

A Topsy Turvy World Ecclesiastes 8:10-14

Introduction:

A topsy turvy world is when the world seems upside down.

It is when things happen the opposite of what we would expect.

It is when there seems to be no rhyme or reason to life.

It is when people behave in a totally incongruous manner

2009 firefighter Jerry Engle pled guilty to arson.

In 2009 the IRS was headed by a man who did not pay his taxes

In 2005 Stockbridge school principal Pamela Neff was fined 100 dollars for illegally passing a school bus

Solomon describes a topsy turvy world in the passage before us.

It is a world in which the righteous experience what we would expect the unrighteous to experience and the unrighteous experience what we would expect the righteous to experience.

Key Verse: Ecclesiastes 8:14 (ESV) There is a vanity that takes place on earth, that there are righteous people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked people to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity.

Here is Solomon's issue with life:

People who do evil get away with it.

The people who do good find themselves in difficult circumstances

With the net result that the wicked experience what we would expect the righteous to experience and the righteous experience what we would think would happen to the wicked.

I. The wicked are often honored even right up to the day of their death.

- A. The wicked are honored in the time of their death.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (ESV) **Then I saw the wicked buried.** They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.

In the old testament era the burning of the human remains was a way of dishonoring a person. Sometimes the body was simply allowed to rot in an open grave, Either way a person was dishonored. A burial, on the other hand, was a means of bestowing honor on those who died.

- B. These wicked are those who pass themselves off as righteous by attending public worship.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (ESV) Then I saw the wicked buried. **They used to go in and out of the holy place** and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.

1. Their hypocrisy is blatant.
2. One would think that they never would get away with it.

- C. These wicked individuals are praised even though their deeds are well known.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (ESV) Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place **and were praised in the city where they had done such things.** This also is vanity.

- D. Their exploits are soon forgotten.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (ESV) Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (NIV) Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (NASB95) So then, I have seen the wicked buried, those who used to go in and out from the holy place, **and they are soon forgotten** in the city where they did thus. This too is futility.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (KJV 1900) 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.

1. The evil is forgotten in the very city where it was committed.
2. The idea is that it didn't seem to matter.
3. There were no consequences throughout life, right up and including the time of death.
4. Their evil deeds never caught up to him. Not only was justice delayed, It was never experienced.
5. There is an old adage - be sure your sin will find you out

Galatians 6:7 (ESV) Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

6. In these situations those words seem like empty platitudes.

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (ESV) Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.

E. Application:

We have all attended funerals of people who were scoundrels and yet were well spoken of.

- II. Since the punishment is slow in coming, unrighteousness increases.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 (ESV) **Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily**, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.

- A. Punishment of crime is a deterrent for others to do evil,
- B. However, the further the punishment is inflicted from the time the crime is committed the less of a deterrent it becomes.
- C. There is a huge debate over the death penalty and whether or not it is a deterrent to murder.

1. The position of the ACLU

Frequently Asked Questions raised by the public about Capital Punishment according to the ACLU

Q: Doesn't the Death Penalty deter crime, especially murder?

A: No, there is no credible evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than long terms of imprisonment. States that have death penalty laws do not have lower crime rates or murder rates than states without such laws. And states that have abolished capital punishment show no significant changes in either crime or murder rates.

2. The position of *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* Summer 2010.

HOW MUCH DO WE REALLY KNOW
ABOUT CRIMINAL DETERRENCE?
RAYMOND PATERNOSTER*

This Article discusses the particular and important role of the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* in publishing the works of both those who were highly critical of deterrence theory and those who wished to keep it alive, though vividly aware of the lack of any empirical support for it.

This Article discusses the theoretical connections that are presumed by the deterrence process and briefly reviews some important empirical studies pertaining to each of those presumed causal connections. The empirical evidence leads to the conclusion that there is a marginal deterrent effect for legal sanctions, but this conclusion must be swallowed with a hefty dose of caution and skepticism; it is very difficult to state with any precision how strong a deterrent effect the criminal justice system provides. At the very least, there is a great asymmetry between what is expected of the legal system through deterrence and what the system delivers. There is greater confidence that non-legal factors are more effective in securing compliance than legal threats. It is argued that the empirical evidence does support the belief that criminal offenders are rational actors, in that they are responsive to the incentives and disincentives associated with their actions, **but that the criminal justice system,**

because of its delayed imposition of punishment, is not well constructed to exploit this rationality.

3. According to the Bureau of Justice and Death Penalty Information Center, **the average time from sentencing to execution was just around 16 years.** If no appeals are raised, that process can happen as soon as six months, but that rarely happens.

D. Despite that it may appear other wise, Solomon is convinced that the righteous will ultimately and finally be rewarded.

1. It seems as though people do evil repeatedly and get away with it.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 (ESV) **Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life,** yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him.

- a. People do evil things repeatedly.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 (ESV) **Though a sinner does evil a hundred times** and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him.

- b. It seems as though there is no consequence.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 (ESV) Though a sinner does evil a hundred times **and prolongs his life,** yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him.

2. Nevertheless, Solomon is convinced that the righteous will be rewarded.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 (ESV) Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, **yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God,** because they fear before him.

- a. The ungodly do not fear God.

Psalms 36:1 (ESV) Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes.

- b. Fear of God is a great motivation for holiness.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (ESV) Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

- E. Despite how it looks now, the evil will be punished and the righteous will be rewarded.

- 1. Things will not be great for the wicked.

Ecclesiastes 8:13 (ESV) **But it will not be well with the wicked,** neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

- 2. He will not ultimately or finally prosper. Life is short and he will die one day.

Ecclesiastes 8:13 (ESV) **But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.**

- 3. His failure to fear God will be his undoing

Ecclesiastes 8:13 (ESV) **But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.**

- 4. Conversely, despite how it looks now, the righteous will be rewarded.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 (ESV) **Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God,** because they fear before him.

III. Conclusion:

- A. The vanity is that in this life, all too often, the righteous are treated like they are wicked and the wicked are treated like they are righteous.
- B. It must be remembered it will not always be that way. A day of judgment and reward is coming.
- C. Don't be discouraged because it is not happening immediately.