

Ecclesiastes 8:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.

Analysis

I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy—the Hebrew 'qadosh' (קדש, holy place) likely refers to the Temple or sanctuary where these wicked individuals performed religious duties or maintained public piety. They 'came and went' (ba'u vayehalekhu, באו ויהלכו) with apparent legitimacy, yet were morally corrupt.

They were forgotten in the city where they had so done—despite their prominence and public religiosity, their memory quickly faded after death. The irony is sharp: those who sought honor through religious appearances gained neither lasting reputation nor divine approval. This verse confronts the gap between public piety and private wickedness, warning that death exposes hypocrisy and that human memory proves unreliable for establishing legacy. Only God's judgment matters eternally (12:14).

Historical Context

Solomon witnessed courtiers and religious officials who maintained external conformity while engaging in corruption—a pattern repeated throughout Israel's history. The Northern Kingdom especially struggled with syncretistic worship combining Yahwism with Canaanite practices (1 Kings 12:25-33). By Jeremiah's time, this hypocrisy reached peak intensity: people frequented the Temple while practicing injustice (Jeremiah 7:1-11). Jesus later condemned similar religious

hypocrisy among Pharisees who appeared righteous externally but inwardly were 'full of dead men's bones' (Matthew 23:27). The Preacher's observation that such people are eventually 'forgotten' proved true repeatedly—numerous kings, priests, and officials once prominent are now lost to history.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What areas of religious activity in your life might function as external piety masking internal compromise?
2. How does recognizing that you will be 'forgotten' by future generations reshape your motivation for faithfulness—are you living for human approval or divine commendation?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	וְאֵיתִ	רָשָׁעִים	בָּאִתִּים	בָּאִתִּים	בָּאִתִּים	וְמִמְּקָדְשָׁם
And so	I saw	the wicked	buried	who had come	from the place	
H3651	H7200	H7563	H6912	H935	H4725	
קָדוֹשׁ	כּוֹ	וַיַּשְׁתַּחַתּ	וְיַבְּלֵל	בָּעֵיר	רַא	כִּי
of the holy	and gone	and they were forgotten	in the city			And so
H6918	H1980	H7911	H5892		H834	H3651
עָשָׂה	וְ	בְּ	כִּי			
where they had so done		this is also vanity				
H6213	H1571	H2088	H1892			

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 9:5 (Parallel theme): For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.

Proverbs 10:7 (Evil): The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

Ecclesiastes 2:16 (Parallel theme): For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool.

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