19-25)?

Application

How does the main idea challenge or confirm your beliefs? Is there some attitude you need to change? How does the Preacher challenge you to live in a way that is more loyal to King Jesus?

How do you grapple with the tension of obedience, loyalty, and prudence to government leaders over against the biblical doctrine that civil obedience is not absolute but limited (see Romans 13:1-10; 1 Peter 2:13-25)?

How does this text challenge or encourage you in the midst of increasing political division and the rise of authoritative and tyrannical rule in our nation?