

Ecclesiastes 11:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:

Analysis

Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun—the Hebrew matok (מָתוֹךְ, sweet) typically describes taste but here applies metaphorically to light, creating synesthetic imagery. The sun's light represents life itself, consciousness, and the goodness of existence. The phrase tov (טוֹב, pleasant/good) for the eyes echoes creation's refrain: 'God saw the light, that it was good' (Genesis 1:4). This verse affirms life's inherent goodness as God's gift, contrasting with the book's repeated observations about life's frustrations.

Following chapter 11's call to diligent labor (v. 6) and joyful living (vv. 9-10), this verse celebrates conscious existence itself. The simple pleasure of seeing sunlight—being alive to experience creation—is God's gift worth enjoying. This anticipates verses 9-10's exhortation to rejoice in youth. The verse provides theological foundation for enjoying life: creation is fundamentally good despite the fall's effects. Jesus called Himself 'the light of the world' (John 8:12), and believers will experience eternal light in the new creation where 'the Lord God giveth them light' (Revelation 22:5).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures celebrated sunlight as life-giving—solar deities were prominent in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite religions. However, Israel's monotheism recognized the sun as created by YHWH, not as deity itself (Genesis 1:16; Psalm 74:16). The sun regulated agricultural cycles, marked time

(Psalm 104:19), and symbolized God's faithful provision (Psalm 84:11). For people living before electric lighting, darkness meant cessation of productive activity and vulnerability to danger—sunlight enabled life and work. This verse's simple affirmation resonated with daily experience: each sunrise brought renewed opportunity for life and labor.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How often do you pause to appreciate the simple gift of being alive and conscious—'beholding the sun'?
2. In what ways does recognizing life itself as God's sweet gift reshape your perspective on daily frustrations?

Interlinear Text

אֵת לְרָא וֹתְךָ וְמַתְתָּחָת
לְעֵינֶיךָ יְמִינָה וְבָא וְרָא
וְמַתְתָּחָת וְקָדְשָׁךָ
is sweet Truly the light and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold H853
H4966 H216 H2896 H5869 H7200

הַשְׁמֶן
the sun
H8121

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 7:11 (Parallel theme): Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

Proverbs 15:30 (Light): The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.

Matthew 5:45 (Parallel theme): That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Psalms 84:11 (Parallel theme): For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Job 33:30 (Light): To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

Proverbs 29:13 (Light): The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lightener both their eyes.

Psalms 56:13 (Light): For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Job 33:28 (Light): He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Ecclesiastes 6:5 (Parallel theme): Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.