

# Ecclesiastes 8:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

## Analysis

**Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged**—the Preacher acknowledges empirical reality: persistent sinners often enjoy long life and prosperity. The phrase 'ma'ariykh lo' (מַאֲרִיךְ לוֹ, prolonging his days) indicates extended lifespan despite wickedness, contradicting simplistic retribution theology that always equates righteousness with blessing and sin with immediate punishment.

**Yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God**—despite observable injustices, the Preacher maintains faith commitment. The emphatic 'yodea ani' (יָדַעְתִּי אֲנִי, I know) expresses settled conviction transcending circumstances. 'Fear God' (yare'im et-ha'Elohim, יִרְאִים אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים) means reverential awe producing covenant obedience. Ultimate well-being belongs to the God-fearer, not the prosperous sinner—a truth known by faith, not always visible in present circumstances.

## Historical Context

Wisdom literature wrestled extensively with theodicy—Job, Psalms 37, 49, 73, and Habakkuk all address why the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer. Post-exilic Judaism faced this acutely: faithful remnant returned from exile to poverty and Persian domination while surrounding nations flourished. The Preacher doesn't resolve the tension with easy answers but maintains faith despite

observable injustices. Jesus taught similar principles: God sends rain on just and unjust alike (Matthew 5:45), yet ultimate blessing belongs to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6). The early church suffered while persecutors prospered, yet maintained that 'it shall be well' with God-fearers eternally (Romans 8:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. When you observe wicked people prospering while righteous people suffer, how do you maintain faith that 'it shall be well' with God-fearers?
2. What does 'fearing God' look like practically in circumstances where obedience brings hardship rather than immediate blessing?

## Interlinear Text

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אֲשֶׁר	חֹטֵא	עֲשֵׂה	כִּעַ	מֵאֵת		
H834	Though a sinner	do	evil	an hundred times		
	H2398	H6213	H7451	H3967		
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וּמֵאֵת יָמָיו		לֹא	כִּי	גַם	יֹדֵעַ	אֲשֶׁר
and his days be prolonged		H0	H3588	H1571	yet surely I know	H589
H748					H3045	H834
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יְהִי	טוֹב	יִירָא	יִירָא	אֲשֶׁר	יִירָא	מִלְפָּנָיו
H1961	that it shall be well	which fear	God	H834	which fear	before
	H2896	H3372	H430		H3372	H6440

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 37:11** (Parallel theme): But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

**2 Peter 2:9** (References God): The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

**Ecclesiastes 7:15** (Evil): All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.

**Ecclesiastes 3:14** (References God): I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

**Romans 9:22** (References God): What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

**Luke 1:50** (Parallel theme): And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

**Romans 2:5** (References God): But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

**Matthew 25:34** (Parallel theme): Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: