

GOD'S MESSAGES BIBLE COMMENTARY SERIES

VOLUME 13

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8).

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOKS OF PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES & SONG OF SOLOMON

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Table Of Contents

PROVERBS

Introduction to Proverbs.....	9
Proverbs 1.....	17
Proverbs 2.....	28
Proverbs 3.....	35
Proverbs 4.....	44
Proverbs 5.....	52
Proverbs 6.....	58
Proverbs 7.....	68
Proverbs 8.....	77
Proverbs 9.....	87
Proverbs 10.....	93
Proverbs 11.....	105
Proverbs 12.....	115
Proverbs 13.....	124
Proverbs 14.....	133
Proverbs 15.....	145
Proverbs 16.....	157
Proverbs 17.....	168
Proverbs 18.....	177
Proverbs 19.....	187
Proverbs 20.....	199
Proverbs 21.....	213
Proverbs 22.....	225
Proverbs 23.....	235
Proverbs 24.....	245
Proverbs 25.....	256
Proverbs 26.....	266
Proverbs 27.....	275
Proverbs 28.....	284
Proverbs 29.....	295



Proverbs 30..... 303
Proverbs 31..... 315

ECCLESIASTES

Introduction To Ecclesiastes 329
Ecclesiastes 1 335
Ecclesiastes 2 343
Ecclesiastes 3 353
Ecclesiastes 4 362
Ecclesiastes 5 368
Ecclesiastes 6 377
Ecclesiastes 7 382
Ecclesiastes 8 394
Ecclesiastes 9 401
Ecclesiastes 10 409
Ecclesiastes 11 417
Ecclesiastes 12 422

SONG OF SOLOMON

Introduction To Song Of Solomon 433
Song of Solomon 1 445
Song of Solomon 2 452
Song of Solomon 3 459
Song of Solomon 4 463
Song of Solomon 5 469
Song of Solomon 6 474
Song of Solomon 7 479
Song of Solomon 8 483





**The Book Of
PROVERBS**



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Introduction To Proverbs

The Author and the Date:

Solomon is the author of most of the Proverbs, although not all of them. The last two chapters of the book are the work of Agur (30:1-33), and King Lemuel (31:1-9). The identity of the author of the latter part of chapter thirty is less certain. The entire collection may not have been compiled until the time of King Hezekiah. Chapters twenty-five through twenty-nine were collected by Hezekiah's scribes from the earlier writings of Solomon. Solomon reigned about two hundred and fifty years before Hezekiah. By and large we can credit Solomon with the book of Proverbs in the same way David is credited with the Psalms. David did not write all of the Psalms, nor did Solomon write all of the proverbs.

The careful student may be curious as to the choice of a man with history of Solomon as the author of a book dealing with morals and ethical principles. Here was a man who married seven hundred wives, and then added three hundred concubines. Here was a man who was instructed not to collect either horses and chariots, gold and silver, or wives, yet did just that (Deut. 17:14-17).

Deut 17:14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;

Deut 17:15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from

among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

Deut 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Deut 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

Not only did he collect hundreds of wives and concubines; he also amassed some forty thousand horses and immense wealth (I Kings 10:14-17).

1Kings 10:14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

1Kings 10:15 Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

1Kings 10:16 And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.

1Kings 10:17 And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

How could Solomon have remained in the favor of God to the extent that he was given such great wisdom and was allowed to author books like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon? For the answer let us examine the first and second chapters of Ecclesiastes. Take note of the following verses.

Eccl 1:3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

Eccl 1:17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

Eccl 1:18 For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

Eccl 2:1 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.

Eccl 2:8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

Eccl 2:9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

Eccl 2:10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

Eccl 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

Eccl 12:9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

Eccl 12:10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

Eccl 12:11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

Eccl 12:12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Eccl 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

It is obvious from the above passages that Solomon set out to apply the wondrous wisdom which God had conferred upon him in order that he might experience both good and evil paths. He felt that after having exposed himself to both, he could then give advice to others. After all, the possession of great wisdom does not guarantee that one will always apply that wisdom accurately. One can know good from evil, and can still decide to experience both in the expectation of being able to better advise others.

By the way, Solomon's wives turned his heart away from God which resulted in eleven of the twelve tribes being taken away from Solomon's son and placed under the rulership of Jeroboam, who was not his son.

We do know Solomon was given enormous wisdom.

1 Kings 3:12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

We also know that Solomon did not always use that wisdom to avoid wicked pathways. What shall we then conclude? How are we to react to the writings of this man? Shall we ignore them, or shall we find them profitable

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for godly living? May I suggest that these books are invaluable if we follow Solomon's advice rather than his walk in both good and evil paths. God had a valid reason for recording these writings. He desires that we come to the conclusion at which Solomon arrived without living the life that Solomon lived.

**The Nature of the Book of Proverbs:**

The book of Proverbs is an example of the poetry of the time and place where Solomon lived. It varies sharply from that of our own time. Rather than rhythmic patterns in word sounds, it compares and makes contrast between ideas. The people of Solomon's time would have found our own poetry to be as strange to them as theirs is to us. A proverb is a brief and pithy statement containing a great amount of truth, which arises from experience and observation. If one asks how the Bible proverbs can be inspired if they arose from human observation, we must answer that the author was an inspired man who was gifted by God with the ability to choose those that matched the will of Jehovah. We have many proverbs today which have been produced during our own time. Poor Richards Almanac is such a collection. An example is "A stitch in time saves nine." Poor Richard's Almanac is not divinely inspired and serves here only as a modern day illustration of the nature of Solomon's proverbs.

Some Bible doubters would like to believe the proverbs of the Bible were drawn from much earlier proverbs of the same general type. There is difficulty in this position. The greatest of the wise men, such as Aristotle, Socrates and Plato did not arrive on the scene until many centuries after the Hebrew book of Proverbs was produced.

I always make the attempt to avoid plunging the reader into a jungle of bewildering terms. I do think it

necessary now to take a look at three major forms taken by these wise sayings. I trust they will be helpful rather than discouraging to the reader's understanding.

The first of these types of proverbs is synonymous parallelism. These are ordinarily two lines in which the second line repeats the first, but states it in a different way. A good example is found in Psalms 24:1.

Psa 24:1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; The world, and they that dwell therein.

The second type is antithetical parallelism. This type may have varying numbers of lines. The latter part of the proverb shows sharp contrast with the first part. Our example is Proverbs 13:9.

*Prov 13:9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.*

The third type is progressive parallelism. Here the latter lines develop the thought presented in the previous ones. The example is Proverbs 20:2.

*Pro 20:2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.*

## **The Purpose of the Book of Proverbs:**

The first four verses of the book declare it's purpose very clearly.

*Prov 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;*

*Prov 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;*

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Prov 1:3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

Prov 1:4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

Proverbs discusses the many relationships of man. Among these are:

1. Relationship to parents
2. Relationship to husbands and wives
3. Relationship to children
4. Relationship to servants
5. Relationship to masters or supervisors
6. Relationship to the animal world
7. Relationship to civil government
8. Relationship to God

Christ and Solomon

This introduction is closed with a comparison between Jesus Christ and Solomon. Solomon provided excellent advice, after demonstrating a very poor example. Christ provided a perfect example as well as perfect counsel. (See Matthew 12:42).

Matt 12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.



Chapter 1

Prov 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

This first verse leaves not doubt as to who compiled the book of Proverbs. It is said to be the son of David king of Israel. Bible students agree that Solomon wrote most of the proverbs in this present book, and that he selected a few from other authors. The last two chapters of the book name Agur as the author of chapter thirty, and King Lemuel as the author of chapter thirty-one.

According to 1 Kings 3:10-12, God gave Solomon a wise and understanding heart.

1Kings 3:10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

1Kings 3:11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

1Kings 3:12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

Prov 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

Verses two through nine explain to the reader the purpose of the entire book. There are a number of words in these verses which are interrelated, but which convey slightly different meanings.

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We must be very careful not to overlook the forest while examining the trees. As a combination, the words complete a very nice picture of Solomon's intentions.

The first three words are found in this second verse. They are "wisdom", "instruction" and "understanding." Wisdom is the ability to properly apply knowledge. There are many people in the world who have gathered large numbers of facts, but who demonstrate foolishness in the use of those facts.

The word instruction here means more than providing factual information to a learner. It includes discipline. A father who tells his child what to do and what not to do, but then fails to discipline the child when it is disobedient, has not truly instructed him in the sense of the word as used here.

Understanding refers to insights concerning the nature and the operation of the creation, and of the Creator.

**Prov 1:3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;**

Solomon desired that the reader eagerly reach out for the facts, commands and promises of Jehovah.

If this was to be done, the person would attempt to see that justice was done to all men. The good would be encouraged and the evil would be discouraged in their respective actions.

Judgment is closely related to judgment. Judgment determines who and what is good or evil. Then justice distributes the proper encouragement or discouragement. Equity is impartiality. The good man is not to be treated as if he is evil. The evil man is not to be treated as if he is good.

**Prov 1:4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.**

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The simple are not the mentality deficient. They are the gullible, who can be easily persuaded to follow unwise paths. There is a need for such persons to learn foresight and to realize the consequences of their decisions.

Prov 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

The wise man searches out truth. He realizes he does not know everything. The wisest of men can learn from others. He will recognize opportunities to gain new information from whatever source it may come. Wise counsels are those who are in possession of knowledge which could be valuable to him. He will pay heed to such counsel and seek to apply it.

Prov 1:6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

A proverb is a short and very meaningful statement which condenses and presents truth. The meaning of the proverb often has to be dug out. The labor involved is typical of God's creation as a whole. One normally has to put forth time and effort to gain that which is valuable. This is true in farming. It is true in housework. It is true in obtaining an education.

God has set up this universe in such fashion that diligent seeking brings it's rewards.

Prov 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

What a tremendous verse this is! No person is well informed if they have ignored their Creator. He is the One who brought the entire system into being. He is the One in whom we live and move and have our being. He is the one who sustains the heavens and the earth through His Almighty hand.

The one who lives his life as if God does not exist has cut himself off from the ultimate source of wisdom and discipline. He may appear ever so intelligent in the eyes of men. But, he cannot see the end from the beginning as God does. His footsteps lead to eternal agony.

Prov 1:8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

The young person who has been fortunate enough to have grown to manhood or womanhood under the watchful eye of godly parents has great advantage. That person will have heard truth taught and will have seen truth by example.

It is not always true that a young person who has grown up in a righteous family will remain faithful to the instructions which have been given. Nor is it always true that a young person who grew up in an ungodly home will follow evil paths in latter life.

However, in general the chances of a righteous pattern of life in a young adult are much higher for the one who has been well instructed than for the one who has failed to receive such holy leadership.

Many of us have heard the amusing story of the father who was asked if was true that he “struck” his children. He replied that he only did so in “self defense.” That would not have been necessary if he had wisely disciplined the child, and the child had heard and followed the instructions and laws the mother and father laid out.



Prov 1:9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

What is it that is to be an ornament of grace and a chain about the neck? It is the teaching and training offered by the parents. Women like to wear hats and other adornments on their heads and around their neck. They feel this causes them to be more attractive and presentable. God says that a well taught and obedient young person will also be approved in the sight of God, and most of the time by his fellowman.

Prov 1:10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Solomon changes the line of thought here. He moves from the childhood years when the youngster is under parental control, to the years when he or she is learning to pick companions and actions without the close oversight of parents.

The advice which is given to the son here is also well taken by the daughter. Either of them will find it necessary to make careful decisions as to the type of companionship they seek out. It is natural for humans to search out others with like interests with whom they may associate. There are more sinners in this world than there are righteous.

A personal example is in order here. As a young man who had left home to attend a university, I found myself in a rooming house with another young man who was friendly but unwise. He had chosen the wrong friends and he had picked up wicked habits. In a moment of weakness I consented to go out and join him in an alcoholic binge. God was good to me. He allowed me to become as sick as I have ever been in my life. I know very well what Solomon

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meant when he said, "If sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Evil companions corrupt good morals.

**Prov 1:11 If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:**

Some of these sinners who would entice the righteous are not only self destructive; they prey on the rest of humanity. They stay on the watch for those whom they can victimize. They seek to take advantage of the innocent in order to gain for themselves.

Some of these gangs become openly violent. They steal, they beat and sometimes they resort to murder in their covetousness and greed. These gangs are becoming more numerous as the years pass.

**Prov 1:12 Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:**

The intention of these sinners is to do whatever is necessary to rob others of their property, their health and even their lives. Little do they care if they maim or kill their victims. They may even laugh at them as they shoot them.

I remind the reader that this is precisely what happened to Jesus Christ. He had popularity that the scribes and Pharisees envied. As He hung upon the cross, they mocked Him as he died.

**Prov 1:13 We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:**

These sinners cast their eyes upon that which others possess and decide to take it for their own. Notice that

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what they do is opposed to both the first and the second commandment. They do not love their neighbor, nor do they love God.

Prov 1:14 Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:

Not only do the wicked groups greedily lick up the lives and possessions of others, they take a certain satisfaction in corrupting any who will join them. They urge the unsuspecting to run with them and share in that which they steal.

Prov 1:15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

Prov 1:16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

In a gentle way, God advises the young man not to heed the invitation of the unrighteous to join in their evil deeds. He is to refuse their companionship and see that his feet do not walk down the same path as theirs.

Prov 1:17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

What does this verse have to do with what has just been said. It has much to do with it. The young man ought to be able to see the net of wickedness which he is invited to fly into. Even a bird knows better than to fly into a net.

Prov 1:18 And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives.

These evil persons are not just hurting others. They entrap themselves. My wife and I passed by a beer joint the other day and noticed bars of steel on the windows. I remarked that I certainly would not want to go into a place like that. One could well risk his life. Within the week, we picked up our daily newspaper and found that a man had been shot to death in that very spot. Those who endanger the lives of others need be careful. They place their own lives in danger.

Prov 1:19 So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

If evil men succeed in feeding off innocent victims while earthly life lasts, they will most certainly meet justice in the last great day of judgment

Prov 1:20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

Wisdom is everywhere. She may be heard in the marketplace and on the sidewalks. Anyone who will open a listening ear will find it possible to profit by her truths. It has been said, "There are none so blind as those who will not see." We can modify the saying to apply to the fool who will not listen to the voice of wisdom. "There are none so deaf as those who will not hear."

Prov 1:21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

Wherever people gather wisdom pleads for a hearing. The concourse was a place of public gathering. The

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gates were the areas of entry into the cities. People were passing through in large numbers. Let us see what wisdom has to say.

**Prov 1:22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?**

She wonders and is hard pressed to explain why those who follow wayward paths do not come to their senses and cease their wandering in the darkness. Nevertheless, the simple minded and foolish continue to direct their own steps and belittle the wisdom of God.

**Prov 1:23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.**

Why do the foolish not hear and heed the life giving teachings which are offered to them. Wisdom has offered truth in abundance, only to be spurned and mocked. She offers over and over, even after being scorned.

**Prov 1:24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;**

**Prov 1:25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:**

**Prov 1:26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;**

What is to be the outcome of this utter disregard for wisdom? Since men have treated wisdom with such impudence, she will hold the foolish in derision when they reap what they have sown. Her ear will be as deaf

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to their pleas during their calamity as theirs were to her call to be heard.

Prov 1:27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

Prov 1:28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

There comes a time when it is too late to make amends for foolish thoughts and actions. Then these who have turned their faces away from wisdom will cry out in the time of distress, but there will be no answer.

Prov 1:29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

Prov 1:30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

Prov 1:31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

Since the fear of the Lord is the principal part, or the beginning of wisdom, the wicked had not even knocked at the door of wisdom, to say nothing of entering into it.

Prov 1:32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

The simple and foolish men are committing spiritual suicide, and sometimes physical suicide as well. They plunge right into the net before they find they are entangled.

Neither can such persons stand prosperity. They are always greedy for more, even when their greed injures the well being of the innocent. The more they have the more hungry they become until they meet self destruction.

Pro 1:33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

This first chapter closes with a beautiful contrast. While the foolish man self destructs, the one who has harkened to wisdom is safe in the arms of the One who is the source of all wisdom.

Chapter 2

Prov 2:1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

The words, “My son” are used a number of times in this book of the Old Testament. This is no indication that the information which is offered is of no value to daughters, nor that it would not apply to seventy or eighty year old men and women. The young man who is starting out to live life for himself, rather than being under the direct influence of his parents, has a strong need to find truths and attitudes which will insure a full and fruitful life.

Our verse begins with “if” because the youngster has the privilege of either seeking and cherishing wisdom, or ignoring it to the point of self destruction. He must do more than just hear the words of God. He must hide them within himself so carefully that they will not be lost.

Prov 2:2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

Both the ear and the heart are involved in the proper treatment of wisdom and understanding. The ear receives them, and the heart ponders and decides what should be done with them.

Prov 2:3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

The getting of knowledge and understanding requires more than walking down the road and waiting for them to strike one in a head on collision. One must actively

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cry out for these things. One must make earnest effort before they may be grasped.

**Prov 2:4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;**

As a small child I had heard of buried treasures. My father had abandoned an automobile in our back yard. I sneaked a shovel out of the garage and took it out behind the car where no one could see what I was doing. Then I started digging in hope of finding some of that treasure. Before I was discovered, I had dug a hole deep enough that only my head was above ground level. It was hard work, but I thought the treasure might be worth it.

If men and women would seek knowledge and understanding as diligently as they seek for financial success, life could become far more meaningful.

**Prov 2:5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.**

Real understanding involves a proper attitude toward the God of heaven. When one understands when and how to fear God, that person has found something far more valuable than silver and gold.

When one understands the fear of God, he will set out to feast upon the infinite supply of knowledge which only God can offer.

**Prov 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.**

From the beginning, God has made certain that His wisdom, knowledge and understanding are available

to the precious creatures He made in His own image. Adam and Eve were supplied. Abraham was known as the “father of the faithful” because he recognized how precious the word of the Lord could be. Moses became a mouthpiece for God as the law was given through him at Sinai. Christ came that men might see the Word in action.

**Prov 2:7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.**

The buckler is one who assists in keeping life in order. God not only makes wisdom and understanding available that men might see the way; He also walks with them when they set out to walk the paths which He has shown them.

**Prov 2:8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.**

**Prov 2:9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.**

With our present day superhighways, it would be altogether too easy to forget the narrow and difficult pathways men traveled in the past. Jesus said the paths are wide that lead to destruction and many follow them, but the path that leads to eternal life is narrow and there are but a few who find it.

If a man is sincere in his efforts to please God, God will see to it that the path is passable. He will keep the way of His children open to the righteous.

**Prov 2:10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;**

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Prov 2:11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

Prov 2:12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

I suppose there is not a young man alive who has not been tempted to cast his lot with sinful companions at one time or another. The human imagination conjures up all kinds of supposedly delightful pleasure and excitement.

It is at that point that the wisdom of God becomes extremely valuable. It will cause one to think the second time before dashing off to meet the roaring lion who seeks to devour God's faithful. The froward man is the one who leaps before he looks. The wise and understanding do not do that.

Pro 2:13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

Pro 2:14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

Pro 2:15 Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:

These froward men do not hesitate to turn from the spiritual light and walk in the darkness. Not only do they fail to cherish the paths of light and uprightness; they embrace the darkness and take joy in the company of those who are an abomination to Jehovah.

Their ways become both wicked and crooked. The young man whose mother has warned him of the consequences of a life filled with folly is a fortunate one. She seeks to set her son's feet on righteous paths, and to cause them to remain there.

Prov 2:16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

The strange woman is one who is a stranger to the way of the Lord. Her lips drip with words as sweet as honey. She entraps the young man with her promise of forbidden pleasures.

This type of woman will be discussed more than once in this book of Proverbs. She will be contrasted with the virtuous woman who is pictured in the last chapter of the book.

Prov 2:17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

The strange woman has ignored any wise words that have been taught to her by those who raised her to adulthood. If she ever realized God cared about her and wanted her to live uprightly, she walked away from that knowledge as if it did not exist.

Prov 2:18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

The young man needs to be careful. This strange woman can lead him straight to hell. One can pick up the daily newspaper almost any time and find that one man has murdered another because of jealousy over a strange woman.

In addition to the possibilities of being shot, there is also the strong danger of sexually transmitted diseases. Yes, it is certainly true that these women must be avoided if one wishes to be safe on earth, and pleasing to God.

Prov 2:19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

It is not likely that the man who is seduced by such a strange woman will ever leave that way of life and return to walk the narrow way that leads to life eternal. It is not absolutely impossible, but it is not to be expected.

Prov 2:20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

We are back to our premise that wisdom will cause the one who seeks for knowledge and understanding of God to hold to His hand and move ever closer to the gates of the Heavenly city.

Prov 2:21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

God promises that following His Way will lead to blessings both on earth and in heaven. As in the case of Job, and of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the righteous sometimes suffer horribly, and even unto death itself.

Yet, in the end, peace, love and joy will be victorious.

Prov 2:22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

It is just the opposite with the wicked who fail to seek for knowledge, wisdom and understanding. They may live in the lap of luxury for a few short years, or they may find themselves surrounded by poverty and disease. But,

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these will find themselves cast into everlasting darkness with screams of agony echoing through their souls.



## *Chapter 3*

**Prov 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:**

There is little doubt that this admonition referred primarily to the law of Moses to the reader of the days of Solomon. It certainly is not, however, confined to that time period. Nor does it apply to young sons only. It is of the greatest of importance that men and women, both young and old, hide the laws and commandments of God deep in their hearts.

**Prov 3:2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.**

The person who does keep the commandments of Jehovah is far more likely to live a life of peace with himself, peace with his fellow man and peace with his Creator. He or she is far more apt to be both physically and mentally healthy, and live for a longer period of time.

This is not an infallible principle. There are some wicked persons who live long lives and own large mansions. But, the spiritually committed person has the odds on his side.

**Prov 3:3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:**

This verse is figurative. It does not demand that one tie a phylactery upon his sleeve with Bible verses printed upon it, or paste scriptures upon the forehead as the Rabbis did in the days of the Saviour. One can do that

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and live a hypocritical life with little true love for either his fellow man, or his Father in heaven.

The verse urges one to hold the eternal truths tight so they are not forgotten or neglected. The Word of God is like food and water for the soul.

Prov 3:4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

God knows the recipe for social and spiritual health. We are told that in Jesus early life he grew in wisdom, in stature and in favor with God and man. Jesus said, "I came to do the will of Him that sent me." If we take the same attitude, we will find that our own growth will follow that of the Master.

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Prov 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

The writer had a radio program for several years. Each broadcast was closed with these two verses. They are as rich in wisdom as any two verses in the entire Word of God.

God's thoughts are vastly higher than our own. If we are so bold as to ignore one who is eternal and omniscient, as well as being love itself, we make as serious a mistake as one can make. We are incapable of seeing the end from the beginning. We can certainly see a short ways, but we cannot see to the end of the road. God can. Only a fool despises the wisdom of the Almighty.

He has offered us his wisdom and we must cherish it.

Prov 3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

Satan loves to see a man filled with self pride. This was one of the three weapons he used in his attempts to seduce the Son of man. He used the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

There is need for a word of caution here. It is altogether too easy to see the pride in someone else and be completely blind to that which has found its way into our own heart.

Prov 3:8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

The fear of the Lord and the keeping of His commandments is said to be the whole duty of man. In saying that such is health to the navel, we are to understand that there is inner support in making a firm commitment to the will of God.

Prov 3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

One's substance is that with which he has been enriched. God is the one who has made such enrichment possible. He expects that those who benefit from His bountiful hand will place the advance of His kingdom above all else. The faithful Jew in the Mosaic age often contributed as much as thirty percent of his income back to God's work.

Prov 3:10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Will man become poverty stricken by giving of his means to the well being of God's cause? Not by any means. Christ advised that one should seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you.

God has made a promise that those who place Him before all else will receive more than they give. God keeps His promises. Not all of us have wine presses in our day. We do have ways by which we make our living. If we care about God, He will care about us.

Prov 3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

Prov 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Why are these last two verses included immediately after informing us that God will provide for His own? I believe it is because there are times when it appears to God's people that He has abandoned them, and that life has been cruel.

There are several reasons why these difficult times may arise. One of the chiefest of these is that God is chastening or correcting us. Sometimes we find out years after the fact that our suffering was of great benefit. When a mother or father spans a misbehaving child, the child may feel that it has been treated unjustly. Later in life that same child can see that the correction was administered because of the love of his or her parents.

Prov 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

Prov 3:14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

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**Prov 3:15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.**

Wisdom is portrayed here as a fine woman. Throughout the book of Proverbs wisdom is placed in opposition to the “strange woman” who seeks to corrupt man.

There is nothing one could gain which would enrich him more than true wisdom. Silver, gold and rubies may sparkle for the moment. Others may admire such possessions and exclaim over them. They lack durability. When this life has run it’s course, these trinkets will be of no more use. Then each of those who have amassed wisdom will realize the true value of that which endures beyond the grave.

**Prov 3:16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.**

**Prov 3:17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.**

**Prov 3:18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.**

Repetition is sometimes said to be the soul of learning. The author of the proverbs recognized the truth of this statement. We find the most important points said in many different ways throughout the book. Thus, we are reminded that peace and fulness of life are the gifts of wisdom.

We must never forget that the acquisition of wisdom is not a happenstance. It comes through dedicated study and observation of God’s laws in action.

**Prov 3:19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.**

There is a strong connection between wisdom and the Word of God. Jesus is called the Word, and is said to have been with God in the beginning. Without Him was not anything made that was made. Jesus is the personification of wisdom.

The Christian may well feel concern for those who fail to recognize the existence and authority of Jehovah. Such persons may have the knowledge to earn a doctoral degree in various academic areas. But, they are poorer than Job's turkey when it comes to that which is true wisdom.

**Prov 3:20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.**

The various laws of nature are firmly under the control of the same God who created the universe. He can withhold the rain. He can give the bountiful harvest. He can cover the earth with a flood. He can also melt the elements with fervent heat. His power and His will must be respected.

**Prov 3:21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:**

**Prov 3:22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.**

A new twist is now added. Cherishing the wisdom of God can cause one to be adorned in beauty. Just as a woman wears a necklace to make her appear more attractive, the wisdom of God can make the owner spiritually beautiful, even if the facial features or body build leave something to be desired.

**Pro 3:23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.**

**Pro 3:24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.**

Will the faithful never break a leg or toss and turn through a restless night? Most assuredly they will. Again we have a principle which holds true in the majority of instances. The man who walks in the darkness, without the light of God's commandments for guidance, cannot see the pitfalls which the Devil places in their way. His walk will be unstable.

Yes, the man of God will have periods of restlessness due to matters which are beyond his control. Still, his sleep will be sweeter than the man whose conscience is reminding him throughout the night that he has defied God and abused his fellowman.

**Prov 3:25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.**

**Prov 3:26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.**

One time when I was a small child, the family visited some relatives who lived near a run down apartment complex. During broad daylight, one man came running out a doorway with another following him holding a large knife in his hand. I was petrified with fear. Undoubtedly there are many good Christians who are faced with grave physical danger on a regular basis. God assures such persons that they are in His hands. Ultimately, they may expect security in heaven.

Pharaoh's forces were very impressive. Yet how simply the Lord rescued his people as the waters of the Red Sea closed in upon their pursuers! God can take care of His followers.

**Prov 3:27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.**

**Prov 3:28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.**

When one sees that his neighbor, who is a deserving person, has a need, he is to offer his help. He is not to close his heart and deny assistance. The help is to be given as though one were actually giving to the Heavenly Father Himself.

Jesus indicated that one's neighbor was anyone who needed his help.

**Prov 3:29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.**

**Prov 3:30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.**

It is great wickedness to try to take advantage of one's fellowman. This is especially true when the other person has not harmed one in any way. If one ignores this command and mistreats a neighbor without a reason, that man invites God to treat him in the same manner that he has mistreated the neighbor.

**Prov 3:31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.**

**Prov 3:32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.**

It is quite unwise to admire and try to imitate the man who oppresses and mistreats others. God's people are to avoid such words and deeds. God hates those who act in such a hateful manner.

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Contrariwise, God stays close to the righteous person. The word “secret” which is used in this verse has to do with intimacy. God is the close companion of the one who befriends others who are in need.

Prov 3:33 The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

Those who fight against God and His people will find that God also fights against them. I do not wish to be an enemy of the one who created all things and sustains them with his wisdom and power.

Those who fear God and keep His commandments will find that God dwells with them. They cannot actually see Him in this world. Someday they will!

Prov 3:34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

Prov 3:35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

The foolish and pride filled shall be brought low. Their pride will be dissolved in shame and embarrassment.

The humble will be taken to glory and offered God’s grace and blessings beyond their fondest dreams.

Chapter 4

Prov 4:1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

The parent-child relationship is one of the cornerstones of a healthy society. If parents are genuinely interested in the proper development of their children physically, mentally socially and spiritually, they are accepting their God given responsibilities. If children have respect and love for their parents, they are fulfilling their part of the team.

It is not enough that the children hear the instruction of loving parents. They must pay strict attention and strive to understand what the parents are telling them, and why they are doing so.

Prov 4:2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

The father who is speaking here declares that he has provided wholesome teaching to his son. Since that is the case, the son must not ignore the teaching.

Prov 4:3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

There are three separate possibilities as to the identity of the father. It could be God Himself speaking to all man and women of every age. It could be that Solomon is discussing the personal instruction he received from David, his earthly father. It could also be a symbolic figure representing all responsible fathers, as they bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Some question whether there was a close relationship

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between Solomon and his father. This could mean that the father is not David, but that he is either God, or a symbol for all responsible fathers.

**Prov 4:4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.**

We can certainly take the excellent advice which is given by this father and make application to our own situations.

Father gets to the point immediately. Success is marked by properly assimilation of truth into the heart. If righteous ways are presented, and are then treated as worthless and allowed to escape, one might as well be untaught.

**Prov 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.**

Wisdom and understanding are not going to force their way into the heart. It is necessary that the man who is to be wise seek it out with all diligence. He must not only listen to his physical father; he must listen to Jehovah and the wise with whom he comes into contact day by day.

**Prov 4:6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.**

Wisdom is to be treated as one would treat a precious wife. She must be cherished and loved. If she is loved, she will respond by taking care of the one who loves her.

Remember that throughout the entire book of Proverbs there are two women who seek the young man's affections.

One is wisdom. The other is the strange woman who would seduce him into following the way of wickedness and foolishness.

**Prov 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.**

Nothing is more important than wisdom. But wisdom and understanding go hand in hand. The one who knows what wisdom is, but who has no understanding of its value might as well never have been instructed.

**Prov 4:8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.**

When one is made acquainted with wisdom, that person must hold her high with great pride. If this is done, the individual will find the returns much more rewarding than might have been anticipated. Hold wisdom tight. She will respond in kind.

**Prov 4:9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.**

One can be adorned in many ways. Diamonds and emeralds will impress some. Fine gowns and tailored tuxedos do the same. But, one needs much more than jewels and luxurious homes to be adorned in such a way as to impress the Lord of heaven and earth.

In addition, the truly wise among men will also recognize others who have found the ways of righteousness.

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Prov 4:10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

If this is Solomon speaking, he did not do a very good job of following his own wise words. He reigned for forty years and then died quite early and was succeeded by his son Rehoboam.

Still, his words are in general true. One who lives a righteous life is more likely to live longer than one who subjects himself to the life of wickedness and corruption.

Prov 4:11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

Prov 4:12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

I like to think that Solomon is writing inspired words which were given to him by the Lord. One cannot accuse the Lord of neglecting to teach men the right pathway. God is not responsible for men's folly.

The word "straitened" in verse 12 is not used in the sense that Jesus spoke of the straight and narrow way. Solomon writes that the path of the righteous man is not straitened. Are Solomon and Jesus Christ contradicting each other? Not at all. When Jesus spoke of the "strait and narrow way" he was saying that the way into the kingdom of God is not so wide as to allow wicked persons to find it and enter in. Solomon is saying that the path of the righteous and wise man is not strewn with obstacles of every kind such that the path becomes a way unto death.

Prov 4:13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

My own father and mother repeatedly told me to avoid evil companions. I knew they had given me wise advice. I tried to pay heed to their instructions. Nevertheless, there was constant pressure to follow the crowd who were “living it up.” That was the way of death. Wisdom is the way of life.

Prov 4:14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

Prov 4:15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

Just how seriously is this instruction to avoid evil persons to be taken. How could God have made it any clearer than He has? One is to “avoid it.” He is to “pass not by it.” Obviously this does not mean that he is to stop when he passes the wicked way. He is not even to pass by close to it. He is to put a distance between himself and it and go the other way.

Prov 4:16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

There are a number of reasons why men and women lie awake at night. Sometimes they are making constructive plans for the next day's activities. Other times they have worries about the health of either themselves or those they love. Sometimes they are grieving because of an evil conscience which is reminding them they need to repent and do better.

This present verse describes men who are so evil they lie awake nights thinking about they injured either the physical or spiritual condition of a fellow man or woman.

Prov 4:17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

These evil persons feed on the bread and the wine of the Devil. The newspapers in recent days have reported a case in which some white men tied up a black man and dragged him behind their truck for about three miles. His body was torn apart. His head and his arms had been removed from their sockets. I ask the reader, "Does this not sound much like the persons Solomon is describing?"

Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

This verse and the next present a contrast between the lighted way of the righteous and the darkened way of the wicked.

The shining light here that shines more and more unto the perfect day is the sun breaking over the horizon in the dawn of the morning. Throughout the day the light grows brighter and brighter until all is illuminated and is easily seen. The righteous man finds the way becoming clearer as life passes.

Prov 4:19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

The wicked man does not find the path growing brighter and brighter. He finds that it becomes darker and darker until he stumbles over obstacles which lead to spiritual injury and death.

Prov 4:20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Prov 4:21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

We can take a lesson from the importance of the physical heart of men. If the heart fails, the person is dead very soon. It is the central point of life itself. If the blood is not pumped through the body, the rest of the person has but a short time to live.

The Bible heart is the mind or soul of man. Spiritual life depends upon the proper feeding of the mind. One must be cautious about what he reads, what he hears, and what he studies. If this is done the spiritual heart will be healthy.

Prov 4:22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

God's teachings are the source of food for the soul. They provide life and health.

Prov 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Do you see my friend, the vital part played by the spiritual heart. First, it must be fed with the proper spiritual food. That food must be digested and must become a part of the soul. Then, from that pure heart can flow a stream of living water which enriches others lives and pleases the Father in heaven.

Prov 4:24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

Look at what takes place when the heart is pure. The mouth and lips bring forth blessing for the fellow man.

Lying, cursing and blasphemy are unknown to the lips of the man with the righteous heart.

Prov 4:25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

The eyes of the righteous are not bent on looking at that which initiates lustful thoughts and covetous attitudes.

Prov 4:26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

The feet of the righteous man will be found walking in the footsteps of the Lord. They will not constantly be wandering off into forbidden territory.

Prov 4:27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

The way of the wise man does not wander from the ditch on the left to the ditch on the right of the road. It avoids these pitfalls with all diligence. The man of wisdom does not try to hold hands with the strange woman. He embraces wisdom and holds her tight!

Chapter 5

Prov 5:1 My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

Prov 5:2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

The teacher speaks here. He has several things to offer to the young man. He has knowledge. He has wisdom, and he has understanding. The wise young man will reach out for all three.

Knowledge must be accepted before discretion and wisdom may be applied. The ears must first hear. Then proper judgments may be made and holy actions can follow.

Prov 5:3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

Most commentators apply this to prostitutes. Such an application is literal. There is also the possibility that a symbolic application is intended. The strange woman may be a prostitute, but she may also be the seductive attraction of Satan's way of life when compared with the purity of God's way.

In either case, the first impression may promise all kinds of delight and pleasure. Not only does she offer physical attractions; she flatters and her kisses are sweeter than wine. How could the young man turn away from such satisfactions?

Prov 5:4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

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It is my understanding that the word “end” in this verse has to do with final judgment. If the young man wishes to join her in sexual immorality, he will find himself sharing in her condemnation as well as suffering a host of other consequences.

Wormwood received it’s name because it was a drug taken from the wood of trees, and was used to rid one of worms. It was as bitter as gall. The sharp two-edged sword is capable of beheading a person.

**Prov 5:5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.**

The path of the strange woman ultimately leads downward to the grave and the torments of the wicked after death.

**Prov 5:6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.**

The one who pauses to attend to her temptations will find that she is extremely undependable. She has shifty ways and it is impossible to predict where she will go next, or what she will say.

**Prov 5:7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.**

We are back now to the pleas of the teacher of the young man. He insists that those who need to hear his wisdom must not turn away from his admonitions.

**Prov 5:8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:**

Previously he had said not to pass close by her. This time he puts the same truth in different words. Stay away from this strange woman as if she is a plague. Stay so far away from the door of her house that you will not be tempted to enter.

**Prov 5:9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:**

**Prov 5:10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;**

A list of possible results caused by falling to her invitations is now to be presented.

One may find that his respect and influence has disappeared and while he has deteriorated, others have risen up to take his position in society. He may find himself being abused by those who would once have hesitated to do so.

His material possessions and his financial assets may melt away as his pocketbook is opened to the whirlpool of sinful expenses. Prostitutes do not come cheap.

**Prov 5:11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,**

**Prov 5:12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;**

Truer words were never spoken or written. Venereal disease is devastating. Syphilis and aids can leave strong men blubbering like idiots and living in bodies that are racked with pain and wasting away until they are mostly skin and bones.

The epidemics of venereal disease of today's society,

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as well as those of past generations are almost exclusively the result of sexual immorality.

Prov 5:13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

The individual who disregards the truth in such matters will find himself wondering how it was possible that he could be so foolish as to have been so foolish as to turn away from wisdom and toward folly.

Prov 5:14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

There are two possible explanations of this verse. It may be telling us that the young man had nearly reached the point of utter ruin and could well have been sentenced to death.

It could also mean he was in a state of disgrace in spite of the fact that he was closely associated with an assembly of God's people.

Prov 5:15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

The young man's wife is pictured as a well or a cistern. Wells and cisterns provide water. This is a plea for the man to receive his sexual refreshment from his own wife and not from strange women.

Prov 5:16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

Prov 5:17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.

Not only does the man find sexual refreshment through his wife. His wife should experience the same from him. Any children that are produced are to be the result of the holy marriage union.

There are numerous children today who are not capable of identifying their fathers. That is a sin against the child as well as against God.

Prov 5:18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

Prov 5:19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

The issue of his sexual activities should be children who are loved and blessed. This can only be true if the young man is faithful to his wife.

Marriage relationships are held high in the Bible. There is nothing ugly or sinful when a man satisfies his sexual hunger with his own wife. Her body should give him all the pleasure he requires. He is to be completely infatuated with her for their entire lifetime.

Prov 5:20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

If men would see their marital infidelity in as ugly a light as God does, they would be much more apt to shun evil companions. Going to bed with a prostitute is an abomination in the eyes of man's Creator.

Prov 5:21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

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See also Psalms 34:15-16

*Psa 34:15-16 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.*

Nothing a man does is hidden from the eyes of Jehovah. The only way sin can be hidden from God is to repent and follow God's procedure for erasing it from His accounts.

**Prov 5:22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.**

George Dehoff has expressed this truth very well. He said, "Every sin has a group of cousins who always come to visit."

Dear reader, would you rather be a slave to sin, or would you prefer to be a faithful child of the Living God?

**Prov 5:23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.**

The foolish man does not die without instruction because it was not offered to him. He dies without it because he deliberately closes his eyes to it in order that he may enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

## *Chapter 6*

**Prov 6:1 My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,**

This chapter of Proverbs is largely concerned with precautions against abuse of personal relationships. These words of caution are applicable to any man at any time. They are particularly important to faithful Christians.

The first of these admonitions deals with agreements to pay the debts of either a friend or a stranger in case they do not fulfil their obligations. This can be a very unwise practice.

The striking of hands is merely a way of sealing the agreement. One has already promised. He shakes hands to solidify the matter.

**Prov 6:2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.**

To be snared is to be entangled in a net from which it is difficult or impossible to free one's self. One who makes a vocal promise to be surety for another places himself squarely in the net. His words will be brought up and used to force him into payment of the debt.

**Prov 6:3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.**

The best advice for one who has walked into this dangerous position is to make every attempt to cancel the agreement. He is to go to the one for whom he has co-signed and plead for a release.

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Prov 6:4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

Prov 6:5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

There is no time to waste. Neglecting to take immediate action can lead to destruction. Just as a deer or a bird would do everything possible to escape, this man should make every effort to find a way of extricating himself.

The above advice does not encourage one to demonstrate a lack of generosity toward one who is in difficulty. If another person is in need, and the observer has the ability to aid the needy, it is right and proper to give help.

Prov 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

A similar expression in our own time would be to become as “busy as a bee.” Ants and bees are known to be very industrious. It would be wise for the lazy person to learn valuable lessons from them.

Prov 6:7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

The ant does not even need to have a boss to keep him from loafing. This verse has been contested by some. They claim that the ants have a colony which is highly organized, with some taking the lead and others acting as followers. This is not a valid objection to the truth taught in the verse. Anyone who has watched ants or bees will have to deliberately close their eyes to miss the lesson.

Prov 6:8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Adam Clarke vociferously denies that ants lay up food in the summer that they utilize in the winter. He asserts that the ants sleep during the winter. This does not mean that he ignores the truth of the statement. The wise person will work while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work.

Prov 6:9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

Prov 6:10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

Prov 6:11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

The lazy person fails to look ahead. He wishes to eat without working. The scripture teaches that *"If a man will not work, neither let him eat."* (2 Thess. 3:10).

That lazy person will find that poverty and want will move steadily in upon him like a marching army.

Prov 6:12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.

Prov 6:13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;

Prov 6:14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

Prov 6:15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

The word "naught" is a bit archaic in present day English. Naught is equal to zero. It is nothing. The naughty man is one who is worthless. We use the phrase "good for nothing." His mouth, his eyes, his fingers and his heart all lead to destruction.

His mouth utters obscenity and blasphemy. His eyes are ever open to evil, but are closed to that which might lead to a higher life. His feet take him to dens of iniquity and his fingers weave a pattern of wickedness. All of these disgusting actions arise from a heart which is running over with evil thoughts.

I am reminded of an article in the morning newspaper of the day in which my present comments are written. Two young men had gone to a tavern to drink together. They were both homosexuals. After having drunk until they were both utterly intoxicated, they decided to have a sexual union. One of them stuffed a towel in the mouth of the other and put another around his neck. He then strangled the other to death while acting like he was riding a horse!! The victim died. The one who strangled him has been serving a prison sentence. In view of this escapade and others without number, would you not agree that the words of the four verses above are undeniable?

Pro 6:16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

Yes, it is true that God is a God of love. He loved those of the world so much that He gave his only Begotten Son that men might believe in Him and not perish in the fires of hell.

That does not imply that God cannot, or does not hate when hatred is appropriate. The hatred is expressed toward that which threatens the objects of His love. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Seven is symbolic of completeness. We are now presented with a full description of the types of persons who incur the wrath or hatred of God because of that which consumes them.

Prov 6:17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

The proud man looks down in contempt upon those around him. When Satan tempted Eve in the garden of Eden, he is said to have attempted to raise himself to a position equal to or superior to Jehovah. The pride of life, along with the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh make up three great classifications of sin.

It is not a coincidence that the Devil is called the “father of liars. He and his children are quite deserving of the hatred of the True Heavenly Father.

Hands that shed innocent blood are those of murderers and those who batter others. God has declared that those who shed innocent blood are to pay with their own blood. The lax laws of today that allow such persons to go to prison for a few years and then be released on parole are not God given.

Prov 6:18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

The Bible heart is the mind. When that mind occupies itself with plans for mischief and wicked objectives, it is taking that which God meant to promote His glory and men’s happiness and turning it into a hated enemy of righteousness.

Prov 6:19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Some see two separate classes in this verse. I do not think that is the case. The false witness delights in spreading lies about others. He does not have to do this in a court of law. If a preacher repeats a false report about another preacher, that one who spreads the lie is a false

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witness. If a member of a congregation of God's people enjoys gossip about other members, he or she is capable of telling lies and sowing discord.

**Prov 6:20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:**

The son in this verse does not have to be eighteen years of age and heading off to college. He could well be a man of seventy years. He will, in most cases, have been taught how he should act in thought, speech and actions. I remember very vividly many of the precepts which both my mother and my father taught me. It is an unusual parent who teaches a child to enter into perversity.

**Prov 6:21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.**

**Prov 6:22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.**

The Jewish Rabbis took such scriptures as these literally. They actually bound written segments on their foreheads, etc. The writer of Proverbs not only urged his readers to tie them around the neck. He added that they were to be embedded in the heart and soul.

**Prov 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:**

Jesus spoke of God's Word as being a light unto our way and a lamp unto our path. The one who neglects to carry this light with him will find that his path has become one of stumbling and falling.

Proud men will not receive the commandments of God. God's instructions are absolutely necessary to the full and complete life.

**Prov 6:24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.**

This light which is shed by the Word of God is capable of showing just how dangerous it is to listen to the flattery which falls from the lips of the strange woman.

This strange woman is a whore, as evidenced by verse twenty-six. She cares nothing about the man whom she seduces. Her attentions are completely selfish.

**Prov 6:25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.**

Prostitutes very often overdo the use of cosmetics. Eye shadow and lipstick are employed to enhance the artificial beauty she desires. She uses every technique available to entrap her victim.

**Prov 6:26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.**

In what way is the man brought to a piece of bread. There are those who believe this indicates the price of a whore is about the same as a loaf of bread. Thus, she appears to come cheap. Then, when all is said and done. She drains him of the necessities of life itself.

Others believe this verse contrasts the whorish woman with the adulteress. The price of the whore is low, while the adulteress destroys the entire life of the man. Either of these types of women can leave a man in poverty and death.

**Prov 6:27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?**

**Prov 6:28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?**

Does one really need to go into detailed comments on these two verses. The answer is a great big NO! Stay away from both the whore and the adulterer.

**Prov 6:29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.**

The man who is foolish enough to frequent strange women, or to entertain an affair with his neighbor's wife, is playing with fire and walking on hot coals. Especially is this true with respect to sexual relationships with a neighbor's wife.

Do not make the mistake of thinking the neighbor must live in the house next door or across the street. The neighbor's wife may live next door, or across the street, but she may also work in the same office or at the work station next to a man.

The one who puts his lust into action will pay a severe penalty. If her husband does not find out about the sin, God still knows. God is not mocked. He has declared that "*Vengeance is Mine. I will repay.*"

**Prov 6:30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;**

If a man finds that his wife and children are hungry, he may steal in order to fill their stomachs. When he is discovered, there will be pity shown because he was not acting from selfish motives.

**Prov 6:31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.**

If the thief is found out, he will be expected to repay that which was stolen. It might be double what he stole. It might be seven times the value of the stolen goods.

**Prov 6:32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding; he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.**

In contrast, the man who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife will find that he has done something which is too expensive to ever repay. He that would rob a man of his wife's affections can never offer compensation equal to the value of that which he stole.

**Prov 6:33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.**

The effects of adultery are lasting. On occasion a man will admit to his wife that he has been unfaithful to her and he is sorry. She may even take him back and do her best to live with him. But, that marriage will never have the same solidity it had before the infidelity. Those who know the man, and are aware of what he has done, will always retain this information in their minds. They will never think as highly of him as they once did.

**Prov 6:34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.**

The jealousy of the man whose wife was stolen from him is very likely to be filled with uncontrollable anger. He will not wait for legal action to take its course. He

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may take the life of his rival. In this case the wound would be unto death.

Prov 6:35 He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

The one who took his wife will not be satisfied with apologies or pay-backs of any kind. He will be correct in that attitude since no price can be placed on the love of a faithful spouse.

Chapter 7

Prov 7:1 My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

This chapter emphasizes the importance of choosing wisdom and understand rather than following the foolish lust and pride of the world.

A very clear and detailed example is given of the seduction of a young male simpleton by an unscrupulous woman whose husband is away on a journey. However, there is far more involved than just a look at the dangers of keeping company with an adulterous woman. The union between God and His people is like that of a husband and his spouse. When his people have their affections stolen by the attractions of the world, He considers it to be spiritual adultery.

The first five verses of this chapter set up the symbolism. The young man is encouraged to lay hold on the commandments and instructions of the Lord and not let them go.

Prov 7:2 Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

Sometimes we hear those who cry out to us, “Why don’t you live it up a little?” The “living it up” is actually just the opposite. It is a path to destruction.

God has presented the way of life through the example of Jesus Christ. Anyone who ignores the one who is the “Way, the Truth, and the Life” is dead while he liveth.

I find it interesting that some commentators explain the apple of the eye as being the physical opening in the center of the eye. It is true that one would hold the pupil of the eye as precious and something to be protected, but

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this is first of all talking about that which the eye sees and not some part of the eye. The apple of a man's eye is anything which is seen to be valuable enough to seek out and obtain. God's commandments and laws should fit in that category.

**Prov 7:3 Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.**

The Jewish Rabbis did write God's word on phylacteries and attach them to their foreheads and wrists. This verse is contrasting such behavior with the correct one. The hands and fingers are to be dedicated to the obeying of God's will. The heart is to cherish His Word and refused to let it be erased from one's set of values.

**Prov 7:4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:**

The careful person will see wisdom and understanding as desirable as their closest kinfolk. Jesus once taught that his mother, his brother and his sister were those who keep the commandments of God.

**Prov 7:5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.**

If God's faithful will cling to His truths, they will be in far less danger from the attractions of the world which Satan places before them.

Yes, certainly the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life will make every attempt to separate a Christian from his God. The invitations offered by the world sound as if one may be able to walk with Satan and

perhaps escape from the constrictions which God places before His own. Satan once offered Eve the opportunity to be like God and direct her own way. It did not work then. It will not work now.

**Prov 7:6 For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,**

**Prov 7:7 And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,**

At this point the writer of Proverbs is ready to show just how sickening and how dangerous this spiritual adultery is. A very detailed story is presented concerning the seduction of a foolish young man.

The writer speaks of looking out through the casement of his window and watching the behavior of those he observed. This was probably not a glass window, but rather a framework with something like our own venetian blinds, through which the person inside could see out without being seen by those outside.

He saw a number of simple persons. These were individuals who did not exercise wisdom and understanding. One of them was a young man who was ripe for picking by the worldly. He was strolling about just waiting to be caught by a servant of Satan.

**Prov 7:8 Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,**

The simple young man was in an area where he ought not to have been. We might just call this street "Shady Row." While moving alone this street the young man passed by the house where a woman of corrupt morals lived.

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Prov 7:9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

It was late in the evening and the darkness of the night was settling in. This is the time of day that evil minds begin their revelling. The bars and houses of ill repute are in full swing at that hour of the day. It seems obvious that the young man was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was waiting to be caught.

Prov 7:10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

This woman is a deceitful person. She dresses as a whore or a prostitute, when in truth she had a husband as we will see in the next few verses. She makes it look like she is a prostitute because the young man will be more apt to take the bait if he thinks he will not have as much risk of dealing with a jealous husband if he is found out. After she entraps him, she will inform him that she has a husband but he is not at home.

Her attire is intended to catch the attention of the man and let him know she is available.

Prov 7:11 (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

This is not the kind of woman who feels dedicated to her housework. She does what she pleases. She traipses around like a gadfly, and leaves her home seeking excitement and the satisfaction of her desires. It matters very little what is right or wrong. She does what she pleases when her husband is away.

Prov 7:12 Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

She quickly recognizes the foolish young man as soon as she sees him. He passes right by her house as she waits outside on the corner of the street.

Again I remind the reader that this woman is symbolic of the pleasures of this world. She represents all the attractions which the Devil holds up before humanity as he does his best to steal their hearts away from God.

Prov 7:13 So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,

She did not timidly walk up to him and ask him if he was lost. She caught him and gave kisses sweeter than wine. She did not find him hard to catch.

Prov 7:14 I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.

The attitude this woman takes is all too common in this world. Peace offerings were sacrifices made by men and women to insure that God would be lenient with them after they had sinned. Some so-called Christians are of the opinion that if they attend worship services on Sunday morning, they can then do as they please the rest of the week and God will turn His face the other way.

She tells the young man he need not worry about what they are about to do. She has prepared the way with her offerings and God could care less.

Prov 7:15 Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

Since that was true, she had set out to find herself a man. She had been looking very energetically, and had finally found one. After kissing him, she knew that he was just the one for which she had been searching. He was now becoming putty in her hands.

Prov 7:16 I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.

She does not live in a hovel. He will find his senses stimulated by her artistry. Everything will be beautiful and decorated with the best.

Prov 7:17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

Not only will her bedroom look good, it will smell good. I cannot help but remark here about the ads that are placed on the sports page of the daily newspaper. They do not advertise filth and corruption. They suggest suntans, saunas and soothing music. How deceptive. Danger and disease lurk on every side. Perfume and decorated walls and couches such as these hide aids and gunshots.

Prov 7:18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

The love which this strange woman was speaking of was not the kind of love which God praises in His people. It was the kind which must hide in the shadows of the valley of death. In fact, it is not love at all. Love seeks the well being of the one who is loved. This woman and her victim are only interested in self satisfaction. It matters

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little what tomorrow may bring as consequences. It sees only the moment of passion. All else is unimportant.

**Prov 7:19 For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey:**

**Prov 7:20 He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.**

Now she reveals that she is not a prostitute. She is a married woman. The young man must now think twice about the safety of his situation. Some have been shocked when the “goodman” did come home before he was expected. Some have lost their lives in the very bedroom where they were playing.

**Prov 7:21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.**

By this time he has been completely taken in. He is ready to take the chance that he will not be caught in his sin.

Note that the word “forced” is used. Her carefully chosen words have entangled him to the point that he is helpless in her hands. It was not that way from the beginning. There was a time when he could have chosen another route. Now she is in complete control.

**Prov 7:22 He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;**

What a pitiful sight! He has little idea of what is coming at the end of the trail. He is in the same position as an ox who does not know he is heading for the butcher shop.

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Not much is said about the meaning of the last phrase in this verse. I presume it refers to the man who is so simple minded that he does not realize what he is doing will cause him to have his feet fastened in stocks where he will be beaten for his misbehavior

Prov 7:23 Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

Reality will come with a sudden shock. It will be a surprise as great as that of a bird who has flown directly into a fowler's net and finds itself about to be slaughtered.

Prov 7:24 Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

Whose children are being addressed here? It is any inexperienced and gullible child of God who may be attracted by the pleasures of the world and thereby forsake the blessings of union with his or her Father in heaven. Such a person will eternally rue the day when he set out after the pleasures of sin.

Prov 7:25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

Shun evil companions. Fasten the heartstrings on the way of righteousness. Jesus Christ is the one to whom Christians are married. Babylon will come tumbling down in shame. She has nothing to offer but guilt and agony. Do not follow her!

Prov 7:26 For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

Jesus spoke the truth when he spoke of the narrow way that few find. Many persons have met both physical and spiritual death as the end product of their infatuation with the strange woman whom the Devil has used to destroy them.

Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Prov 7:27 Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

This seducer's promise may be perfumed beds and heavenly passion. Instead, the one who follows her will be forever separated from all that is holy. He will find that her doorway has led him straight into hell.

Chapter 8

Prov 8:1 Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

It is hardly a coincidence that after the young man is seduced by the adulteress who comes out of her house and invites him into her bedroom, we find now a chapter in which wisdom cries out from every side for the attention of the sons of men. There are two ways. One is the way of death. The other is the way of life. Every person must make a choice between the two paths. The ugliness of the way of **fools** was demonstrated in chapter seven. We shall now be presented with the way of the **wise**.

Yes, most certainly voice of wisdom can be heard by anyone who will open their eyes, unstop their ears and soften their heart. It is not wisdom's fault if she is not heard.

Prov 8:2 She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.

The high places are those locations where her voice can ring out in every direction and be heard by all. She may be found in both the highways and the byways.

Prov 8:3 She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

Wisdom may be found in the entrance gates of the city where the population is large. She may also be found where men pass in and out the doors of buildings, including their own homes.

Prov 8:4 Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.

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The pronoun is now changed to the first person. Wisdom is made to speak as if she is a person. She makes it clear that she is vitally concerned with the behavior of not just men, but of all humanity.

**Prov 8:5 O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.**

She calls out to the simple minded and to the foolish. We are not talking about morons or those with low I.Q. These are simple and foolish because they have not explored the truth to the extent that they have a real understanding of spiritual matters. They need to be lifted to a higher plane of life and contemplate the things that are truly important.

**Prov 8:6 Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.**

Wisdom make a solemn promise that what she has to say will be uplifting and will not bring one into disapproval with the Lord. She is quite the opposite of the strange woman whose mouth was full of deceit in chapter seven.

**Prov 8:7 For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.**

**Prov 8:8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.**

Wisdom is dependable. It does not have to be watched to separate truth from lies. It leads to correct choices and there is no evil intent in that which it teaches.

Frowardness plunges in before all of the facts are investigated. Perversity feeds on challenging truth and righteousness. Wisdom does neither of these.

**Prov 8:9 They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.**

One's attitude toward knowledge and understanding have much to do with appreciation of wisdom. Those who despise knowledge and understanding will find muddy waters when faced with wisdom. Those who hold these to be precious and valuable will find the truth to be much more clear than might be expected.

The arrogant atheist sees problems on every side when reading the Bible. Some atheists, who have been converted concur with the conclusion put forth in this verse. A host of what were thought to be insurmountable problems melt away when the attitude turns from hostility to honest searching.

**Prov 8:10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.**

**Prov 8:11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.**

Some of the richest people in the world are miserable in spite of their wealth in silver and gold. Christ put well when He said, *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

There is an interesting account of a conversation between John D. Rockefeller and a railroad porter. There is reason to believe it is a true story. The porter had just served this immensely rich man with his dinner tray.

He then told Mr. Rockefeller that he sure wished he had just a tiny portion of the money that the rich man had. Rockefeller replied that he would give his entire fortune if he could trade stomachs with the porter. He had reached the point that he could no longer enjoy his food. There are a number of things more precious than silver and gold. Wisdom is one of them.

The apostles once told a lame man that they had no silver or gold to give him, but they would give him such as they had. They then told him to rise and walk. He did so!

**Prov 8:12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.**

This statement may have a positive or a negative meaning. If the meaning is positive, it refers to the assistance wisdom may offer in the discovery of new technology or scientific laws and principles.

If the meaning is negative, it could refer to man's production of evil inventions (See Eccl. 7:29).

*Eccl 7:29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*

If we look at the verse itself, we see that this knowledge of witty inventions is accomplished by wisdom. In that case the inventions would be valuable to both the Lord and His people. The word witty would be taken at face value. The inventions would result from application of wit.

However, if we look at the next verse, there may well be an indication that these witty inventions are the same kind as Solomon said were sought out in pride and arrogance.

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Your present commentator prefers the first of these two meanings.

Prov 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Wisdom is closely allied with the fear of the Lord. It despises everything that opposes righteousness, humility and the will of God.

Prov 8:14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.

Wisdom results in correct advice. In the understanding of truth there is immense strength. The simple and foolish man denies himself access to this well of power and strength. He is entirely too busy seeking out fleshly pleasures and accomplishments to seek out wisdom.

Prov 8:15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice.

Prov 8:16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Through wisdom kings, princes and judges of the earth are able to maintain order in society. It is certainly true that there are men of political power who are very unwise. This verse is not speaking of them. It assumes the kings, princes and judges are attempting to rule righteously.

Prov 8:17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

A man who loves his wife and lets her know it is far more likely to find a tasty meal on the table than is one who ignores her. This is also true of wisdom. The person who seeks her out and responds to her correctly will find handsome rewards.

Jesus spoke in the same vein in His statement to His apostles. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* (John 8:31-32).

Prov 8:18 Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.

The word durable is the key to this verse. Gold and silver may be durable when compared with iron which rusts away quickly. They are not so when eternity is considered. The truly durable riches are not gold, silver, jewelry and furniture. Wisdom is eternally durable.

Prov 8:19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

Prov 8:20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

Wisdom teaches men the will of God. It points out the best ways and the accurate judgments.

Prov 8:21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

It is doubtful that this verse is talking about property and bank accounts here. The real inheritance and treasures are laid up in heaven awaiting the day of judgment when the righteous will be invited to enter into the joy of the Lord.

Prov 8:22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

Has wisdom only recently made its appearance. Certainly not. Before the universe ever came into being, wisdom was there. It preceded the oldest of things of the creation.

Prov 8:23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

As a characteristic of Divinity itself, wisdom has always existed. Since God has wisdom, it had no beginning. It was present when the earth was formed.

Prov 8:24 When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water.

Wisdom was involved in the production of the seas and sources of water.

Prov 8:25 Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:

Prov 8:26 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

The majesty of the most magnificent mountains required wisdom for their creation. Man may seek out the secrets after the fact, but only the wisdom of Jehovah could bring them into being.

Prov 8:27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

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All three of the grand portions of our environment are dependent upon wisdom. The earth and the sea are mentioned before. Now the heavens are added.

**Prov 8:28 When he established the clouds above:  
when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:**

**Prov 8:29 When he gave to the sea his decree,  
that the waters should not pass his commandment:  
when he appointed the foundations of the earth:**

The distribution of the water is the product of wisdom. Some is found in the clouds above. Some is found in the ocean below. Through the use of wisdom, God specified the activity of the water cycle. Meteorologists may study this cycle and make predictions as to what may happen a few days in the future. But, it was God's wisdom that activated it.

**Prov 8:30 Then I was by him, as one brought  
up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing  
always before him;**

This verse has been the center of a gigantic controversy over what is called "Arianism." There have been powerful intellectuals who contend that this verse indicates Christ was not eternal, but was a created Being. They see the words "brought up" as the coming into existence of the Word before the Creation of the universe. They see Christ as neither fully God, nor fully man. The Arians believe Christ is eternally subject to God the Father.

An appeal is made to John 1:1-4 in the effort to show that the Word, as the wisdom of God, is eternal. See below.

*John 1:1-4 In the beginning was the Word, and the  
Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same*

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was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

The verse presently under consideration tells of the “T” in this chapter being born and brought up as a child. Those who hold the Arian view see wisdom as being eternal, but Christ as having a beginning at the time of His conception as the Son of man.

Other passages used by the Arians are Acts 2:36 and Colossians 1:15 and John 14:28.

I do not believe verse thirty above is saying Christ had a beginning before the creation of the world. I believe it is saying wisdom is an attribute of God which has existed eternally as a part of His nature

Prov 8:31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

Wisdom is delighted at the fact that men were placed upon the earth and have increased in numbers. Every time a human soul comes into existence, there is the possibility of a faithful child of God joining Him in heaven.

Prov 8:32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

The words “blessed” and “happy” are almost synonymous. The one who hears the voice of wisdom and follows it will be blessed by God and will find happiness both here and hereafter.

Prov 8:33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

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**Prov 8:34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.**

At the gates of the great athletic stadiums of the day, men, women and children line up by the thousands, looking forward to the excitement they expect to share when once inside. Wisdom urges men to line up in waiting at the gates of the city and the doors of homes to hear wisdom and gain understanding.

**Prov 8:35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.**

Once again the two walks of life are set in contrast to each other. There is a way of life, and a way of death. The one who hears wisdom and follows it walks the way of life and is approved of God.

**Prov 8:36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.**

The one who turns a deaf ear to wisdom has brought the wrath of God upon his own soul. He is walking the way of separation from God and is drawing closer and closer to the **second death**.

Those who are wise love God and His wisdom. They seek it out and follow it.

## *Chapter 9*

This chapter marks the end of a major section of the book of Proverbs. Beginning with chapter ten, we will be considering more isolated pieces of wisdom. The present chapter deals with a call to the simple (inexperienced) from both wisdom and folly to see which of them can persuade the hearer to walk in their pathways.

**Prov 9:1 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:**

This is quite a mansion which wisdom has erected. The writer lives in a part of the old south where many grandiose mansions were constructed by wealthy land owners. Four large pillars stand on many of these front porches. A mansion with seven pillars would be very, very impressive.

**Prov 9:2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.**

Wisdom has been in the process of preparing a sumptuous meal for those who accept her invitation. She has both meat and drink on the table. We are not given specifics as to the type of beasts which have been killed. We do know she has provided mingled wine. Mingled wine is probably wine diluted with four or more parts of water to one part of wine. It is also possible, though less probable that the wine was mingled with spices rather than water. Whichever the case, Wisdom is offering quite a banquet. The one who ignores her invitation will miss much.



**Prov 9:3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,**

There is no reason to reply that one did not hear the invitation. It has been announced by those whom she has sent out especially for that purpose. The announcements have been proclaimed from the most prominent places. No one can say, "I did not know of the banquet."

**Prov 9:4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,**

The word simple in this verse does not refer to simpletons. It refers to those who are inexperienced and still uninformed. Those who lack understanding may gain that understanding by supping at wisdom's table.

**Prov 9:5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.**

**Prov 9:6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.**

Wisdom admits that there is another way which might appeal to the simple. She pleads with great sincerity for the simple one to turn from the way of folly and place his feet on the way that leads to life.

**Prov 9:7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.**

**Prov 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.**

Any effort to live constructively in association with



the pride filled and the wicked will come to nothing. If one attempts to correct a person filled with pride and scorn, he will be shamed for doing so. If he scolds a wicked man, he will find that the wicked merely go on his way and mark the one who would correct him as a busybody who tends to other person's affairs.

In direct contrast, the wise person will appreciate any constructive criticism offered to him. He will cherish the advice and love the one who thought enough of him to guide him toward the good life.

**Prov 9:9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.**

The wise man is in his present condition because he has been willing to listen to truth. He may be expected to continue doing that. Each day will find him living at a higher level. It is true that he may have sorrow or misfortune enter into his life. That does not mean he has walked blindly into it. He has made every effort to search out and follow that which is upright and pleasing to his Maker.

**Prov 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.**

This is Solomon speaking. This was the man who prayed to God that he might have the wisdom to guide Israel, the people of God. The Lord granted him a very special outpouring of that which he had asked. If any can provide us a valid definition of true wisdom, this man Solomon should be the one.

His definition is that wisdom begins with the fear or

respect of the Lord. He adds that true knowledge is the understanding of the difference between the holy and the unholy.

**Prov 9:11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.**

Wisdom is speaking. She declares that the one who possesses her increases the chances of a long life. We all know of cases where holy and God fearing persons have been killed in automobile accidents, or have died from fatal diseases at an early age. That does not nullify the truth of wisdom's claim. The God fearing and holy person has a better chance of a long and happy life that does the prostitute or the drunkard.

**Prov 9:12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.**

God will hold every man or woman responsible for their own choices. The wise shall answer to Him with pleasure. The fool will answer to Him in shame. Yes, it is true that others may have either a constructive or destructive influence upon one. But in the end, it is the individual who makes the final decision either to fear God, or to turn away.

**Prov 9:13 A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.**

We come now to the call of folly. She is the opposite of wisdom. She does call loudly, but her call is more like a clanging cymbal than a sweet invitation such as wisdom offers.



Folly never looks at the consequences of actions. It is the here and now that is important. If one may eat, drink and be merry in the company of sinners, folly closes his eyes and covers his ears to what may take place tomorrow.

**Prov 9:14 For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city,**

**Prov 9:15 To call passengers who go right on their ways:**

Like wisdom, folly is difficult to ignore. She places herself on billboards and announces her momentary pleasures at every turn in the road. One finds it necessary to make a choice. Will he hear the voice of wisdom and be filled with the Spirit of God, or will he open his ear to the tinkle of the whiskey glass and become drunken with wine.

**Prov 9:16 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,**

To the immature and uninformed, folly calls, “Come in and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Do not worry about the headache when sobriety returns.” We use this as an example. Folly can take a thousand turns. At one time she offers alcohol. At another time she offers illicit sex. If a gain can be made at another’s expense, she whispers, “Right on.”

**Prov 9:17 Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.**

Earlier in this book of Proverbs, the sinful woman invited the simple man into her home by saying that

the good man was not at home. He would never know. It is strange that sin is so tempting. Shame and pleasure often go hand in hand. Folly would persuade both man and woman that it is boring to be righteous. This is as far from truth as one can get. Righteousness can be highly satisfying. What is more, it never has to apologize for it's behavior.

**Prov 9:18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.**

Are we talking about the dead physically, or the dead spiritually? The accent is probably on the fact that it is the spiritually dead who drink from stolen pleasures. It seems that those who listen to the invitation of folly blind their eyes to the gates of hell which lie directly ahead unless they turn from her beckoning finger.

## *Chapter 10*

**Prov 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.**

At this point both wisdom and folly have sent out their cry for men to come to them and feast upon their offerings. The reader has chosen to make a comparison and choose the better way. Wisdom will speak through the pen of Solomon. Let us hear what she has to say.

The next few chapters will be full of contrasts. There will be a few parallels, but most of these gems will point out sharp differences between wickedness and righteousness, poverty and riches, laziness and diligence, the violent and the peacemakers, etc.

**Prov 10:2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.**

It is certainly true that the wicked are sometimes capable of amassing wealth at the expense of others. That treasure which comes by taking advantage of one's fellow man is a detriment rather than an advantage. One must live constantly with the guilt of selfishness.

The righteous man may not be able to gaze upon a full treasure chest in his earthly home, but he is laying up treasures in heaven where they will last forever.

**Prov 10:3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.**

The body of the righteous may starve from lack of nutrition. It is not so with the soul. The righteous man is

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headed toward a situation in which the soul never dies.

The wicked will find that when all is said and done, his lands, his silver and his gold must be left behind for some other selfish person to hoard for a few fleeting years.

Prov 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

The slack hand is the one which belongs to the lazy man. He very well knows there is work to be done. He determines that he will wait just a little longer before beginning it. It does not get done and he becomes poor because he has produced nothing of value.

The man of diligence watches carefully for the opportunities which arise. He reaches out as soon as he sees them and acts on them. As a result, this person has something of value to offer others and is rewarded for his work.

Prov 10:5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

Late summer is the time of harvest. The farmer who recognizes when the crop is ready and sets out to reap it will be proud later that he did so.

The one who closes his eyes to reality and allows the wheat to lodge down or the tomatoes to rot on the vine will bring shame upon himself because of his laziness.

Note that the word “son” is used here. Much of the book of Proverbs will reflect upon the parent and child relationship. Also note that daughters can bring shame by laziness just as sons can.

Prov 10:6 Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

Those who treat others as they themselves would like to be treated are far more likely to find happiness than those who abuse their neighbor.

The word “covered” may mean several different things. Sometimes it has to do with being hidden. For instance, “Love covereth a multitude of sins.” Other times the word may refer to something which is smeared over a surface. The just man may hear blessings heaped upon his head. The violent man may smear his mouth with violent words. It is also possible that the latter part of this verse means the violence of the wicked man may result in his own death and the silencing of his tongue.

Prov 10:7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

That this is blessed is pleasant to consider. That which is rotting and putrid is just the opposite. Each of us can recall the names of persons who brought happiness to our lives. We like to recall those memories.

I can at this moment remember the name of a bully who tried to pick a fight with me when I was in the first grade. He was bigger than I and felt confident that he could beat me up. His memory will live in my mind like a drink of sour milk.

Prov 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

The wise are wise because they are teachable. When facts are presented to them, they listen. When commands are given to them, they obey those that are uplifting. When promises are made to them, they treasure them and work toward them.

It is not so with the foolish. They spend far too much

time talking to ever find time for listening. Since they ignore dangerous paths, they stumble in the darkness.

Prov 10:9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

That person who carefully searches out the way of righteousness and follows it will find his footsteps solid and sure. He demonstrates a confident example for those who observe him.

The person who leaves the light and decides to walk in the darkness will find that his crooked ways are recognized by onlookers. He will be shunned by men of wisdom.

Prov 10:10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.

Winking can mean the telling of jokes, or it can mean overlooking something important such as sinful conduct. A person who seldom speaks a serious word can hurt others feelings without even recognizing he has done so.

The person who closes his eyes to the seriousness of sin can cause sorrow to himself by entering into the sin, or he can cause sorrow to the sinner by failing to correct him.

Prating is foolish rattling on with little to say. One who spends his time in such folly can look forward to disaster.

Prov 10:11 The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

Wells are mentioned often in the Holy Scriptures. Wells were much more common in the days of Solomon

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than today. They were sources of refreshment. The mouth of a righteous man sends for refreshment to those who hear what he has to say.

The mouth of the wicked man spews out hurtful words and hateful thoughts. Sometimes those words and thoughts result in the closing or covering of his own mouth.

**Prov 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.**

Hatred and love are opposites. Love is the desire for the well being of the object of that love. Hatred is the desire for the destruction of the hated object.

The more love which exists, the more likelihood there is for peace among men. The more hatred that exists, the more likelihood there is for contention and war.

**Prov 10:13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.**

Wisdom and understanding are closely related, but obviously not identical. Understanding is the ability to see how facts are related. Wisdom is the ability to choose the best path of action once one understands the facts.

Understanding leads to wisdom and encouragement from others. Lack of understanding and wisdom earns a rod of correction. The parent who ignores this truth and fails to correct foolish behavior of his children does them serious damage.

**Prov 10:14 Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.**

Over and over in the Proverbs we see this contrast between the wise man and the fool. This time we are told the wise man is constantly searching for truth. When he finds it, he stores it up where he can make use of it. His life is made more secure.

The foolish man loves the darkness. He finds it a waste of time to listen to the Word of the Lord. His life hangs in the balance. He approaches ever nearer to ultimate separation from all that is good. Unless he turns from the ways of foolishness, he will be destroyed in hell.

**Prov 10:15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.**

This is an interesting verse. In view of many other verses we may conclude that this strong city of the rich man has walls of financial security which are nowhere near as secure as he thinks. It is wise to remember that the walls of Jericho came tumbling down very unexpectedly.

The destruction of the poor can be brought about because they are unable to defend themselves. Let us not forget, however, that the rich in this world's goods may be poor in the sight of God. It is also true that the poor in this world's goods may be rich in the sight of the Creator and protected by walls of faith.

**Prov 10:16 The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.**

Both the righteous and the wicked produce something. The righteous produce the fruit of the Spirit, which lead to eternal life. The produce of the wicked is sinful lust and pride. The wages of sin is death. Let us walk in light and life, and not in darkness and death.

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Prov 10:17 He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

Instruction only runs over some persons like water off a duck's back. Such persons never profit by showing them the error of their ways. Others gladly accept instruction in the way of the Lord. These are delighted to walk in the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Prov 10:18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

The one who hates another while hiding it by pretending friendship is a foolish man. The same man who will do that will also slander the one whom he hates when that person is no longer present. Both the pretension and the slander are unwise.

Prov 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

It is not necessarily sinful to talk incessantly, yet it is better to avoid such chatter. All too often the person who talks much says something that is sinful, even before he realizes it.

Prov 10:20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

Silver and gold are of much value. The words of the wise are of even greater value. But when the wicked man opens his heart through his lips, that which is spoken is worthless.

Prov 10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

This verse is not saying the righteous actually feed others physically. It is pointing out that wise words provide spiritual food. Even though this is true, foolish persons will fail to eat that spiritual food. They die in the midst of plenty!

Prov 10:22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

God's blessings are a source of happiness. He who obtains those blessings will rejoice. Those blessings are not mixed with cursings. They are pure and uplifting.

This does not mean that God never sends unpleasantness. Pharaoh found out this truth repeatedly as the plagues came upon him and his people as a result of their rebellious attitudes.

Prov 10:23 It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.

The foolish think they are having great fun when they indulge in forbidden thoughts and actions. The man with real spiritual insight will recognize these as sinful behavior and will avoid them.

Prov 10:24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

What is the "fear of the wicked?" Does not the wicked man or woman feel a sense of guilt when wrong is done? We think so. That fear very often catches up with the sinner and he ends up miserable.

The desire of the righteous is contrasted with the fear of the wicked. The righteous desires the approval of

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Jehovah. When he acts in harmony with the will of God, the man's desire will be granted and God will approve.

**Prov 10:25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.**

All of us have seen the difference in results when a windstorm strikes a poorly built shack and when it strikes a house built on a solid foundation. When the whirlwinds of spiritual chaos strike the lives of the wicked, they are left in tatters. The lives of the righteous will stand in the midst of the storms. Jesus spoke of the house built upon the sand and the one built upon the Rock. The foolish man builds his house upon the sand. The foundation will not hold.

**Prov 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.**

All of us recognize the bite of vinegar in the mouth, or of smoke in the eyes. One does his best to rid himself of either one as quickly as possible. The one who employs a sluggard, or lazy person, to accomplish a task will find the results just as annoying.

**Prov 10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.**

The fear of the Lord is not a paralyzing fear. It is a sincere respect for His commandments. Such a fear results in living a righteous life. Living that kind of life usually leads to a longer life.

The wicked cares not at all for the will of God. Consequently, he attempts to direct his own steps, and ends up in a foolish and shortened life.

**Prov 10:28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.**

The hope of the righteous is that all will be well with his soul and he will live in the eternal happiness of heaven. If he continues until this life is no more, he will realize that hope.

The expectation of the wicked is that he will eat, drink and be merry today. Tomorrow is a long way off. His tomorrow of eating, drinking and making merry will be cut off without mercy.

**Prov 10:29 The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.**

God promises two responses. If one follows the way of life, God will provide the necessary strength to walk every footstep of the way.

The wicked will find that God does not force men to be holy. He will allow them to disobey. Then they will find that they have been cast into everlasting fire.

**Prov 10:30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.**

There are at least two other familiar passages which should be considered in connection with this verse. The first is Psalm 37. The second is Matthew 5:5, which was quoted from Psalm 37 by Jesus Christ. As an example of the words found in Psalm 37, look at verses 27-29.

*Psa 37:27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.*

*Psa 37:28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and*

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forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

Psa 37:29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

I do not propose to explain this verse completely. Does it refer only to this present heaven and earth, or does it have reference to the new heaven and earth which replace that which presently exists? The verse says the righteous shall **never** be removed. The contrast is with the wicked who shall **not inhabit** the earth.

I do not believe the one thousand years of Revelation 20 is a literal thousand years during which Jesus will return to earth and reign in person. But, may I suggest that the reader look very closely at the following words from the pen of the apostle Peter.

2 Pet 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2 Pet 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

2 Pet 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

2 Pet 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

2 Pet 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Although the righteous may be cut off this present earth, it appears God gives a solemn promise that a new earth is coming in which those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will live and claim as their own.

Prov 10:31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.

The people of Solomon's day knew about the cutting out of tongues. Certain crimes were punished by actually cutting the tongue out of the criminal's mouth.

The present verse is probably not speaking literally. It is more likely that it is telling us the wisdom of the just and righteous will be approved and encouraged by Jehovah, but that the words of the fool will come to nought.

Prov 10:32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

Another word which could have been used in the place of frowardness is perversity. The righteous person will know what pleases God and will confine himself to that type of speech. The wicked do not care what is pleasing to God. Filthy jokes, lies and blasphemies pour out in an endless stream.

Chapter 11

Prov 11:1 A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

God wants honest transactions between a buyer and a seller. There are a host of ways in which a buyer can be cheated into paying more than the purchased goods are worth. One way this could be done in the days of Solomon was to remove a small portion from the weight of the objects which were used as standards. In our own terms, if a one pound weight was whittled down to seven eighths of a pound, the buyer was getting less than he was paying for. It was also possible to change the pivot on a balance to gain the same advantage.

A person who would stoop to such dishonesty is held in disgust by the Lord. One who is honest in his dealings is a joy to Him.

Prov 11:2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” If a man thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, he has placed himself in a position where others are very apt to puncture his pride with accusations which will lead to his shame.

Those who humble themselves are much more apt to be exalted by others than are those who toot their own horn.

Prov 11:3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

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The moral honesty of the upright person will aid him or her in choosing the routes which lead upward to God. The unwillingness of the evil minded to face truth results in becoming ensnared in the nets of Satan.

**Prov 11:4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.**

The day of wrath is the day of final judgment when the righteous are told to “Enter into the joys of the Lord,” and the sinners are told to “Depart, ye workers of iniquity.” The wealthy person may find that his riches can buy his way out of punishment in this life. When he stands before Jehovah in the end time, he will find that his riches are impotent.

**Prov 11:5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.**

**Prov 11:6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.**

All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Yet, there are some whom God has called perfect. Job was one of those. When compared with others, Job was far more mature. When such a person concludes one challenge the Lord has placed before him, he often finds another just in front of him. Each new success leads him to new gateways.

The wicked are not so. they find themselves tripping and stumbling as they attempt to substitute their own ways for those God puts in front of them.

**Prov 11:7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.**

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Any hopes and dreams which the sinners entertain are cut off with the passing from this life. They may enjoy some degree of success now. This will not be so after the judgment. In addition, there will then be no opportunity to reverse their actions.

Prov 11:8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.

The righteous man is placing himself in position to escape from the troubles which plague him while in this fleshly body.

It is the opposite with the wicked. He is placing his soul in peril. The troubles of the righteous now will come upon the wicked in far greater degree when the final rewards and punishments are assigned.

Prov 11:9 An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

The hypocrite is the one who pretends to be something he is not. The hypocrite will act as if he is a friend to his neighbor. Then, when he goes on his way, he will slander the one to whom he pretended to be a friend.

When the true facts are known, the slander will be found out for what it is. The purity of the good man will outshine the blot which the hypocrite tried to smear upon him.

Pro 11:10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

A society where the good person is promoted and encouraged will find that the entire society is blessed by those good people.

When the unrighteous are removed from a society, there is a feeling of relief and thanksgiving. As examples of the above, we note that a beloved Bible School teacher who is praised for her contributions to her students lives, all tend to rejoice with her. However, when a murderer or child rapist dies, society is more apt to react by saying, "Good riddance!"

Prov 11:11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

The speech and conduct of the upright lift the entire community to higher levels and greater unity.

The words and conduct of the sinner brings reproach and chaos to those around him.

Prov 11:12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

There are often times when one can find great faults in those around him. If he is not careful, he will multiply his hatred by mulling over those faults. It is a mark of wisdom to refrain from attacking the neighbor either by words, or by actions. Peaceful words and actions minimize the friction. Hasty words and actions may increase the friction.

We might add that sometimes the hasty actions prove to be ill founded and the supposed faults of the neighbor were more imaginary than real.

Prov 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

A talebearer is one who goes from person to person telling anything with he thinks will catch the attention of a listener. It matters not whether the tale is true or false. He gets a thrill from passing it on.

The faithful person is the one who refuses to tell everything he knows about others because he realizes what he has to tell could be wrong. Even if it is true, he avoids revealing it unless it will do more good than harm.

Prov 11:14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

There is a need for consultation before taking important actions that can affect many persons. One person, acting by himself without advice from others, will risk making errors which could have been avoided if others had been involved in the decision.

Prov 11:15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure.

Most persons have enough debts of their own without taking on those of others. How many times has the reader heard of someone who co-signed a note, and then found that he had to pay the debt by himself.

One grand exception to this is the debt which Jesus Christ paid for the sins of the world. If He had not paid our debt, each of us would have been eternally separated from God and His eternal city.

Prov 11:16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.

We shall assume that this gracious woman is one who leads an upright life which proves to be a blessing

to others. She will be honored by those who know her.

I take it that this proverb is a contrast rather than a similarity. The gracious woman cherishes her honor and character. The powerful and greedy man cherishes riches.

Prov 11:17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

Treating one's fellowman unmercifully will rebound in unhappiness for the perpetrator. The merciful person will find that his merciful attitude will be infectious and will be returned to him by those to whom he has shown mercy.

Prov 11:18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

The Devil is called a great deceiver. He was a liar from the beginning. Those who associate themselves with him follow the same pattern of action. They have no hope as long as they join him in deceit.

The one who sows righteous seed may expect to harvest a corresponding reward. His hope is anchored in God's promise.

Prov 11:19 As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

Is the author of the proverbs speaking of eternal life, or quality life before the judgment? It is likely that he speaks of both. Physical life is enhanced by righteous living. Physical death is invited by evil works. But, the

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same can be said of spiritual life and death.

How often Solomon has reminded us that life and death hang in the balance! We must choose life and not death.

**Prov 11:20 They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.**

A froward heart is one that is determined to ignore the instructions of the Lord, and walk in it's own paths. The upright are delighted to obey God's commandments. They find their place among the sheep and not the goats.

**Prov 11:21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.**

The wicked often join their efforts and evil intents. They have found there is strength in numbers. They would be far wiser to have joined hands with the upright. The righteous will escape the horrible punishment which is to fall on the evil doer.

**Prov 11:22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.**

Pigs are not the most delightful animals. They are greedy. They make unpleasant noises when they eat. They have extremely offensive odors and are usually covered with mud from having wallowed in the mire. Inexpensive metal rings are put into their snouts to keep them from rutting under fences. How foolish it would be to place a diamond ring in the snout of a hog.

A woman with great outward beauty who wallows in

evil is similar. Like the diamond in the pig's snout, she wastes her beauty by covering it with a life of corruption.

**Prov 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.**

There may be a lesson here in the difference between the words "desire" and "expectation." The good man hungers and thirsts after righteousness. The wicked may expect the wrath of God. The first will enjoy the fruits of his labors. He will be filled. The second may expect only unpleasantness when his seed ripens.

**Prov 11:24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.**

The generous person develops good will among those whom he aids. He also pleases his Lord. He will get returns far greater than that which he has given away.

The miser who cares nothing for others may well find that his selfishness causes others to hold back from helping him in his time of need.

When I was a teen age boy my father made an agreement with a miser neighbor to cooperate in harvesting our wheat fields. I can still recall having to pick up every loose straw from the ground of the neighbor's field. It would be much more difficult to help him in his time of trouble than it would be to come to the aid of a less selfish person.

**Prov 11:25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.**

The person who is liberal is the one who has concerns

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for those around him. He will be blessed for his concern. As he waters or provides for others, he is paving the way for others to return his favors.

Prov 11:26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

This verse is talking about creating a “black market.” It is not wrong to wait for a reasonable price to sell one’s produce. It is wrong to damage others by waiting until they are harmed from the lack of necessities of life.

Prov 11:27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

“Seek and ye shall find.” The man who continually seeks out the good way and follows it will find himself in favor with his associates. On the other hand, if a man persists in damaging behavior, he will bring down the wrath of others upon his head.

Prov 11:28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

One must leave his riches behind when this life is over. His silver, his gold and his land will be of no use whatsoever to him then. The good person will carry his good name and his good deeds to the throne of Jehovah, and will be very thankful that he placed his confidence in the eternal rather than the temporal.

The building of bigger and bigger barns is futile unless it has a righteous purpose.

Prov 11:29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.

A responsible parent or spouse brings confidence, peace and happiness to the entire family.

The renegade who bickers with the rest of the household, and who spend time in riotous living will come to nothing.

Prov 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

The righteous multiply their righteousness. As a tree grows and puts forth productive branches, even so does a righteous person branch out into the lives of others. Such a person is wise in that he or she causes friends and neighbors to follow them in paths of righteousness.

Prov 11:31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

In a number of cases we have found the writer of the proverbs confidently asserting that the way of the righteous is far more profitable even while he lives on earth. One can look around and see numerous exceptions, but God is concerned with the rule rather than the exceptions.

Chapter 12

Prov 12:1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.

A human is expected to be capable of distinguishing between good and evil. All a brute can do is avoid punishment and seek rewards. When a human stoops to the level of hating instruction in righteousness, that human has denied his humanity and has become little more than a beast.

Prov 12:2 A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

Jehovah is a God who places high value on holy and righteous behavior. He is therefore pleased when those who worship Him behave in a holy and righteous manner. He will condemn the person who lives a wicked life because that person has chosen to follow God's adversary, the Devil.

Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!

Prov 12:3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

This proverb sounds very much like Jesus account of the two men, one of whom built his house upon the sand, and the other who built his house upon the rock. The wicked person is like a plant which has been pulled up by the roots. The good person is deeply rooted and will flourish when the wicked are perishing. This proverb goes farther than this life. The good man will live on forever.

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**Prov 12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.**

Let us make a comparison between a virtuous woman and a good woman, as recorded in the Bible. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a good woman. She has brought great honor to her husband Joseph. In contrast, Eve allowed herself to be deceived by Satan. She then became a stumbling block to Adam and both of them live in infamy because of their folly. We need more good women who lift their husbands to righteous living.

**Prov 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.**

Keeping company with evil doers is highly dangerous. One can be deceived into walking into the Devil's traps. How much better it is to share our thinking with those who love and obey Jehovah. Both He and His commandments are dependable and full of hope.

**Prov 12:6 The words of the wicked are to lie in wait for blood: but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.**

Evil companionships corrupt good morals. Those who are evil think nothing of the damage they do to others. Trampling upon the lives of those who oppose them is the accepted way for them.

This proverb is not saying that the mouths of the upright will deliver the wicked, although that does sometimes take place. It is teaching that those who choose upright lives will avoid the perils which lie in the way of the evil.

**Prov 12:7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.**

This verse is so close in it's lesson to verse three above that the reader is urged to backtrack four verse and consider the similarity between the two verses.

**Prov 12:8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom: but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.**

This is a general statement. Certainly it is not always true that a wise man will be commended for his wisdom. If he could isolate himself from the foolish of this world, the statement would always be true.

It is most certainly true in relationship to the Lord. He knows wisdom from folly and He is delighted to commend the person who love Him, His children and the truth. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

**Prov 12:9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.**

This proverb is difficult. After having read a number of commentaries, I still feel a bit uncertain as to the full meaning. I am convinced that it deals with putting on a false front.

If a man was ridiculed by others, but still had sufficient means to have a servant, he would be better off than another person who went about trying to convince others of his importance, but who did not even have the necessities of life.

**Prov 12:10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.**

Some have it within their power to control the lives of others. A person who will make life miserable for his ox or his pets will have a strong tendency to do the same to humans who fall into his hands. This includes his wife and children.

**Prov 12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.**

If a man will not work, neither let him eat. The person who is too lazy to work deserves to go hungry. He does not have enough wisdom to realize the end of his ways.

The person who is diligent and willing to work will normally have enough to fill his stomach.

**Prov 12:12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.**

When I was a young lad, we had a pond on our farm. Muskrats lived in the pond. Muskrat hides were worth a small amount on the market. If something they liked to eat was placed in a trap, they could be ensnared and killed for their skins.

Wicked men are like those muskrats. By their association with others who are also wicked, they find themselves caught in the net of sin and death.

Righteous persons are much more apt to find life fruitful and satisfying to God, to fellow man and to themselves.

**Prov 12:13 The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble.**

Proverbs has much to say about the perils of an untamed tongue. This is just one of the many admonitions found in this book. Liars and blasphemers place themselves in serious danger. In contrast, the person who loves and speaks the truth is far more apt to bypass the pitfalls and entrapments of the Evil One.

**Prov 12:14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.**

One who thinks and speaks good things is apt to find blessedness in life. By keeping his own promises and encouraging others to do the same, he will find that others follow his example and all are enriched.

The recompense of a man's hands are the good things which he produces by hard work. His efforts will pay off as he reaps in accordance with his sowing.

**Prov 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.**

**Prov 12:16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.**

It is well nigh impossible to show a foolish person the error of his ways. He will follow his tragic path until he is destroyed.

The man who listens to the advice of others who are wise will become wiser himself. It is not true, however, that the fool should follow the counsel of other fools.

A foolish person is very apt to lose his temper and throw fits. The prudent person will keep his anger under control rather than demonstrating it to everyone around him.

**Prov 12:17 He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.**

Speaking truth makes the lives of everyone clearer and plainer. By knowledge of the way things really are, a man can carefully thread his footsteps around danger.

The man who lies about his fellowman, or even spreads untruth about any situation multiplies confusion. These lies can lead to punishments for those who are innocent, and to wasted time and energy for those who follow false trails.

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

**Prov 12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.**

One might as well have a sword plunged through his stomach as to have a lie plunged into his heart. The foolish think little of the damage they do to others by wagging their tongues.

Good men will make life happier and more comfortable for those around them. Their tongues will tell the truth and will teach others helpful truth.

**Prov 12:19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.**

Truth is durable. Falsehood is self destructive. It is not always easier to tell the truth. Sometimes a quick

lie will seem to deliver one from a momentary difficulty. In the long run the truth will prove to be a far wiser decision. One lie leads to another. One truth also leads to another. One ends in destruction. The other ends in the company of God.

**Prov 12:20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.**

There are those whose thoughts are on evil continually. They weave such a web of deceit that they ultimately find sorrow. Those who promote peace and good will among men are traveling the highway to happiness.

**Prov 12:21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.**

Again we are faced with a generality. Job was a good and upright man. That did not prevent him from suffering terrible sorrow. This writer has known of more than one dedicated Christian who endured terrible anguish. Most of the time this is not true.

It is the evil and wicked who bring suffering and anguish to both themselves and others. Just as there are good men and women who suffer, there are also wicked and evil persons who live in luxury. But, I repeat, these are the exceptions and not the rule.

**Prov 12:22 Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.**

God hates liars. They are among those who are listed as being headed for the lake of fire in eternity.

God is just as delighted with those who cherish the truth as He is angered with those who love the lie. Those who love and obey truth will find His reward to be far greater than they ever imagined.

**Prov 12:23 A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.**

The wise and prudent man avoids ostentation. He applies his wisdom when and where is it appropriate. That is not the way with the fool. He spouts off his ignorance around the clock. Some of the wisest persons the reader will ever meet are quiet and unassuming. We need more of such.

**Prov 12:24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.**

Those who rule have others under their direction. Those who are forced to pay tribute are in the position of being directed. Those who apply themselves with diligence are far more apt to be in position to direct their own lives than are those who are lazy and trifling.

**Prov 12:25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.**

A heavy heart is brought about by bad news. It may be related to health. It may be personal problems with respect to others. It may be business losses, etc. Regardless of the cause of the heavy heart, the hearing of something uplifting is capable of cancelling out just a little of the grief. The Christian has much joy to share. He or she should take delight in transmitting that joy.



**Prov 12:26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.**

A good man or woman will have the possibility of raising his neighbor to a better way of life. He or she will have been a blessing.

The wicked person has the effect of lowering the other to the gutter. Such an effect will be a curse to the one who falls victim to such abominable bait.

**Prov 12:27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.**

This verse has to do with more than going hunting for rabbits. A lazy person does not value that which comes into his hands. He will waste it, whether it be a rabbit or a high salary. The wise and ambitious man will hold such things as precious. He will not foolishly throw away that which has come into his possession.

**Prov 12:28 In the way of righteousness is life: and in the pathway thereof there is no death.**

Over and over we are reminded that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Of course the man or woman who follows Christ will die physically one day, unless the Lord appears on earth before that time. However, the real death is that which comes in the judgment when the sinner is commanded to “Depart from me, ye worker of iniquity.” The righteous man will never hear those words.

## *Chapter 13*

**Prov 13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.**

Both sons and fathers have a variety of personalities. Some fathers are afraid to discipline their children. Others are altogether too quick and impulsive. Some children are easy to correct while others become rebellious and look with scorn upon any interference in following their own will. The wise father disciplines as needed and when needed. The wise child accepts the parent's instruction and matures into a responsible adult.

**Prov 13:2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.**

Persons also have varying appetites. One hungers and thirsts after righteousness. Another seeks out and feeds upon wicked and violent ways. The first will find his life enriched by his search for the right. The second will find himself ingesting violence and hopelessness.

**Prov 13:3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.**

The one who speaks impulsively before having thought out the consequences of what he is about to say will find himself in constant danger and difficulty. The one who carefully weighs the effects of his words before they are spoken will far more often enjoy a full and satisfying life.

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Prov 13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

The sluggard is the lazy person. Such persons are normally desirous of things they do not have. They do not have because they do not work.

The diligent person is one who is not afraid to lay his hand to the plow. He is more apt to refrain from desiring a host of things he does not have. He is too busy to spend his time in daydreaming. He also has more than the sluggard because he uses his time to produce or to purchase the things which he truly needs.

Prov 13:5 A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.

God hates lying. It is destructive and confusing. The righteous person understands that life is based upon knowledge of the truth. He will avoid that path with all his power.

The wicked will choose the lie over the truth if they persuade themselves that they can achieve their momentary end by uttering the falsehood. It may succeed in the short run. It will not do so in the end.

Prov 13:6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

The truth of this verse can be illustrated by giving the reader an account of what took place at the police station where I was reporting a noise problem in the neighborhood where I live.

A man came in the front door and walked up to the

front desk. He was carrying a plastic sack with a few belongings inside. He explained to the person at the desk that he had been arrested in a neighboring town and the police had impounded his car, relieved him of \$460, and confined him in the workhouse for thirty days. He explained that he did not know why the marijuana was found in his car. He certainly did not smoke the stuff.

The man was obviously overthrown by his sins. He had forsaken the way of the upright and had chosen the downward trail. He had blinded himself to that which lay downstream.

Prov 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

Some persons like to make it appear that they are more prosperous than they really are. They drive finer automobiles than they can afford. They try to live in neighborhoods where the cost of living is too high for them.

Other persons have large amounts of wealth and yet like to make it appear that they have much less than they do have. By acting miserly, they attempt to avoid the dangers of robbery and of requests for financial assistance which the rich sometimes hear.

Both are hypocritical. God would not be pleased with the attempt to appear different than they truly are.

Prov 13:8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.

The rich are in far more danger of being threatened with violence and robbery than are the poor who have little to steal.

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The poor are not considered to be worth the effort of swindling or blackmailing.

**Prov 13:9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.**

Men's lives are here compared to lights which illuminate their surroundings. Good persons provide clarity that others may see saving truth. Wicked persons shed no light that others may see the ways of righteousness. They only bring darkness and ignorance.

**Prov 13:10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.**

Man is constantly involved in contentious behavior. Sometimes it is in the workplace. Sometimes it is in the political arena. Sometimes it is on the athletic field or court. Athletic competition can be wholesome and constructive. Political activity can lead to better understanding of important issues within groups of people.

All too often, however, that which could be constructive becomes destructive because pride enters the picture. Hitler and Stalin were pride filled individuals. Some football players are known for their appetite for glory which turns into fierce brawls. Wisdom puts a bridle on false pride. It provides a higher view of one's fellow man.

**Prov 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.**

Wealth obtained by vanity is wealth that was inherited without having to work for it, or wealth which

came in some other manner which required no honest effort on the part of the owner. Since such persons became wealthy without learning the connection between riches and productivity, they allow it to be dissolved as easily as it was obtained. Easy come—Easy go!

The one who has put in an hours work for an hour's pay will more fully understand the need to spend his wealth wisely.

**Prov 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.**

It is a delight when that which has been hoped for and worked for over a period of time finally becomes reality. It is as a tree whose fruit is delicious and nutritious.

When hope disappears after long and diligent efforts to obtain that which is hoped for, the heart sinks and life becomes morbid.

**Prov 13:13 Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.**

What word is under consideration here. Is it just any word from any source. I think not! The word which is mentioned here is the Word of the Living God. It is a lamp unto one's way and a light unto one's path. The one who cherishes it will walk in the light. He will find that the keeping of God's commandments leads to many blessings.

The one who despises the Word of God will life destroyed and an existence in the company of the damned.

**Prov 13:14 The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.**

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Take note of the contrast here between a fountain and a snare. The law which the wise pursue and obey is the law of the Lord. Drinking from God's fountain of life is as a medicine which protects one from the second death.

Prov 13:15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

Many times the book of Proverbs assumes the reader will identify the word "good" with a life in harmony with the will of the Lord. That is true in this verse. Good understanding is a proper view of the Word of the Lord. Such understanding results in a person being looked on with favour by God. Needless to say, such favour is invaluable.

The one who scorns the law of the the Lord is held in scorn by the Lord. His way is hard because he has been foolish enough to count God as an enemy and one to be contended with. The way of such a person is indeed hard.

Prov 13:16 Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly.

Those who have good judgment will be hesitant to lay out everything they know before the gaze of others. Knowledge should be carefully handled. It should be used at the right time and for the right reasons.

The foolish speak impulsively before having counted the cost of their words. They do not realize just how much damage they can do, nor how irresponsible they may appear in the sight of others.

Prov 13:17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.

This verse has been thought by some commentators to refer to political ambassadors. These could certainly be included; however, the one to whom the verse refers is anyone who carries a message which either destroys others, or uplifts others. The one causes trouble. The other promotes joy.

Prov 13:18 Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.

Many who are proud despise correction or instruction. This attitude leads to a lack of direction in their lives. Others recognize their shortcomings, even though they do not. When opportunities arise, they will be bypassed because others are better prepared to rise to the new level. Being bypassed will lead to less income and some degree of embarrassment.

The person who welcomes instruction will be chosen because he or she has developed greater skill and a greater sense of responsibility.

Prov 13:19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

It is a thrill to reach a desired goal, especially if the goal is recognized as a worthy one. However, such achievements only come to those who are willing to forego folly and reach for noble ends. The fool does not pursue that pattern of life.

Prov 13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

People tend to take on the characteristics of those with whom they associate. One who keeps company with the wise will be influenced in the direction of wisdom. The one who finds pleasure in the company of the foolish will find that life becomes frivolous and without meaning.

Prov 13:21 Evil pursueth sinners: but to the righteous good shall be repayed.

The person who rejects God's instructions will find wickedness creeping toward him from all directions. He has sown evil. He will reap as he has sown.

Those who reach out toward righteousness will find their efforts rewarded. God will see that they are rewarded with a fruitful harvest.

Prov 13:22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

The reader who sees only dollars in this proverb has missed the point. Certainly it is true that the good man is more likely to leave material value to his descendants than is the sinner. But the inheritance which counts more than dollars is the spiritual advantages.

Over a period of time the children and grandchildren of the good man will find their lives enriched by his good life. The descendants of the sinner will not find these same advantages. Anything that was worthy will have been squandered through the poor judgments of that ancestor. That which could have been theirs will be found in the possession of the wise man's heirs.

Prov 13:23 Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.

The present writer is unsure of the meaning of the proverb here. It is possible that it is saying the poor are often poor because they neglect to make wise choices in the use of their possessions.

There would be more prosperity if they would use better judgment in the use of the land or blessings which God has seen fit to place in their hands.

Prov 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Failing to correct a child is a serious sin. It is not a sign of love. God chastens those whom He loves. He expects fleshly parents to follow his lead. Allowing a child to do that which is wrong, without making it clear that it is wrong, teaches irresponsibility. Such children grow up to be selfish.

Unmerciful beatings are not necessary. The punishment should fit the seriousness of the misbehavior. It should be sure and certain, and it should be administered without a display of temper on the part of the parent.

Prov 13:25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

The righteous person uses only that which is needed. He will be satisfied with the fulfilment of reasonable wants. He will often have enough to aid in helping others. The wicked is always hungry for more than he has. He never has enough for himself, to say nothing of those around him who have genuine needs.

Chapter 14

Prov 14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

The house mentioned here is far more than the building in which the wise woman lives. It is not that she is a carpenter. The house she builds most certainly includes her place of abode. More importantly, it has to do with the family for which she cares.

The wise woman keeps her home clean and well ordered. She plans meals. She cleans clothes. She does many things that cause things to go well from a material point of view. But she also loves her husband, teaches the children and lives a life that is pleasing in the sight of God. Her home will be built up through the strength and wisdom which she supplies.

The foolish woman acts precisely the opposite. She allows the house to become filthy and disorderly. She may be unfaithful to her husband or ignore the needs of her children. A house will never be a home in the hands of this type of woman.

Prov 14:2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

There are two widely different attitudes that may be taken with respect to Jehovah. One may respect Him and walk according to His will. Or one may chafe at His instructions and commandments, stubbornly following in the footsteps of Satan.

Prov 14:3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them.

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The rod of pride is the tongue of the foolish man. One commentator used David and Goliath as examples of the wise and the foolish in this proverb. Goliath looked with disdain upon the young shepherd boy and told him he would feed him to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. His tongue was a rod of pride.

David went out to meet him with what appeared to be certain suicide. It was not so! His words of wisdom placed him in the camp of the Lord. He did not come with a sword. He came in the name of the God of heaven. God saw to it that David's life was preserved.

**Prov 14:4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.**

The ox was a very useful animal in the days of Solomon. It plowed the fields. It could be ridden. It pulled carts, etc. At the same time, the ox was a dirty animal that fouled up its stall. This meant someone had the unpleasant task of cleaning out the manure.

If the stable was clean, there was no ox to foul it up. One did not have to clean out the manure, but neither did one have the benefits the ox could provide. The lesson is that usually one has to endure some unpleasantness to accomplish worthy ends.

**Prov 14:5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.**

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness. He spoke only the truth. Those who have been baptized into the church, which is the body of Christ, should manifest the same truthful nature.

The Devil and his followers have no hesitation at all in making use of the lie. It the lie will serve their evil,

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selfish purposes, they will choose it over the truth.

Such faithful and unfaithful witnesses are not confined to the courtrooms of the land. The righteous spread their truths, and the wicked spread their lies, wherever they go.

Prov 14:6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

The scorner here is the one who scorns the source of wisdom. He seeks wisdom in all of the wrong places and does not find it. His efforts to become wise rest upon his own experience and mental processes. He follows a rough road.

The one who truly understands the source of wisdom will search in the pages of his Bible. He will open his eyes to the glories of God's creation. He will learn from righteous companions. Real knowledge can be easily gained by the one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness and goes to the Fountain of Life to drink.

Prov 14:7 Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.

The man or woman who uses such poor judgment as to keep company with the fool is destined to become infected with his deadly disease. Stay away from the fool, lest you join him in his folly.

Prov 14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.

The cautious and wise person analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of the paths which he takes. He knows as much as he can about where he is going and why.

The foolish could care less what the end of the road they follow will reveal. They are easily deceived. They walk in their foolish ways with their hands over their eyes and ears.

Prov 14:9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.

One of the most convincing ways to check the truth of this proverb is to stop at certain restrooms on the superhighways. The pictures and filthy words on the walls of the restroom are evidence that the fool will mock at sin. It is a laughing matter to him.

The latter part of this verse does not say the righteous favor sin. It says God looks with favor upon the one who shuns sin and does not fill the heart with it.

Prov 14:10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.

Every man is an island. No one else can penetrate the deepest parts of his heart. When one loses a spouse or a child others may sympathize with them, but can never completely feel their sorrow.

It is just as true that no one else can fully share one's joy. The pride in a job well done can only be completely understood by the one who finished the job. The satisfaction of knowing one has given his all to the service of the Lord can only be known by that person and the Lord.

Prov 14:11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.

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As far as this world is concerned, this proverb is a generality. There are wicked persons who appear to have everything one might wish for on earth. There are righteous persons who are sometimes tortured and left hungry.

We must look farther down the road to see the truth expressed. Jesus said the man who built his house upon the sand would someday find that it had been demolished. He said the one who had built upon the rock would see his house stand.

In the world to come we shall find Jesus statement to be true without exception. He is preparing a mansion for those who love Him. He will return to take the faithful to that mansion.

**Prov 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

Here is one of the mountain peaks of the entire Bible. It would be interesting to know how many times it has been quoted from the pulpits of the world.

Men cannot see to the end of the way. Because this is so, they often deceive themselves into walking in ways which lead to hell rather than to heaven. Our knowledge is incomplete. God's knowledge is infinite. His way leads to life. The ways of death are those that lead to lust and pride. The wages of sin is death.

**Prov 14:13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.**

This life is a mixture of joy and sorrow. It is possible to cover the sorrow for a time. Later, the laughter ceases as the sorrow overcomes it. Nevertheless, the saints will

persevere and the time will come when all sorrow and tears shall melt away before radiance of the Son of Righteousness.

**Prov 14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.**

One can not backslide from a place where he has never been. This proverb has to do with those who at one time were counted among the faithful, but who have later turned away from God. They have chosen the unclean ways and they shall be filled with uncleanness.

The good man knows the value of hearing and obeying the will of God. He has feasted upon the good ways. His life will be satisfying to him, and to God.

**Prov 14:15 The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.**

Christians are sometimes laughed at as fools who believe whatever the preacher tells them. Faith is seen as believing that which one knows is no more than an impossible dream.

The Bible certainly does not teach that. It informs us that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1). Anyone who believes without evidence is not a person of faith. He is a person of superstition. The prudent look carefully before they commit themselves to a given pathway.

**Prov 14:16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.**

The wise man listens carefully to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. He respects God and delights in pleasing Him.

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The fool is like an unbroken horse. He rears up and fights with all his might against being guided against his own will. He is quite confident that his raging is proper. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Prov 14:17 He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

A vile temper can lead to horrible mistakes. The person who acts in a passionate fit endangers the safety of both himself and others who are unfortunate enough to be near him at the time.

The man of wicked devices is different. He has taken the time to plan out his wickedness. When others realize his nature, they will make every effort to avoid him.

Prov 14:18 The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

As we have mentioned several times before, the simple in the book of Proverbs are those who have rejected God. They are not necessarily those of low IQ. They are those who have not made proper use of the IQ they have. These will inherit that which they did not expect.

Those who carefully seek out the Way of the Lord will wear a crown of knowledge. Seek and ye shall find.

Prov 14:19 The evil bow before the good; and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

Some would question the truth of this verse. We see the good man at the mercy of the one who has amassed wealth and power through selfishness.

This is because we look at matters from our own

limited view. If we could see from the vantage point of our Creator, we would no doubt realize that the reality is just the opposite. The evil bow before the good, and the wicked wait at the gates of the righteous in the eyes of God.

Prov 14:20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

It is interesting that Solomon had so much to say about the abuse of the poor. It causes one to wonder how much he did to relieve them of their misfortunes.

What he said is no doubt true. The poor are often despised because of their sad plight. Sometimes it is their own fault. Other times it is not. Those who despise them are usually not much concerned about how they came to be poor. There are some who could help themselves if they decided to. There are others that need assistance and deserve it.

The rich have difficulty in knowing just who are true friends and who are going along for the ride. I cannot say I would rather be poor than rich, but I do know the rich have problems just as do the poor.

Prov 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

It is a sin to have more than one needs and fail to assist the neighbor who is in desperate condition. If the neighbor deserves help, assistance would bring happiness to both the one who helped and the one who received help.

Prov 14:22 Do they not err that devise evil? but mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.

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The word “devise” indicates long range planning. The one who devises evil does not just do so impulsively. He looks forward to his sin. God is much displeased with such a man.

The man who does long range planning for righteous actions will find truth and receive the blessings of God.

**Prov 14:23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.**

Too much talk and not enough work brings poverty. Honest labor generally brings a more satisfying life than sitting on the park bench and gossiping.

**Prov 14:24 The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.**

The riches spoken of here are not silver and gold. They are spiritual riches which come about because of their choice of good over evil. The fool has chosen the evil over the good and thus deprived himself of a crown.

**Prov 14:25 A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.**

A person who speaks truth makes other free. See John 8:32. The one who lies causes others to be damaged by misleading them.

**Prov 14:26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.**

The one who fears and respects God has good reason to be confident. He is moving toward life eternal. Such a

person will also provide the kind of teaching that will point his children and grandchildren toward a home in heaven.

**Prov 14:27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.**

This thought is repeated time and again through the book of Proverbs. God is the Creator and the Sustainer of life. Those who walk in his ways will find life enriched. Those who turn away from Him will experience spiritual weakness and despair.

**Prov 14:28 In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.**

If a ruler can establish solid relationships with the majority of those over whom he rules, he will be rewarded with honor. If that same ruler mistreats those over whom he rules, he will lose the support of the people and endanger his rulership.

This proverb applies not only to kings, but to any person in a supervising position.

**Prov 14:29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.**

Impulsive anger is a dangerous habit. Foolish decisions are often the result. The wise man will maintain control of his temper. Having taken the time to think things out, he will make the more accurate choices of action.

**Prov 14:30 A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.**

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Since the “sound heart” and “envy” are used as opposites in the verse, it is clear that the sound heart is one which is not dominated by envy.

Envy is a destructive emotion. It eats away at the inner man until it takes on the appearance of a rotten apple.

Prov 14:31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

God made the poor just as He made the rich. To take advantage of the poor is to insult God for having created them.

The one who attempts to help the deserving is also honoring the One who created them.

Prov 14:32 The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

The wicked have chosen to separate themselves from God. They are always free to return if they will repent, but if they do not repent, they will accomplish that which they sought. They will be driven from His presence.

The righteous need have no fear of death. They have chosen to draw close to God. They will one day be told to enter into the joy of the Lord.

Prov 14:33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.

The wise man does not reveal everything he knows. He is not forever flaunting his learning. He has a heart of humility.

The mental poverty of the fool is spouted out in a continual stream of foolish speech and actions.

Prov 14:34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

Righteousness is action in harmony with the will of Jehovah. All one need do to verify the truth of this proverb is examine the fate of nations who have set out to conquer the world for selfish ends. They have fallen one by one.

In contrast, nations which have lived closer to God's will have risen to world leadership. Let those nations who have enjoyed world leadership in recent centuries take heed. If they allow themselves to elevate sinful conduct, they will be replaced or destroyed.

Prov 14:35 The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

The greatest King is the One we call the "King of kings." He will look with favor upon the wise servant who follows his example. The one who brings reproach upon either the King, or His Kingdom, may expect Divine wrath to fall upon him.

Chapter 15

This chapter of Proverbs deals primarily with sins of the tongue and of the heart. James informed us that one who can tame the tongue is a perfect (or mature) man and will be capable of bringing the whole body under control (James 3:2).

Prov 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Hard words have a way of multiplying in volume and sharpness as they pass back and forth between to persons. Soft spoken persons are not faced with such argumentation to the degree that those who speak harshly are.

There is, of course, a time for sharp words. Jesus used them on certain occasions, such as those situations in which he chastised the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy. These occasions occur much less frequently than some persons suppose.

Prov 15:2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

The wise are very careful to see that their words are fitly spoken. They realize they can either tear down others or upbuild them. Surely the reader will be able to recall the names of persons who have spoken words fitly framed that help the listener to live a higher quality life.

On the other hand, foolish persons pour out a torrent or words which are uttered without much understanding of what the effect will be upon those who hear them.

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**Prov 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.**

Nothing is hidden from the eyes or the ears of Jehovah. He hears every word. He sees every action. (See Hebrews 4:13).

*Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

It is very difficult for we humans, who are limited in the use of our senses, to realize the omnipresence of the Lord. If we could more completely understand His unlimited abilities, we might well use more caution than we do and say.

**Prov 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.**

Is this verse talking about the effect upon the one who hears one speak, or does it have to do with the speaker himself or herself?

Surely the person who uses the tongue to encourage and guide others is acting as a tree of life for them. The fruit of the tongue has been used to enrich and nourish the listener. But, in addition, the speaker himself is a better person for having uplifted his fellowman.

The one who speaks perverse words breaks the spirit of the listener. He also does damage to his own spiritual being.

**Prov 15:5 A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.**

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It is assumed in this proverb that the father's instruction is well founded and that the father has a genuine interest in the growth of his offspring. Since the father has far more experience than the child, it is a mark of wisdom for the child to take advantage of his father's superior experience.

The foolish child will ignore the guidance of either a father or a mother. He will thus have to learn each lesson of life for himself. That is a very wasteful type of behavior.

Prov 15:6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

The treasure here is not silver and gold. It might possibly include material possessions. However, the main idea is that the righteous have invested their time and effort in that which is spiritually profitable.

The one who scorns the advice of his Maker and follow wicked paths may possibly have gathered a few material possessions, but he will be quite poverty stricken when it comes to spiritual values. The trouble he experiences will begin in this world, and will continue after the judgment.

Prov 15:7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so.

The lips will demonstrate the condition of a man's heart. *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so it he."* Out of the heart of the wise man comes truth. The truth shall make men free. Out of the heart of a foolish man comes lies, insults and blasphemy.

This writer has worked with a few individuals who



seemed not to be able to speak anything constructive. Their hearts were so full of filth that swearing and foul talk dominated their entire conversation from morning until night.

Prov 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

The individual who spends his week with wicked companions and disregards the Lord on Monday through Saturday will find that the Lord has disregarded that man's sacrifice on Sunday.

Placing a one hundred dollar bill in the collection plate on Sunday does not wash away the sins of the other six days of the week, unless such a sacrifice is accompanied by a penitent heart.

Prov 15:9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

A person can be known by the quality of his companions. A wicked man will be found in the company of the wicked. It is there that he is most comfortable. The man who makes himself a friend of the wicked is not a friend of God.

The righteous will ordinarily be found in the company of the righteous. It is the same with God. He delights in walking with the good person. He keeps a distance from the ungodly.

The reader may recall how the fellow students of one who did not take baths regularly tended to avoid the boy or girl who was unclean. The odor was most unpleasant. The wicked affect Jehovah in much the same way.

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**Prov 15:10 Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die.**

You cannot forsake a way you have never traveled. This proverb refers to one who has at one time found the way of the Lord, and who has then left it. Correcting such a person is an extremely difficult task. It is often easier to guide one who has never been a Christian, than to help one who has been a Christian and who has then left the Way.

**Prov 15:11 Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?**

God knows the heights of heaven and the depths of hell. He knows the secrets of the angelic and demonic realms. There is nothing hidden from his all penetrating eye. If He can see to the farthest regions of heaven and hell, it makes sense to accept his ability to peer into the hearts of men.

**Prov 15:12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.**

It is quite useless to go to the one who scorns the truth and the God who presents that truth. He will not take any such advice.

Not only will he not listen when one goes to him and makes an attempt to turn him from his dangerous ways. The last thing which enters his mind is to approach the wise and ask them to teach him the truth.

**Prov 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.**

The way a person feels on the inside is reflected by his outer appearance. If the heart on the inside is filled with joy, the entire appearance of the person will radiate that joy.

If the heart is running over with sorrow and trouble, the hopes and goals are dimmed and the face and the posture of the burdened one will become confused and will make the load on his heart evident to those around him.

**Prov 15:14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.**

The one who realizes what life is all about goes about seeking as much truth as possible. Understanding and knowledge work in harmony with one another. The more understanding one has, the more diligently he will seek for knowledge. The more knowledge he has, the more understanding he can put to work.

The foolish man hungers after frivolity. Thus this man's life becomes increasingly meaningless. He is mentally and spiritually lazy. This laziness separates him from the favor of God.

**Prov 15:15 All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.**

This verse is almost an echo of verse thirteen. Those who allow themselves to become depressed find that every day is a hard one. Others are uncomfortable in

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their presence. Life becomes more and more difficult as time passes.

If one can overcome troubles and consider just how many blessings he enjoys, life may become cheerful in spite of any afflictions. Some of the most cheerful people one sees, are lame, blind or poor. They will not allow life to become dismal.

Prov 15:16 Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.

The poor man who knows God is with him will find life far more satisfactory than the rich man who has placed a distance between himself and the Almighty.

Prov 15:17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

The stalled ox is one that has been confined in order that he might be fattened. It is better to live in limited conditions with loving companions, than it is to be able to gorge one's self with the finest of food, clothing and other delicacies of life, if one must live in the midst of strife and animosity.

Prov 15:18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

The one who flies into a fit of anger at the least provocation will find himself in the midst of constant fighting. If it is not present at first, it will be when he makes his personality known.

The calm person who remains unruffled in the presence of disturbing conditions will have a calming effect upon others.

Prov 15:19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

The slothful man is one who is too lazy to organize his life. His path will become increasingly difficult.

The man who determines to keep his life in order finds his way through confusion and avoids many of the problems the wicked man must face.

Prov 15:20 A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.

It is interesting that the father is made glad by his wise son, but the mother is despised by the foolish child. Could it not be turned the other way as well? Any child who chooses wisdom over folly will make both his father and his mother glad.

The foolish child will turn away from the guidance of both father and mother. He will despise anyone who attempts to direct his life.

Prov 15:21 Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom: but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

Folly is more serious in the book of Proverbs than it is in Webster's dictionary. To Solomon, folly was opposition to the wisdom of God. It was therefore unrighteousness. The person who walks in wicked paths is foolish. In contrast, the man or woman who walks uprightly, according to the will of the Lord, is a wise one.

Prov 15:22 Without counsel purposes are

disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

Two heads are better than one! If one tries to go it alone the chances of making poor decisions are larger than they are if one consults with others. It is very often easier for others to see the errors we make than it is for us to see them ourselves.

Prov 15:23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

A word fitly spoken is precious to the speaker and also to the listener. It must be spoken at the right time and for the right purpose, and with right content. When all three of these are present it can bring happiness to all concerned.

Prov 15:24 The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

A wise man knows the difference in taking the downward path which leads to hell, and the upward path which leads to heaven. His good judgment will cause him to point his steps in the proper direction.

Prov 15:25 The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

Those who are so haughty that they see no need for help from the Lord will not only lose His aid; they will find Him opposing them.

The widow who is so desperately in need that she

turns to the Lord, finds that He has stretched out His Almighty Hand to help her.

Prov 15:26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

Once again, thoughts and words are found in the same context. The wicked harbor evil thoughts in their hearts. There are two serious consequences of this. The evil thoughts are known to God, and they later express themselves in words and actions.

Prov 15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

The one who is greedy for gain will do almost anything to add to his bank account or his pride. In doing so, he endangers his entire household.

The one who refuses to take a bribe maintains his integrity and makes God his Friend.

Prov 15:28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

We have met this truth multiple times now. The wise and righteous person is slow to speak. The foolish wicked person spouts out evil words without considering their consequences.

Prov 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

The wicked person is not apt to speak to the Lord in the first place. Since his life is turned from God, his prayer would only be an abomination if he did by chance decide to talk to Him.

The good person walks with God continually. He is in constant communication with Him. His life is a constant prayer. God hears it!

Prov 15:30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.

Good news and pleasant sights bring joy to the heart. When there is joy in the heart, the entire system is more apt to flourish. Of course the bones do not become fatter. This is only a way of saying the person thrives to the innermost parts of his body and soul.

Prov 15:31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

Life has a way of teaching critical lessons. Some take heed and learn these lessons. Others fail to recognize them. Those who hear and change directions are wise. Those who ignore these lessons bring destruction upon themselves.

Prov 15:32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

This man who refuses to accept instruction despises his soul because he stubbornly moves toward calamity. The one who listens to instruction adds to his knowledge and is capable of making more accurate decisions.

Prov 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

Truly the beginning of wisdom is found in the fear of the Lord. The more one listens to the Word of God, the wiser he becomes. Humility will cause one to realize he cannot direct his own steps. Then, when he asks God for guidance, he has placed himself in a position where he can receive honor from both God and fellowman.

Chapter 16

Prov 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.

There are a variety of interpretations of this verse, given by different students of the Bible.

How can the preparations of the heart be from the Lord? Is it not man that determines the condition of his own heart? Both God and man have a part. God provides the truth which can be used to condition the heart. Then man may use that truth as God intended. However, God must present the truth before man can make use of it.

The answer of the tongue, I believe to be the answer God gives to the prayer of men. The tongue is used to express the felt needs. Then God answers the prayer in accordance with what He knows the true needs to be. We are taught to pray, "Thy will be done."

Prov 16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.

The way a man sees himself and the way God sees him may be two very different views. If a man says "I have no sin," he makes God a liar. God says all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God knows the inner man even better than the man himself.

Prov 16:3 Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.

Jehovah is the rightful controller of the universe. When a person turns his life over to God and asks God to direct his paths, God will see to it that "All things work together for good."

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**Prov 16:4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.**

Is it selfishness on the part of God to have made all things for himself? Not any more than it is selfishness for a husband and wife to decide to have a child. They expect to find satisfaction in the experiences of parenthood, but there is far more. They look forward to a pleasant life on earth for the offspring, and then eternal life in heaven.

It is true that some of what God has made possible will be used for evil rather than for good. It is not true that God desired any man or woman might be consigned to the fires of hell. We may not understand why God made man with the power of choice, but we must accept the fact that He did. Also, we must accept His decision to separate the rebellious from the presence of the righteous forever.

**Prov 16:5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.**

This present chapter has more continuity of thought than almost any we have studied in the book of Proverbs. The theme running through the first verses of the present chapter is the sovereignty of God. He created. He provided. He has given directions. We are to follow those directions.

The proud are those who defy God's will. They neither fear Him nor praise Him. Even though such persons join forces to oppose Him, they will find their opposition to be punished.

**Prov 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.**

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If men were left to their own devices, they would be lost. Every man has sinned. The wages of sin is death. God has seen fit to be merciful. He has provided a means by which men may escape eternal death.

From the beginning God planned a Way of salvation. He gave guidance to Abraham and his descendants during the patriarchal age. He continued to offer instruction during the Mosaic age. Then He brought Jesus Christ into the world as a perfect example and a sacrifice for sin.

Because of His mercy, God has made forgiveness possible. Through the truth He has shown the Way, the Truth and the Life. Man must then respond by departing from evil and attempting to live righteously.

Prov 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

This does not mean every enemy of the true Christian will turn and become a close friend. God is perfectly righteous, yet He continues to have enemies. God's enemies even placed His Son upon the cross. The verse is telling us a good Christian has the power to make the world a more peaceful place. That is what Jesus did, and that is what His followers can do.

Prov 16:8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

The scriptures inform us that it is better to be a good poor man, than to be an evil rich man. Dear reader, it may come to a time of choice for you. Surely it would be nice to be both rich and righteous. There are not a large number who are in both of these categories at the same time.

God advises that if it becomes necessary, it is far better to choose righteousness than riches.

Prov 16:9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

It is impossible for a person to see the end of the way which he has chosen. The truly good man recognizes that it is not in his own power to see the end of the way he might choose. The wise man will pray that God use His providential power to see that all things work together for Divine glory and for his own salvation.

Prov 16:10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

Does this verse apply to all kings, or does it apply only to the "King of kings?" It is certainly not true that the mouth of the kings of Israel never transgressed in judgment. They made many horrible judgments.

Another thought is that the word "sentence" can mean more than one thing. It can refer to a statement made by the king. It can also refer to the sentencing of a criminal. If Jesus Christ is the "king" mentioned in the verse, it is true that He will not err in pronouncing sentence upon sinners.

Prov 16:11 A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work.

When one made purchases in the days these words were written, balances and weights were used to determine how much was being purchased. Both the weights and the balances were expected to be true. The weights were often kept in a sort of apron and could be pulled out of the bag as needed.

The entire principle of justice and honesty are of the Lord. Every person will be judged eternally by the use of absolutely correct principles. God is honest. He expects His followers to act in similar manner.

Prov 16:12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

The king who commits wickedness is bringing discredit to himself as well as to the country over which he reigns. Many kings have been deposed or even murdered as a result of their evil conduct. When a king acts responsibly, he builds confidence in his subjects and strengthens his country.

Prov 16:13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.

There are two possibilities here. The first is that that kings take delight in their subjects speaking that which is righteous. The second is that the subjects over which the kings rule will be delighted with the king who speaks righteously.

It makes more sense to believe that this is an ideal condition. If that is true, the subjects of the king cause delight in his subjects because of his righteous words. They would then love him as a result of his upright speech and behavior.

Certainly many kings have fallen short of this ideal.

Prov 16:14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.

A king has tremendous power. If a subject brings the wrath of the king down upon his head, he may expect severe punishment, even to death. A person who wishes to avoid such punishment would do well to calm that wrath.

Sometimes the calming of a king's wrath by pacifying it can be inadvisable. Jesus certainly did not pacify the wrath of the Roman rulers when he was on trial just previous to his crucifixion.

The point seems to be that obedience to civil government is appropriate as long as the government is not fighting against God's guidance.

Prov 16:15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

The reader needs to remember that it was a king who wrote these words. If Solomon became angry at one of his subjects, he had the power to sentence that subject to death. If he looked with favor upon a subject, that subject could find life like the emission of the sun after a refreshing shower.

One constantly wonders while studying the first fifteen verses of this chapter, just how much refers to earthly kings, and how much contains truth about the "King of kings."

Prov 16:16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

The man who wrote these words was recognized as a very rich man. He was also recognized as a man gifted with superior wisdom and understanding. It was

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through experience with each that Solomon could make the statement that wisdom and understanding are to be preferred to riches.

**Prov 16:17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.**

The highway of the upright is a continuous journey in the direction of heaven. The person who continues faithfully shuns the temptations of the world. Jesus said the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who travel it. He added that the way leading to heaven is a narrow one and only a few travel it.

This verse adds that the one who does not depart from the narrow highway of the righteous may look forward to the words, "Enter into the joys of thy Lord."

**Prov 16:18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.**

When one becomes so confident in his or her ability to direct their own paths, the results may well be disastrous. The high and mighty have farther to fall than the humble and lowly.

**Prov 16:19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.**

It is better to be an associate with those of a humble and lowly spirit because ultimately they will be lifted up.

To divide the spoil of the proud on earth is to place one's self in great danger of falling from the favor of the Lord.

**Prov 16:20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.**

The two parts of this verse are parallel. To handle a matter wisely is identical with trusting in the Lord. The one who trusts in the Lord is handling the matter wisely. The result is happiness.

**Prov 16:21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent: and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.**

There are three positive characteristics listed in the verse. They are wisdom, prudence and sweetness of speech. All of these characteristics are of value because they are commended by God.

**Prov 16:22 Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.**

The person of understanding will apply that understanding to enrich and extend his life. It is just the opposite when a foolish person is instructed. The foolish are not about to heed instruction. Trying to teach such is a waste of time.

**Prov 16:23 The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.**

The foolish are unable to offer learning to uplift others. They have nothing to offer. The wise person has filled the heart with real learning and can thus present teaching which uplifts his hearers.

**Prov 16:24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.**

We are informed that honey still in the honeycomb is particularly sweet. Those who offer both pleasant and constructive words to others build up both the soul and the body.

**Prov 16:25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.**

This verse is one of the highlights of the entire Word of God. The majority of humanity is far more willing to trust in following paths that seem right to them, even though those paths lead away from heaven and toward hell.

Salvation is only given to those who search out the footsteps of the Christ.

**Prov 16:26 He that laboreth laboreth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.**

Labor is not a bad word in the sight of God. "If a man will not work, neither let him eat." But when that labor is strictly for self satisfaction of his cravings, that person is displeasing to his Maker.

**Prov 16:27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire.**

Some persons are not satisfied unless they are able to dig up scandal or gossip which can be spread to others who are hungry for just such information. It matters little whether the information is true or false. Such a person delights in setting off a fire which can destroy another.

The Christian will not spread such information unless he sees the opportunity of helping the gossip monger, or protecting someone whom the scandal spreader is damaging.

**Prov 16:28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.**

**Pro 16:29 A violent man enticeth his neighbour, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.**

A person who loves violence is one who is bold in his defiance of God, and who spends time separating others from God and also from one another. Such a person loves nothing more than friction and conflict.

**Prov 16:30 He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass.**

A person who is froward also spends time in meditation trying to imagine things which will lead others to follow evil paths. After he has devised some evil plan he will not be satisfied until he has brought it to fruition.

**Prov 16:31 The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.**

The head of the elderly is usually gray, bald or perhaps both. The age which such characteristics reveal can be a mark of dignity. It should be respected and honored.

Such honor and respect is only due to the person who has spent their life walking in the light of God's truth. The "if" in this verse is most critical.

**Prov 16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.**

It takes a strong person to control his temper. self control is more to be desired than the power to control others.

Some famous men of history conquered city after city, but found themselves unable or unwilling to control their own anger.

**Prov 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.**

Lots were sometimes cast in the Bible in order to determine the will of God when men knew they needed more than their own analytical abilities were able to offer.

The apostles cast lots when Judas was to be replaced. The lot fell upon Matthias. The Bible seems to indicate that this was acceptable to the Lord.

The word "lot" sometimes means more than looking for some sign from God as to His desired path of action. In our own time faithful Christians may place a problem in the lap of the Lord and ask Him to see that all will work out in harmony with His will.

Your present commentator believes very strongly that God's providence works all things together for those who love Him and keep His commandments. God is still able to guide one's life without necessarily having to do it through miracles.

## *Chapter 17*

**Prov 17:1 Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.**

The reader is certainly aware of the fact that many of the principles taught in the book of Proverbs are repeated many times. I think it unwise to refer back to previous comments and neglect the repetition completely. I will, however, sometimes abbreviate the comments when the principle is repeated.

A houseful of sacrifices indicates an abundance of the material needs. Even though the household is prosperous, if there is conflict between the members, unhappiness will reign.

If there is just enough to keep body and soul together, but at the same time there is peace and cooperation, life will be more satisfactory.

**Prov 17:2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.**

Children who bring shame upon both themselves and their parents are apt to find that a servant in the household has more respect and authority than does the child.

The wise servant may well share in the inheritance while the child is disinherited.

**Prov 17:3 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.**

When silver and gold are mined they are mixed with many impurities. In order to purify the precious metals,

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they are melted in a furnace. This causes a separation between the pure metal and the impurities.

God uses similar methods to separate the impure thoughts and actions from men. Many of the trials men face are not as disadvantageous as they might think. After the misery is over the person may find that he or she has become more humble before God and more willing to depend upon Him for guidance and strength.

Prov 17:4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

A wicked person is far more apt to listen to falsehood. A liar is attracted to other liars. The lies are then spread like a fire out of control.

The word “naughty” used here is a far stronger word than when we use it today to talk about a misbehaving youngster. The person described here is a wicked, gossip and a liar.

Prov 17:5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

Why is it that some people seem to find satisfaction in the misfortune of others. The man who has enough to fulfil his needs has no right to belittle another who has done all he could to live a full life and then found himself short of food, clothing and shelter.

The man who makes fun of the poor has laughed at God. God made the prosperous man. He also made the poor man. It is not wise to mock Jehovah.

Prov 17:6 Children’s children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

It is quite natural for grandparents to take pride in their grandchildren. In a sense these grandchildren are a further extension of their own lives. Normally the grandparents do not have the responsibility for disciplining these youngsters. They do have the good fortune to watch them develop.

Prov 17:7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.

It is bad for a weak minded man to put on airs and pretend to be more than what he is. It will soon become evident that his speech is more show than it is wisdom.

It is even worse for a man who is in a position of leadership to lie. Such a man can do tremendous damage to those over whom he has authority. Both political leaders and religious leaders should be extremely cautious. They should love the truth and speak the truth.

Prov 17:8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.

A gift may mean two different things. It may have to do with something which a person has received from another person. It may also refer to mental or physical gifts. We often speak of a very bright person as being "gifted."

When a precious gem such as a diamond or an emerald is turned in the light, it glistens with beauty. When one has been blessed with gifts, those gifts can be used to brighten the lives of those around him.

Sadly, they can also be used to exhibit false pride.

Prov 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

Covering a transgression, as the phrase is used here means not telling everything one knows about another. When the one who has the fault realizes the one who refused to spread malicious facts, the one who was protected may come to love the one who refused to hurt him or her.

The one who delights in broadcasting the faults of others will probably find the opposite to be true. When it is discovered that he has enjoyed the weakness of his friend, he will find the individual is no longer his friend.

Prov 17:10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

The wise man will welcome correction. He will understand that the correction was for his own good.

The foolish person can be beaten with a horse whip and will still follow his faulty ways. It is impossible to turn him from his folly.

Prov 17:11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.

Yes, the evil man will rebel against anyone who attempts to guide him. His Maker is not immune to the rebellion. He will fight against God and refuse to obey Him.

As a result, those in authority may find it necessary to enforce their instructions with threats and severe punishment.

Prov 17:12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.

Female bears are known for their dedication to the welfare of their cubs. A person who has made the mistake of mistreating the cubs has made a poor decision.

Even so, the fool can do more damage to his victims than the she-bear.

Prov 17:13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

How foolish it is to return evil for good. The one who multiplies evil will invite others to refrain from offering good things to him. They may even go so far as to see that he suffers for his ingratitude.

Prov 17:14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

The magnification of strife and conflict is very much like what happens when a small opening is made in a dam. The water which moves through the opening enlarges it and allows more and more water to pass through until the dam is useless.

Contention should be cut off even before it begins. Then it has no chance to multiply it's effects and bring destruction to the contending parties.

Prov 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

The Lord knows the heart and the actions of every man. One who would justify an evil person is fighting

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against God since he has placed himself on the side of one who is an enemy of God.

The one who would condemn the righteous man is also making himself an enemy of the Lord, because his attempting to destroy the person in whom God takes pleasure.

**Prov 17:16 Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?**

Of what use is it for a foolish person to pay for an education? If he manages to pass all of his courses and is granted a diploma, he will waste his time and his money by failing to put the knowledge into practice.

**Prov 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.**

The real friend is one who loves another continuously. He is not one who would be there one day and not the next. There are others who are there in good times, but manage to be unavailable when trouble comes.

**Prov 17:18 A man void of understanding striketh hands, and becometh surety in the presence of his friend.**

Striking hands is a way of sealing a promise. The man who shakes hands as a promise to pay the debt of another in case he fails to pay proves himself to be foolish.

**Prov 17:19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.**

If a person loves conflict he has proven that he desires to create havoc. The latter part of the verse is a bit difficult. It is likely that it means one who seeks a fight will very likely find it.

**Prov 17:20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief.**

The froward heart is one that is bent on following it's own will. The perverse tongue is one that utters lies, blasphemies and filthy language. The heart and the tongue are closely connected. When the heart is froward, a perverse tongue will not be far behind.

**Prov 17:21 He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.**

Parents should be able to take pride in their children. The parent who child chooses folly over wisdom will cause enormous grief to his mother and father.

**Prov 17:22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.**

Physicians whole heartedly agree with this precept. A happy person is more apt to be healthy than one who is depressed. To dry the bones is simply a way of saying the individual who has faced heavy grief is saddened to the inner depths. This can bring on a host of physical problems.

**Prov 17:23 A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment.**

Today we are more apt to carry our money in a purse or a billfold. However, there are parts of the world, even now, where the money is carried in a container just above the belt.

The one who presents a bribe in order to escape punishment for wrong actions is a wicked person.

**Prov 17:24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.**

The wise person will find wisdom around him in every direction. He does not have difficulty in locating it. He is quick to make use of it when he finds it.

The foolish person could circle the entire globe and never recognize wisdom when it was right at his fingertips.

**Prov 17:25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.**

This is the same principle which was discussed earlier in this same chapter. No further comment is necessary.

**Prov 17:26 Also to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity.**

Jehovah abhors the abuse of those who do not deserve punishment. Just persons should be encouraged in their good conduct.

God teaches that Christians are to be subject to the powers that be. This is a reference to civil governors or others who have been designated as supervisors.

Adam Clarke goes so far as to say that anyone who is responsible for killing a king, even when the king is

worthless, has done a disservice to his country.

Jesus instructed his apostles to give tribute, or taxes, to whom tribute is due. Jesus had had far more influence than any earthly king who ever lived. He died on a Roman cross, but his sacrificial death has transformed the world for good.

**Prov 17:27 He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.**

“A wise man keeps his mouth shut.” Of course he does not become absolutely silent. Nevertheless, he does weigh his words before they reach the end of his tongue. A man who can control his tongue can usually control his behavior.

**Prov 17:28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.**

A torrent of words is not the best way to establish a reputation for wisdom. *There is a time to speak and a time to remain silent.* The one who is forever speaking when he should have stayed silent will soon prove he is a fool.

## Chapter 18

**Prov 18:1 Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.**

There is sharp contrast in the comments which have been offered on this verse. Some see the separation as being separated from the world and devoting one's self to God. Others see the separation as separation from God and attachment to the world.

It seems contradictory to consider the separation as setting one's self apart from the world and at the same time intermeddling with wisdom. The one who leaves the world should be described as a lover of wisdom.

Therefore, I suggest that the meaning of the verse is that the person described has through his own desire separated himself from the ways of the Lord and has thus mistreated real wisdom by forsaking it.

**Prov 18:2 A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.**

Although most of the proverbs stand on their own, this second verse does logically follow the first. It is the fool who has separated himself from the wisdom of God. He sees no need for Divine guidance. He seeks to direct his own steps, or follow the desires of his own heart.

**Prov 18:3 When the wicked cometh, then cometh also contempt, and with ignominy reproach.**

The contempt is on the part of God. He loves the souls of men, but He has only contempt for the sin which the wicked embrace. As a result of the foolish direction their

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lives have taken, the wicked will receive reproach for their sin, until God finally gives them up.

Prov 18:4 The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

Since the word "and" is used here to connect the two main clauses in the verse, it seems reasonable to consider both clauses as being harmonious.

The words of a man's mouth could possibly be muddy waters through which one could not see. If that is the meaning, there would be a contrast between the wellspring of wisdom and the words of a man's mouth.

Therefore, I propose that the deep waters are those which have deep meaning and provide a wellspring of wisdom to the listener. Deep waters would also suggest that the flowing brook would not go dry because of the abundance of truth from which they come.

Prov 18:5 It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

The person of the powerful, the rich and the clever sometimes have more influence in the courts than does the truth. In such cases, the righteous may be abused in order that the prestigious may be appeased. This is a sad case!

Pro 18:6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

Pro 18:7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

The fool speaks before he thinks. He is forever looking for a confrontation. His words are very apt to result in

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violence. This kind of attitude can ultimately entrap his soul and send it to the fires of hell.

**Prov 18:8 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.**

Few of those who delight in spreading gossip are aware of the terrible hurt which may result. The takes may be true, or they may be false. Even if they are true, they may still create a situation in which it would be more difficult for the person who was discussed to repent and do right.

But it would be especially hurtful if the tales are false. There is more than enough wickedness in the world without conjuring up some which really does not exist. Certainly such words of gossip can strike deep into the inner man and cause pain where there should be none. Let us not condemn the innocent. "As a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

**Prov 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.**

Which is worse, my friend, the one who is lazy and produces less than that of which he is capable, or the one who wastes that which others have produced. The results are the same in both cases. That which should have been present is not available.

**Prov 18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.**

This word had meaning in the times of Solomon in that castles had towers for defense. Those who were in danger could run to the towers and be safe.

It has even greater meaning in these latter days. The sinner who is in serious danger of eternal condemnation may run to the name of the Lord and find forgiveness and security for his soul.

We baptize people into Christ, for the remission of their sins. They then carry the name Christian. That name is as a strong tower where a person may be safe from the darts of Satan. To avoid the security of the tower of Christ is the utmost folly.

**Prov 18:11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.**

Not all rich men are wicked. This verse discusses the rich man who is wicked. Such a man places his confidence in his riches rather than in the power and wisdom of the Lord. His conceited pride envisions no possibility of destruction. The man is deceived. He will one day find out just how insufficient his riches are.

**Prov 18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.**

What comes first? Haughtiness comes before destruction. The pride filled and haughty person needs to take heed lest he fall. He often fails to do that.

Humility comes before honor. This is only partially true in this present world. The pride filled often receive the honor of misinformed people. It is not so with God. He is not deceived. He will abase the proud and He will uplift the humble. It may not happen during this life; but it will take place in the life to come.

**Prov 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.**

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Get all the facts which are available before making a final decision. The facts which have been left uninvestigated may well reverse the decision completely. In that case, the decision maker will end up in shame.

As an example. A lawyer for a man in court who has been accused of a crime may well make it appear that there is no reason to find him guilty. Then the opposing lawyer presents the other side of the case and it becomes obvious that there is enough evidence to find the person guilty.

Prov 18:14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

If the body is suffering from disease or injury, it is possible for the individual to move forward in spite of the affliction. His spirit may sustain his progress. The broken spirit is far more disastrous. When the person gives up all hope, the end may not be far off.

Prov 18:15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

The prudent and the wise are the same. There is a slight difference in getting knowledge and seeking it. When the prudent man has knowledge presented to him, he will recognize it and make use of it. When the wise man realizes there is knowledge which he does not have, he does not wait for it to be presented. He hungers and thirsts for it.

There is an added truth which I take the liberty of presenting. The acceptance of knowledge when presented, and the seeking out of knowledge which still lies undiscovered. Let us note that the proper application

of the knowledge is just as important as the acceptance of it or the search for it.

Prov 18:16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

It is a bit surprising to read widely different lessons which men have drawn from this proverb.

Some see it as a condemnation of bribery. This would be the use of gifts to influence the decisions of those who have the power to reward or punish.

Others see the gifts as talents and abilities which a person might possess. We sometimes refer to persons as being "gifted." This time the meaning would be that by making use of the gifts which one has, he could be promoted to association with those of influence.

Prov 18:17 He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

If a person presents his side of a disagreement first, he may appear to be right in his conduct. Then, when someone who knows the situation quite well comes along and cross examines him, his conduct may appear wicked. The lesson is very similar to that of verse thirteen in this same chapter.

Prov 18:18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.

The casting of lots was sometimes used in earlier times to settle controversy. The idea behind this was that when men were not wise enough to make a decision, God could be invited to see that the lot fell correctly.

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When the decision had been made, the contention could be dissolved. Even today we are told to pray, "*Thy will be done.*" This is done in the confidence that when the matter is placed in the hands of the Almighty, He will see that all things work together for good.

**Prov 18:19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.**

It is highly important for friends to avoid offending one another. Once the offense has been introduced, the friendship may completely dissolve. When this happens, it is sometimes even more difficult to mend the breach than if it had occurred between strangers.

It is most certainly true that disagreements between fleshly brothers, and disagreements between members of the church, are heated and persistent.

**Prov 18:20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.**

The book of proverbs is filled with discussions of the proper choice of words. The fruit of one's mouth is the words which the person utters.

If his words are chosen properly, he is more likely to find others cooperating with him and he will have enough to eat. His communications with others can lead to greater production of goods. Both the one who speaks and the one who listens will then benefit from the conversation.

Destructive conversations would, of course, do just the opposite.

**Prov 18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.**

Does this proverb apply to earthly matters or spiritual matters. Perhaps it applies to both. Those who use their tongues may offend others and be murdered for their insults. They may also please others and find life on earth more pleasant.

The verse may go farther and tell us that the spreading of spiritual truth is capable of bringing life to those who hear and obey it. It may also lead to the spiritual death of those who hear and ignore it.

**Prov 18:22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.**

The last chapter of this book of Proverbs will have much more to say about a worthy woman. This one verse is but a sample of the compliment which is paid to such women there.

When one marries there is usually a promise in the marriage ceremony that each person will love and cherish the new mate until death parts them. This is a promise most easily kept when a man finds a good wife. Life becomes fuller and richer. It becomes easier to serve Jehovah and love one's neighbor.

The verse does not include the fact that there are wives who are bad. When that is true, life becomes daily misery. Service to God and fellowman are hindered.

Young men, you need to be more cautious in choosing a wife than in nearly any decision you ever make.

**Prov 18:23 The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.**

Solomon is not saying this is the way it should be. He is only stating the truth. The poor do not have the power of riches to enforce their words. They normally have to beg or plead for their needs to be fulfilled.

The pleas all too often go unheeded. The rich who could take care of the poor man's needs is far too busy to be touched by the requests. He send the poor man off without even a decent hearing.

**Prov 18:24 A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.**

Unfriendly persons do not usually have an abundance of friends. If one is not interested in the lives of others, it is not likely that others will be interested in his life. The friendly person is interested, and inspires others to be interested in him.

This is far easier for some persons than for others. There are natural introverts who find it far more difficult to make friends than extroverted persons. Be cautious about censuring the quiet and reserved individual. That person may have to overcome obstacles to making friends that you do not have to hurdle.

Most of us have had the experience of finding a friend who is more apt to be present in a time of need than a fleshly brother. David had just such an experience. He and Jonathan were the dearest of friends. His own brother, Absalom was not.

We hardly need to be reminded that there is one friend who definitely sticketh closer than a brother. Jesus said, *"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."*

He promises, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”*  
He also promised that He will return for those who have proven themselves to be His friends, and will take them unto Himself.

“What a friend we have in Jesus!”



## *Chapter 19*

**Prov 19:1 Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.**

The contrast between God's view of men and the view of the world is sharp. If one were to list the ten richest persons in the world, he would find that they were honored by most of those who had any idea how much they had financially.

It would only slightly reduce the honor paid to them if it was found that they gained their riches by false advertising or by other dishonest business methods. There might well be a considerable amount of discussion over the methods used, but the bank account would still override the lack of integrity in the minds of many.

This is definitely not the case with respect to God's view of men. In the sight of God, that man or woman who poor but honest is superior to the one who is poor yet honest in speech and actions.

**Prov 19:2 Also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.**

This verse is not pointed in the direction of the one who is incapable of normal thought. It has to do with the one who will not learn, even though he has the capability. It is a sad condition when one cannot learn. It is worse to be able to receive knowledge and fail to listen.

The one who acts before he thinks can expect to make many serious mistakes. God even goes so far as to say that refusal to accept knowledge is one form of sin.

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Prov 19:3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.

A pervert is one who strays from the straight and narrow way. When one follows the crooked paths into which Satan invites, there are many calamities ahead.

Then, when these calamities rear up their heads in the life of the one who has perverted his way, the person desires to lay the blame for his miseries upon God rather than honestly taking the blame himself.

Prov 19:4 Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour.

We have already noted the verse which states that "He who hath friends must show himself friendly." This is not quite as true with respect to the wealthy. The riches of the wealthy may attract others in spite of their personality. Some will be attracted because they are poor and actually need help. Others are attracted because they expect to benefit by the association with the rich.

It is quite the opposite with the poor. The poor are often shunned because of their poverty. It matters but little whether or not they are responsible for their unhappy condition. Others do not wish to share in their plight.

Jesus Christ spoke a word in behalf of the poor when he gave the beatitudes. He promised that they would inherit the Kingdom of God. There is joy in the knowledge that one who is poor on earth may become rich in heaven.

Prov 19:5 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.

For all practical purposes the liar and the false witness are the same. The second half of this verse is

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meant to place heavy emphasis upon the first half.

The courtrooms of the land are filled with witnesses who attempt to twist the truth. That is why one takes a solemn pledge before God to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The ones who break that pledge may escape the punishments of men. They will not escape the punishments of God.

**Prov 19:6 Many will intreat the favour of the prince: and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.**

The powerful ruler and the one who offers gifts are both able to draw many to themselves. There is nothing wrong with being a true friend to either of these classes. The wrong comes in representing one's self as a friend when the real motive is selfish gain.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was performing miracles of healing and was feeding the multitudes, he found it necessary at times to separate himself and retire into the wilderness to escape the press of the crowd. When He went to the cross, He went alone.

**Prov 19:7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.**

Both the relatives and the friends of the poor man are few and far between. He may make the same efforts to gain friends that the wealthy man does, but his efforts will be in vain.

All that would be necessary for him to find his efforts bearing fruit would be for those who had vanished to discover that he had inherited a fortune.

**Prov 19:8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.**

The soul represents the whole man. The person who seeks out wisdom enriches his entire life. Wisdom is the capacity for making correct choices. A man who loves wisdom is making preparation for the future.

It is not enough to obtain wisdom. It is necessary to cling tightly to it. Unless this is true, the future is still precarious.

**Prov 19:9 A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.**

This verse is almost an exact repetition of verse five of this same chapter. This is not a mistake because the Holy Spirit forgot Solomon had been inspired to write these words before this. Liars shall find their place in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. It is not wise to forget that!

**Prov 19:10 Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.**

The Hebrew word which is translated as “delight” could just as well have been translated as “luxury.” It is quite inappropriate for a fool to have luxurious delights. He will only treat them with injudicious choices and squander them.

The same is true with respect to rule by unqualified persons. On occasion a person who has serious inadequacies is found in a place of supervision. When that happens, the unit over which the unqualified person rules will suffer, and so will the ruler. This is true whether it be a family, an educational institution, or a nation.

**Prov 19:11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.**

Anger is capable of reducing the best of us to beast-like actions. The reasoning power of the angry person is replaced by emotion. If one would stop and carefully think things out before allowing his anger to precipitate foolish revenge, he would find that this is a profitable way of life.

Jesus urged men to pray that God might forgive them as they forgive others. Most of us pray that God will be far more willing to forgive us than we are willing to forgive those who sin against us.

**Prov 19:12 The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.**

Certain despotic rulers have been made famous by their slaughter of any and all who stand in their way. A roaring lion is something none of us would like to face. The red faced king who has been offended is just as dangerous.

The king who is pleased by one of his subjects can be as refreshing as the dew of the morning upon the tender grass.

There is a King who is the greatest of all kings. He is both Lord of lords and King of kings. It is not wise to live such a life here that one must face his anger in the judgment. It is extremely wise to cultivate His friendship and be taken home to heaven.

**Prov 19:13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father; and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.**

Fathers have a hard time! Just as our Father in heaven grieves over some of His children who go astray,

human fathers grieve over their offspring. One of the reasons why this is true is that God has seen fit to offer humans the power to choose. We are not robots who move according to the button which is pushed.

Responsible fathers attempt to train up their children in the way that they should go. In many cases the children decide for themselves that those are the best ways. The fathers are then proud and rejoice over the character of their sons and daughters. When the opposite is true, and the children exert their power of choice to depart from the training in righteousness which was provided for them, the fathers are saddened by the departure.

Many men are blessed with wives who make every attempt to cooperate with them, encourage them, and love them with all their heart. Such men would be well advised to thank God for such a precious gift.

Other men find that the woman they married and promised to live with until death parted them are contentious and sharp tongued. God describes the effect as being like dripping water which aggravates one until it threatens to drive them up the wall. I might add that some women have to deal with husbands who bring on these tirades.

**Prov 19:14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.**

We have mixed emotions when we receive an inheritance from our parents estates. We are sorrowed over the loss of the parents, but we usually appreciate the confidence which the parent had in us to will the inheritance to us. Houses and riches which are appreciated.

There is something worth far more than houses and riches. That is the prudent wife. She will be described in detail in the last chapter of this book. Only God can give one a worthy wife. Men, if you have this kind of wife, give

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the Father in heaven glory and honor. Love your wife with all your heart.

Prov 19:15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

If a man will not work, neither let him eat. When one is sleeping, he is not working. If he goes into a deep sleep it may well last through the hours when he should be working. In that case the person will risk having insufficient food. He will have no one to blame but himself.

Slothfulness is laziness. There are some who deserve help. The slothful, or lazy, do not deserve it.

Prov 19:16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

According to Solomon, the writer of these words, the fear of God and the keeping of His commandments is the whole duty of man. One who follows that path of life will please God and find eternal life in heaven. The one who chafes at God's commandments, failing to keep them, will find that the person does not desire life. The person is apt to die physically before he otherwise would. He also will die the second death which separates him from God forever.

Prov 19:17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

God has promised to pay back whatever one has given to the poor. The poor may not be capable of repaying what

which they have received. That will not matter. God will take care of the giver.

Still, this is one of the most difficult parts of the Biblical instructions to follow. We do not wish to encourage the slothful. They do not deserve help. They need to discover the relationship between prosperity and honest labor. We do wish to help those who deserve it. The difficulty lies in determining which persons are deserving and which are not.

When this commentator was a boy, tramps used to come along begging from house to house. It was a well known fact that if you gave food or money to one of these tramps, you were likely to find several at your door in just a short while. It is no doubt preferable to give when there is uncertainty than it is to withhold assistance from the truly needy.

Prov 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

A misbehaving child, son or daughter, needs to be corrected. At times this may only require a clear explanation of why the words or actions were wrong. Other times it may require corporal punishment. That is likely to bring on screaming and tears.

It is certainly not pleasant for parents to hear their children weep after they have been paddled. That should not prevent the parent from administering the punishment. If the correction is delayed too long it may be found that the situation has gone beyond help.

Prov 19:19 Aman of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.

A violent temper has gotten many into enormous difficulties. When the temper increases, the reasoning

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power decreases. Things are done and said which ought not to be. Murders are often committed in temper fits.

If an individual is prone to lose his temper, you can perhaps get him out of the resulting difficulty. That does not guarantee he will not repeat the folly. Indeed, it is very likely that he will.

**Prov 19:20 Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.**

The proper attitude toward advice and instruction today will arm one for the days which follow. The older a person becomes, the wiser they should become.

I have just this day read an article on the sports page of the newspaper in which a coach was commenting on a game which had been more difficult than his players expected. The coach had pointed out that the opponent had played several games already and his own team had not. He had warned them that they should be careful, that experience can pay off. They had failed to pay attention to his warning and had paid a price.

**Prov 19:21 There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.**

The devices spoken of here are of a devious nature. God has given man a plan for living. When man decides he can do a better job of directing his steps than can the Lord, he is looking for trouble. Human wisdom is not sufficient. God's wisdom will not fail.

**Prov 19:22 The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.**

Why do we desire to be in the company of certain persons rather than others? One of the reasons is that

those who are kind to us draw us to them.

We do not appreciate being lied to. We would much rather find ourselves in the company of a poor person than in the presence of one who deceives us with lies.

**Prov 19:23 The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.**

The contrast in this proverb is between a rich and full life and one plagued with unpleasantness. The rich life comes about when one fears Jehovah and follows His directions. The miserable life comes when one chooses to ignore the Word of the Lord and rebel.

Of course, we always have to contend with that everlasting question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" The entire book of Job deals with the answer to that query. Job was a good man. In spite of this, he suffered enormous problems. Job had great difficulty in understanding why these horrible things were taking place.

If Job had known multiplied millions of people would read of his struggles and would be encouraged in their fight against Satan, he would have felt that his misfortune was worth enduring the trials. Most of the time those who fear the Lord and allow Him to direct their paths will find life finer and sweeter.

**Prov 19:24 A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.**

Most commentators agree that this verse discusses laziness at it's very height. How could a man be so lazy he would starve rather than exert the effort to feed himself? God hates laziness. A man who is too lazy to eat is lazy.

I would like to pass on a comment which was made by J. Vernon McGee concerning this verse. He pointed out that there are spiritually lazy persons who do exactly that which is so disgusting to consider in the physical realm. The Bible contains spiritual food and drink for the soul of man. There are those who will carry a Bible around with them, but who almost never read from it.

**Prov 19:25 Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.**

The scorner is one who belittles the Word of God. If you subject him to bodily punishment, he will learn to avoid being caught the next time. He cares little for the rightness or wrongness of the deed. He only realizes he gets hurt when he goes in a certain direction.

The one who has understanding will not require smiting. A word of reproof will be sufficient for alter his actions. He will realize the reason for changing his direction.

**Prov 19:26 He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.**

It is very probable that this proverb is talking about a son whose father has died and left him with his mother. The son then foolishly wastes that which his father left behind. When his mother objects to such waste, the son chases his mother off. That son brings both shame upon his mother, as well as reproach upon himself from both God and his fellowman.

**Prov 19:27 Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.**

Some hunger and thirst for knowledge. They shall be filled. All one has to do to realize there are many who like to feed on evil instruction and then pass that information on to others is to stop at a truck stop restroom and note the words that are written on the walls.

Even some who have academic credentials from the highest universities will hold out instruction which tempts men to turn from God and spiritual truth as found in the Holy Scriptures.

**Prov 19:28 An ungodly witness scorneth judgment: and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity.**

A false witness does not concern himself with the need for accurate judgments. Those who bore false witness against the Lord Jesus Christ are proof of the truth of this verse.

The last part of the verse does not say the wicked try to destroy iniquity. That would be the last thing he would do. The verse is stating that the wicked feed on iniquity. They feed on it!

**Prov 19:29 Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools.**

The person who scorns civil law is asking for the punishment attached to the crime. Fools can only be dealt with by sharp punishment such as stripes with a rod. They absolutely refuse to take heed to words alone.

## Chapter 20

**Prov 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.**

The Bible condemns drunkenness. We are told to “Be not drunken with wine.” Nearly anyone old enough to be familiar with human personalities understands the use of the slang word “wino.” God did not create man for the purpose of degrading himself with intoxicating drinks.

It is most strange that we hear much today about the dangers of smoking and the use of marijuana or cocaine. Yet, there is almost no publicity with respect to the dangers associated with drinking alcoholic beverages. The damaging effects of consuming alcohol are far greater than the threat of lung cancer, although both are devastating.

The answer usually comes back from the wine and liquor industries, and from those who use their products, that Jesus made a very large amount of wine for the wedding feast at Cana. They also point out that Paul told Timothy to “Drink no more water, but take a little wine for the stomach’s sake.”

The fact is that the wine Jesus made at Cana was made from water supplied on the spot, and in just a short time Jesus had turned it into wine. It did not have time for fermentation. The Greek word which is translated as wine can also mean grape juice. That is what Jesus made.

With regard to Paul’s instructions to Timothy, there is a different explanation. When tourists visit in Palestine even today, they are cautioned about drinking the water. The reason for this caution is that sanitation measures are not applied to the degree they are in Europe and

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the United States. Paul was urging Timothy to use wine as a preventative against bacterial infection of the intestinal tract. There is little reason today with more effective water sanitation procedures to use wine for that purpose.

Even if Jesus had made wine, the percent of alcohol would have been only about five percent. Modern wines are three or four times higher in percent of alcohol content. That which we term “hard liquor”, such as Bourbon Whiskey may have as much as fifty percent alcohol. This writer knows of no better way to pickle one’s brain than to drink sizable amounts of this concentration of alcohol.

We urge the modern man refrain completely from the consumption of alcoholic beverages. It has been shown through tests with video games, etc. that even one drink will often lower the score a significant amount. Just how drunk is drunk. Just how damaging is drunkenness. Be not deceived, or made irrational through wine or strong drink.

Prov 20:2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

Much of the Holy Scripture was written in lands and in times which were under the rule of human kings. These monarchs had the power of life and death. When a king became angry he could be as dangerous as facing a hungry lion. It was not wise to make the king angry.

In addition, God has instructed humans to be subject to the powers that be. Rebelling against the will of the king is certainly not subjecting one’s self to the powers that be. Admittedly, there have been despotic monarchs who mistreated their subjects in such ways as the king



did when Daniel was unjustly thrown into the lion's den. However, that was not the usual case.

The person who offends one in a position of power can expect to suffer the consequences. If he does not place his soul in eternal danger, he may well find himself in serious physical danger.

Prov 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Honorable men do not see strife as a means of settling controversy. They would much rather sit down and discuss the matter intelligently and come to agreement.

A foolish man is far more apt to aggravate the conflicting positions by insulting or threatening the one who disagrees with him. He may go even farther. He may initiate strife where there was none before, just because he gets satisfaction out of the confrontation.

Prov 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Some plow their fields in the spring, some in the fall. In either case the truth of this proverb is the same. The man who uses the excuse that the weather has not yet become warm enough to get out and plow, and also the man who claims that it has already become too cold to plow can endanger their harvest.

The lazy man can always find some excuse for avoiding work. When the farmer fails to prepare the soil for planting at the proper time, he will find that his harvest is drastically reduced. Then, when he has to beg for help from his neighbors, he is likely to find them unsympathetic.

Prov 20:5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Wisdom and knowledge lie buried deep in the heart of some men. Rather than spouting off and boasting of their knowledge, they remain quiet and unassuming. The one who draws such knowledge out of the man will find himself refreshed by the truth.

Another possible interpretation of this proverb is that the counsel in the heart of the man of understanding is in plenteous or deep supply, and is carefully weighed before it is drawn out for presentation to others.

Prov 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

It is not easy to assess one's own true goodness. We are too biased to see objectively. When the good is discussed, we are ready to claim it. When the evil in us is discussed, we find it hard to accept. Yes, some rogues are proud of their wickedness, but this is not the usual case.

It is very difficult to find a man who is absolutely honest in looking at himself.

Prov 20:7 The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

A just man is a good man. He is honest with both himself and with others. When he knows certain words and deeds are wrong, he will avoid them. This will usually cause him to prosper during his lifetime. Then, when he leaves this world, he children have the opportunity to build upon the foundation which he has laid.

Prov 20:8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

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This is a description of rulership as it should be. A monarchy is a powerful force for good if the king is righteous and just. If he is self centered he can plunge his nation into ruin. He has the capability of removing sin just by letting it be known that he is opposed to it. So little as a narrowed eye or a frown on his forehead may deter that which is wrong.

**Prov 20:9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?**

The answer to this question is “No one.” We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. The man who declares that he has not sinned has made God a liar. The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Yet we, as sinners, have hope.

That hope comes through the blood of the only perfect person who ever walked this earth. Jesus Christ had no sin. This made it possible for Him to offer His blood in place of that of each of us. We can truthfully say, “I am pure from my sin.” It is false to say, “I have made my heart clean.” If your heart is clean of sin, it is because it has been made clean by the application of the blood of Christ to it. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

**Prov 20:10 Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the LORD.**

God desires that men be honest in buying and selling. Those who have diverse weights and measures are the ones who knowingly attempt to pay less for a product than it is worth, and who then set the selling price above that which they know that same product is worth.

Honest merchants can succeed. Most of you will be acquainted with Christians who would not knowingly

deceive either those from whom they buy, or to whom they sell. The merchant can provide a constructive service to his customers and still make a justifiable profit.

**Prov 20:11 Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.**

It is not necessary to wait until a child becomes an adult to see behavior patterns. Children who are pure and right in their actions can be identified in the early years. Those who are selfish can also be seen. Temper tantrums need to be dealt with by parents. If they continue, the chances for proper cooperation with others in adult life are dimmed. I wonder how many children have had their mouth washed out with soap for telling a lie. *I did!*

Parents, you need to reward your children for righteous conduct and punish them for wickedness. If these conditions are responded to early, the child is blessed.

**Prov 20:12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.**

The eye and the ear are both instruments for receiving information. Jehovah hears all and knows all. He desired that the humans whom he created be able to use these same benefits to a lesser degree.

Having been raised on the farm, and then spending much of a lifetime in teaching the wonders of nature, this commentator is humbled by the majesty of God's creation. Long before man produced a hearing aid, or made use of a camera, God had perfected human organs that still defy their imitation in the world of mechanics. It is my guess that even the specialists in hearing and sight

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would throw up their hands in defeat if they were asked to make complete comparisons between the knowledge of the specialists and that of God.

Prov 20:13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

The lazy person takes so much time to sleep that no work is produced. If he eats it will be because someone else took pity on him and gave him the necessities of life.

There are, however, two extremes. It is possible to become so intense with work that one cannot sleep. Physicians sometimes have to tell patients to “slow down.” We should be able to find the happy medium in which we open our eyes at the time they should be open to live a productive life. We should also avoid overwork which causes us to lie awake because we cannot get our mind out of high gear.

Prov 20:14 It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.

We return to the same line of thought which was explored earlier in this chapter with respect to diverse weights and measures.

The buyer tries to persuade the seller the merchandise is priced too high. Then, when he has made the purchase, he boasts to others of having bought the merchandise well below what it was worth. This is sinful.

Prov 20:15 There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.

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Gold and precious gems are of immense value. Wealthy persons accumulate great riches in the form of expensive jewelry.

There is something which is far more precious than gold and rubies. That is knowledge. Gold and rubies will pass away with the end of this present world. Knowledge will not. Men pay large sums of money to be taught truths which will enable them to be successful in life. Jesus said, *“Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”* Knowledge separates men from the beast world. *Animals do have the ability to absorb small amounts of knowledge, but when compared with the knowledge gained and transmitted from one generation to another, humanity possesses vast superiority. No price tag can be placed on this capacity.*

**Prov 20:16 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.**

I know I am about to make an unusual statement for a Bible commentator, but I fail to fully understand the meaning of this verse. I will go as far as I can.

It appears that there are three individuals involved in the first part of the verse. There is the one who is being cautioned to take a garment from someone who has promised to be responsible for the debts of still a third person. Thus we have the one who takes the garment, the one from whom he takes the garment as surety, and the stranger who might not meet his debt responsibility.

If the verse had used the word “from” rather than the word “for” it would be easier. In that case there would only be two persons involved. One would take the garment of a stranger as surety to make certain he paid back that which he had borrowed.

The second part of the verse is not much easier. Some think it speaks of a man who has become involved with a prostitute and owes her for her favors. This would mean the first person is to take some type of pledge for security if he loaned money to one who had become indebted to a prostitute and could not pay her.

All I am able to say after reading several others comments is that one must be very careful about promising to be responsible for the debts of those concerning which there is the slightest doubt.

**Prov 20:17 Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.**

When one obtains a profit by dishonest measures he fails to realize that his present satisfaction can be very quickly turned to discomfort. When one bites into a lettuce salad, he may enjoy the flavor of the salad. If that salad has not be washed well, he may later find his teeth grinding on sand and small gravel. As ye would that others do unto you, do ye also unto them.

This truth can be turned around to say that as you treat others, it is likely that they will treat you.

**Prov 20:18 Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.**

The wise person will seek the advice of others before starting out on new ventures. Two heads are usually better than one. A general who is considering going into battle would show good judgment to decide whether his army is strong enough to win the battle, or whether he is sending it to certain defeat.

**Prov 20:19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.**

The person who enjoys gossip will try to gain the trust of another by flattery in order that he may obtain juicy tidbits of personal information which can then be spread around the town.

It is best to be careful about the ones to whom you reveal personal details you do not wish to become commonly known.

**Prov 20:20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.**

God expects men to honor their father and mother that their days may be long upon the earth. Most mothers and fathers have sacrificed much for the benefit of their children. An ungrateful child who thinks so little of parents as to curse them will incur the wrath of the Father in heaven.

See Leviticus 20:9 and Matthew 15:4.

*Lev 20:9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.*

*Matt 15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*

**Prov 20:21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed.**

This verse may be discussing devious methods on the part of the inheritor to get the inheritance before the

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parent died. He may succeed in his goal and think all is well. Later, he will pay dearly for his misconduct

Prov 20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, I will repay. It is most difficult for we humans to determine just what vengeance is appropriate as punishment for our suffering. It is better for us to pray for God to forgive those who have wronged us, and then allow Him to determine how justice is to be applied.

Prov 20:23 Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good.

This verse is almost identical with verse ten. The comments there should be consulted.

Prov 20:24 Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

I am a stranger and a pilgrim on this earth. I have not traveled this way before. There is much that I do not know. God is both omniscient, knowing all things, and omnibeneficent or perfectly good. It is then a mark of wisdom on my part to hear what He has to say about my goals and my pathway for obtaining those goals. I must—

Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Prov 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Prov 20:25 It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry.

It is folly for one to make a vow to God that he will do something in the way of service, and then decide after further examination that he does not wish to keep that vow.

Prov 20:26 A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.

The wheel was a way of punishing a criminal in the time of Solomon. Sometimes a person would be tied to the spokes of a wheel and beaten with a whip. Other times a person might be tied and a cart would be driven over their body.

The point of the verse is that a wise king will not allow crime to go unpunished. In many parts of the world today the criminal has a more satisfying life after having committed a major crime than he did before being placed in prison. He has plenty of food and medical treatment. He has a warm place to sleep. He normally does not have as much work to do as he would have earning a living outside the prison. Criminals should be punished for their evil actions.

Prov 20:27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

My own spirit and the Lord who gave it are the only ones who know my innermost self. The candle of the Lord may well be the conscience which sheds light on the rightness or wrongness of my thoughts, words and deeds.

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That which the candle of the Lord reveals should be seen and laid in order while there is yet time.

**Prov 20:28 Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.**

A good king is one who does his best to promote kindness and the spread of truth in his kingdom. By encouraging righteousness in the kingdom, the king builds an enduring nation.

Not all rulers follow after mercy and truth. Adolph Hitler worshipped power. He did tremendous damage to the nation of Germany.

**Prov 20:29 The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the grey head.**

There is pleasantness to be found in every age of a man or woman. During the early years of life pride is taken in athletic ability. During the latter years the man who boasts of his athletic ability might well be asked to prove it on the athletic field, in which case much embarrassment could follow. At the same time the young man should admit that he is inexperienced and needs to be taught wisdom and knowledge. He is unwise if he believes he already knows it all.

**Prov 20:30 The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.**

When one has been wounded, the wound turns black and blue. This is a part of the healing process in which the blood carries away congestion which could result in

clogging the wounded portion of the body.

In similar fashion, the marks of a whipping are evidence that the spirit of a man has been chastised. The stripes are intended to cleanse the inner man as the blood can cleanse the fleshly organs.

## *Chapter 21*

**Prov 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.**

Solomon would have been wiser if he had followed this truth. It is amazing that he could write such proverbs as this one and still ignore God's commandments not to multiply riches, chariots or women.

There have been many powerful rulers down through the history of this world. Some of them were God fearing men. Entirely too many of them were not. Some of them were rulers over Israel. Some were Gentiles. Some lived in ancient times. Some have lived recently.

The wicked rulers convinced themselves they were subject to no man. It may have been true that they had a large degree of independence relative to their fellow men. It is not true that they were independent of God, and free to direct their own ways without respect for the will of Jehovah. If men, including the most powerful rulers, will place their hearts in the hand of the Great Physician they will find life. If they refuse to take His prescription for life, they will die.

**Prov 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.**

It is very difficult to be completely honest with respect to our own failings. Men would like to see themselves as having no weaknesses. We may be able to convince ourselves that we are right. We may even be able to convince others that we have very few faults. We will not deceive God. His penetrating gaze pierces through the surface and scrutinizes the deepest parts of every heart.

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We must constantly seek to keep our hearts spiritually healthy.

Prov 21:3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Judgment is the process of making decisions. Justice is the process of making correct judgments concerning those around us. We should be extremely cautious about condemning another person without proper evidence of that person's guilt. We should also give credit to those who deserve credit. God is a just God. He expects His children to follow His example.

It is not enough to go through the motions of service to the Lord. One can be a member of the church. One can be an elder, a deacon or a pulpit preacher. One can give both time and money to church activities. However, it is possible to do each of these things and still lack the true motive of sacrifice. Each of them may be done through a desire for recognition.

That is precisely why Jesus condemned the Scribes and Pharisees. They were going through a ritual and were hypocrites. They were abominable in the sight of God.

Prov 21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

A high look is the one which comes about because the heart has decided it has reached a level above that of others. This is sin in that it is the opposite of the character of the Lord. He is all powerful, all knowing and is Ruler of the Universe. Yet, He loves the poor, the mentally retarded and the lowliest servant.

Plowing is normally a sign of industriousness. The farmer plows in order that he may later reap a harvest.

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In this verse the plowing represents any action which would be expected to bring a satisfying result. We are told that the industry of the wicked is sinful. It is so because it is not intended as righteousness. It is motivated by selfishness.

**Prov 21:5 The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.**

The diligent and the hasty are contrasted in this verse. I take it that the diligent are those who careful and persistent in their words and deeds, and that the hasty are those who enter into such words and deeds without properly evaluating the consequences, or without pursuing them to completion.

The diligent will find life full and satisfying. The hasty will find it unfulfilled and unhappy.

**Prov 21:6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.**

Gaining a profit by dishonesty is a dangerous road to follow. I once paid \$1400 for a 1941 Buick Special automobile. Six months later I decided to go to college. In order to raise the finances, it was necessary to sell my car. If I remember correctly, the same dealer who sold it to me for \$1400 offered me \$875 for it. It was still in very nearly the same condition it was when I paid him for it.

A person who amasses a fantastic bank account through deception is tossing vanity around like a beach ball. Vanity is emptiness. Those who seek to play this game will find the final score of their life comes out to be

“zero.” We can go even farther. It will be on the minus side.

**Prov 21:7 The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.**

The proverb is not talking about robbing the wicked. It is talking about the robbery the wicked use to take from others.

Because such persons attempt to destroy the lives of those they misuse, they shall find that their own lives will come to the final judgment in sad disarray. They had misjudged others. They will face a True Judge.

**Prov 21:8 The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.**

A froward and strange way is one that is crooked and strays from the path set out by God.

The pure person will walk the straight and narrow way that God has laid out in His Book and shown through the example of His Beloved Son.

**Prov 21:9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.**

In the time of Solomon, the author of these proverbs, most of the houses had flat roofs. the man who found himself living in the house proper with a wife who constantly scolded and nagged would find it preferable to forsake the house and take up his quarters on the roof.

This proverb works both ways. The wife who finds her husband to be abusive and ungrateful would also find it preferable to leave and live on the roof. Many a



divorce has taken place because of just such misuse of one's mate.

I may have made use of this example in another place in this set of commentaries. If so, it is worth repeating. When I was a lad we had a hired man who lived in separate rooms in the same house as we did. He was married to a woman who did not keep the house clean, and who laid around reading magazines most of the day. He came in one day and she met him at the door. She had worked real hard and was proud that she had accomplished what she had. He was so used to the opposite behavior that he replied, "You didn't do anything you weren't supposed to did you?" Needless to say the resulting physical brawl was not very nice.

Marriage requires affection and cooperation by both the husband and the wife.

**Prov 21:10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.**

"Seek and ye shall find." The wicked man who is always seeking for evil will find it, even if it is not present. He can find every fault in his neighbor, and even some that are not there. He is evil himself, and he expects to find such evil in everyone else.

There is much evil in the world. If one goes about seeking it, he will find it. If he is evil he will revel in it. If he is righteous, he will avoid it.

**Prov 21:11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.**

The scorner is the one who looks with disdain on directions which are provided for him, especially the Word



of God. If the scorner of the civil law is properly punished, others will learn not to do that which he has done. That is why it is important to punish criminals quickly and sufficiently. Otherwise the simple will conclude they can follow in the wicked ways of the criminal without punishment.

The wise will learn from punishment. Usually they do not even have to be punished. They hear and obey instructions and do not have to be punished.

**Prov 21:12 The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.**

Righteous persons will take notice of the wickedness which surrounds them. They may not have the ability to successfully oppose and destroy it. They will recognize it and stay clear of it.

The time will come when the wisdom of the righteous will be recognized. Although men may not be able through their own power to destroy that which is evil, God can do so, and will. The destruction may not take place today or tomorrow, but rest assured, it will take place.

**Prov 21:13 Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.**

God loves the poor just as much as he does those who have plenty. Jesus loved the poor. Christians are expected to act as their Father in heaven, and their elder brother act. We are to hear the plea of the poor.

If we fail to respond to the cry for help, God will turn a deaf ear to our own plea when we find ourselves in need.

There is great difficulty in this verse. God knows the

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hearts of men. He knows who is deserving of help and who is not. Many of us would be delighted to be of help to those who truly need it and deserve it. The difficulty comes in knowing we are not wasting that which we give.

There are many organizations in our present society that give handouts to anyone who knocks at their door. When lazy persons receive help which they do not deserve, they become even more lazy. Those who see that they have been treated in this way decide begging is the easy way to survive.

The Christian is faced with the need to make a judgment which is not easy. It is probable that God desires us to err on the side of giving more than is deserved rather than less. But, He certainly is not happy when we encourage laziness.

Prov 21:14 A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath.

When Jacob realized that he was going to meet Esau for the first time after having deceived him with respect to the birthright, he sent gifts ahead to pave the way for a reconciliation. He did not realize that Esau did not hold malice toward him.

But what is a gift in secret? It seems that we are speaking here of some sort of bribe which is offered in privacy. It would then serve the purpose of soothing a hot temper and avoiding some sort of retaliation for a wrong which had been done.

Prov 21:15 It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Those who treat others righteously are promised joy as a reward. It is quite the opposite for those who treat others abusively. They will face calamity.

Prov 21:16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

The way of understanding is the highway of holiness. The person who leaves that highway will find that he has joined the company of those who are spiritually dead. He will remain in that company until he determines to return to God's way.

Prov 21:17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

Pleasure is ordinarily a word found on the positive side of the dictionary. God is not opposed to pleasure if it is sought in walking with Him. As it is used here it is very negative and denotes the pleasures of sin. The man who devotes his life to wine, women and song is very apt to squander his money foolishly and end in poverty. That which gives us pleasure should also cause God to have pleasure in us.

Prov 21:18 The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.

A ransom is a price paid for the release of that which has been taken captive. How then can we say the wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous? Do they pay the ransom, or are they the ransom themselves?

One suggestion has been that Jesus Christ paid the ransom for us, and that he took the sins of all the world upon himself when he died upon the cross.

There may be another explanation of the verse. Ordinarily we would say that Jesus, the upright, paid

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the ransom for we who have transgressed the will of God. That is the reverse of this verse. What we have here declares that the wicked will pay dearly for the evil which plagues the world, while the righteous will not have to pay.

**Prov 21:19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.**

This verse has already been discussed in connection with verse nine.

**Prov 21:20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.**

The wise are far more apt to live comfortably than are the foolish. The foolish do not see far enough ahead to plan for the future.

**Prov 21:21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.**

The person who seeks evil will find it. The person who seeks righteousness will also find it. However, the person who seeks righteousness will also find spiritual life and honor in the sight of God.

**Prov 21:22 A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.**

Wisdom is greater than might. Babylon had powerful armies and what seemed to be impenetrable walls. It was

defeated because a man of intelligence caused the water from a stream which ran through the city to be diverted and he was then able to go under the wall rather than over or through it.

**Prov 21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.**

It would be most interesting to count the number of references in the book of Proverbs to the careful use of the tongue. Not only does the one who controls his tongue keep his own soul from trouble; he prevents others from suffering as a result of his folly.

**Prov 21:24 Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.**

How does Jehovah look at the man who deals with his fellow man in haughtiness and anger. God labels him as being full of pride and scorn. That is not the most desirable view of one for God to have.

**Prov 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.**

The lazy person wishes to have everything that the worker has. He is not willing to put forth the energy to earn that which he desires. He can destroy himself by wishing without working.

**Prov 21:26 He coveteth greedily all the day long; but the righteous giveth and spareth not.**

The first word "he" in this verse must refer back to the lazy person of the last verse. Anything which he does

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gain is selfishly coveted. The righteous person is willing to part with his possessions if he sees a need.

Prov 21:27 The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

Let us suppose that someone has accumulated a fortune through improper motives and deception. Let us further assume that this person decides to make a monetary contribution to the church. That would be an abomination in the sight of God.

It would multiply the disapproval of God if the person gave the contribution as a means of further improper gain.

Prov 21:28 A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.

Those who spread lies about others place themselves in serious danger. If they do not repent of these sins, they will be condemned in eternity. This holds whether the lies are told in a courtroom or over the back fence.

Prov 21:29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

It is useless to give spiritual directions to many wicked persons. They only stiffen the neck and proceed in their wickedness.

The upright will hear instruction and will pay heed.

Prov 21:30 There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.

It is not possible to successfully oppose the will of Jehovah. He will win, and the opposer will lose. Many have thought they could do so, and then found out too late that they were wrong!

Prov 21:31 The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.

Chariots and horses will not prevail as will obedience to God. They did not prevail when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. They are insignificant in comparison with the power of the Almighty. Do not depend upon human arms. God's arm is far stronger.

Chapter 22

Prov 22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

It is interesting that Solomon made the above statement. He was immensely wealthy and could afford to purchase anything that was purchasable. With this experience he was able to draw the conclusion that riches are not as precious as a good reputation and the friendship of others.

Riches can flee away in a very short time. Friendship is much more durable. You cannot eat diamonds and pearls.

There is a story about an Arab who was destitute and starving of hunger. He was walking along a trade route hoping he could find something which had been discarded by the travelers. A wagon passed by and a package fell on the road. He hurried to pick it up and fill his empty stomach. To his dismay, it contained only pearls.

Prov 22:2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.

The amount of wealth one has does not place him in higher esteem before the Creator than one who has much less than he. Both are of equal value in the sight of the Lord. It is the heart of man that God evaluates. The man with the pure heart is counted by the Lord as a spiritual treasure.

Prov 22:3 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

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A prudent man is one who has looked on down the road and has seen the pitfalls which present danger. He will then carefully avoid them.

The simple man is the one who rushes headlong into the obstacles and suffers the consequences of his lack of foresight.

**Prov 22:4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.**

Jesus Christ has said that we would be far better off to lay up treasures in heaven than to lay them up where thieves break through and steal and where moths can eat them.

The riches, the honors and the life which comes to those who fear God and keep His commandments is far more important than worldly attainments. These are as sure and certain as the promises of God. There are many who are poor in this world's riches, but who are rich in the things which truly count.

**Prov 22:5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.**

The froward are those who deliberately leave the way of the Lord and choose to direct their own steps. They will find that there are many unforeseen dangers in that choice. The most important of these is the loss of the soul.

**Prov 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**

This is a general principle. This writer knows of parents who have brought up children in admirable

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fashion who later suffered the greatest of grief when those children used their freedom of choice to depart from the way and will of Jehovah.

If disobedient children are always rebellious because they have been poorly brought up, then God Himself has been lacking in the guidance of His own children who have gone astray.

When the freedom of choice is factored into the statement in this proverb, it is absolutely true. It is far more probable that the properly trained child will continue in righteous living until death than will the child who has been lacking in loving discipline.

Prov 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

It is quite true that the rich have greater power in this world than the poor. The second sentence in this proverb indicates that the poor who are ruled by the rich have used bad judgment and have found themselves in need of borrowing from the rich. The one who must have everything his heart desires as soon as he sees it will borrow in order to obtain it. He then finds himself obligated to the one from whom he received the credit.

Prov 22:8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

When you plant the seeds of wickedness, you will reap the harvest of nothingness. Any anger which he feels because of the unpleasant results will be useless. Neither angry words or physical force will remove the vain harvest.

Prov 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

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A bountiful eye is one that has sympathy for the unfortunate he sees about him. Such a man will follow his heartfelt sympathy with aid for those who deserve it. God will see that he is properly rewarded for his kindness.

**Prov 22:10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.**

The scorner is the one who is always right in his own eyes. He disdains the ideas and suggestions of others regardless of the correctness of that which he scorns. As long as the scorner remains, contention and strife will rise up. When the scorner is rejected, the strife will dissolve.

**Prov 22:11 He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.**

A pure heart is one that does not harbor wicked and evil thoughts. The person with a pure heart will be found speaking kindly to others. Even the rulers will find it advisable to cultivate his friendship.

The verse is especially true with regard to the most important King of all. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Abraham was called the friend of God. We should be also.

**Prov 22:12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.**

God sees and He knows those who cherish and spread real knowledge. He will support their efforts. He also sees and knows the ones who speak in opposition to truth. He will oppose the success of their efforts.

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Prov 22:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

The slothful, or lazy man will find any excuse that will allow him to evade work. It will be too cold to prepare the ground when it should be plowed. It is too dangerous to get out in the streets. A lion might be lying in wait.

It really does not matter to him that his excuse is outlandish. He will snatch at straws to find a way to lie in bed.

Prov 22:14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.

Solomon knew all about these strange women. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. We are told that they turned his heart from God.

His failure to recognize the danger involved resulted in the division of his kingdom shortly after his death. The strange woman is the one who is a stranger to God. She is entirely capable of destroying a man's soul. He can fall so far into the depths of sin that he never climbs out.

Prov 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Children do a lot of foolish things. They need to learn right ways through experience. When the child falls while taking his first steps, he should be lifted up and helped to take the next one. Sometimes he will be so independent that he will hurt himself seriously. When a child persists in self destructive behavior, the child must be turned toward safety, even if it requires physical punishment

to accomplish it. At time the rod is remembered better than words.

My father operated a barber shop when I was about three or four years old. One day when I was in the shop, a man gave me a piece of candy. My father noticed that I did not tell the man "Thank you." He told me several times to thank the man. I did not want to. He took the razor strap off the barber chair and gave me a couple of licks. I still did not want to. He continued until I thanked the man. I still did not want to, but the fact that I am now writing these words is proof that the rod of correction has lasting effects. It has been seventy years since I felt the rod.

Those who teach that spanking should never be done are doing a serious disservice to our children and to our society in general. Many of those children will decide no one can make them obey rules of any kind. Others will follow their lead and they will flock together in gangs who steal, rape and murder.

Prov 22:16 He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

What a degraded soul this would be. He takes advantage of the poor who cannot help themselves in order to build up his bank account. Then he uses the bank account to gain favors from the rich. God guarantees that in the long run, this person will not succeed. He will come to want either in this life, or in the next.

Prov 22:17 Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge.

The next few verses point out the importance of listening to the words the author is writing. Sometimes

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one will cup his hand around his ear in order to better hear what is being said. That is the thought here. Listen carefully. The truths which are being presented must not be ignored.

**Prov 22:18 For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.**

These words can bring joy to life if they are digested and stored in the inner man. If that is done, they can be recalled at will and repeated to others. Although the wise men here had not experienced the preaching of the gospel of Christ, they would have agreed whole heartedly with the command to preach the good news to all the world.

**Prov 22:19 That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.**

I remind the reader than Solomon's conclusion to the whole matter was to fear the Lord and keep His commandments. He declared that this was the whole duty of man.

The wonder is that he failed to follow his own advice with respect to multiplying riches, chariots and women.

**Prov 22:20 Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,**

His claim is that he has offered the reader knowledge which should be learned and advice as to how that knowledge should be applied.

**Prov 22:21 That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?**

Every person should reach out for truth. The facts should be checked to see that they are true. Once that is done the one who has learned and verified the truth has an obligation to offer that truth to whoever asks for it.

**Prov 22:22 Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:**

It is a scandalous thing to take advantage of the poor simply because they cannot defend themselves.

The desperately poor in these early times often gathered at the gates of the city, hoping to receive food and other necessities from those who were passing in and out of the city. We are not informed as to what type of oppression could have been laid upon them. We do know they should have been treated with kindness.

**Prov 22:23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.**

One very good reason why the poor were to be treated generously is that those who mistreated them would sometime receive the same type of treatment from one who owns the entire heavens and earth.

**Prov 22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:**

**Prov 22:25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.**

Our companions have influence upon us. If we run with the angry, we tend to pick up their angry ways. If we keep company with those who maintain self control, we are more likely to restrain our own emotions. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is longsuffering.

**Prov 22:26 Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts.**

Do not shake hands in agreement to stand for the debts of someone else. Promising to be responsible for the debts of another person can be most dangerous. Sometimes one who has been a close friend can be turned into an enemy when he is pressured to pay the debt which he owed and the one who has backed him is forced to pay it for him.

**Prov 22:27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?**

It is particularly unwise to stand for the debts of one who owes more than the backer possesses. In such a case the one who stood for the debt could lose everything he owns.

**Prov 22:28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.**

The ancient landmarks were very often stones which were set up at the boundaries of property. It was a serious crime to pick up a neighbor's landmark and move it over in such way as to increase one's own land and decrease that of the neighbor.

There are spiritual landmarks which should not be removed today. Influential persons have persuaded many that the Bible is fallible and whenever it conflicts with their own wisdom, it can be disregarded. God has set certain spiritual landmarks which are not to be picked up and moved at will. When such is done, men will find God is not mocked!

**Prov 22:29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.**

Kings need subjects who are trustworthy and ambitious. Most of these kings will find a way to make use of diligent subjects and see that they are employed profitably.

The man who is slothful will more often be forced to work for one who treats him in an unpleasant manner.



## *Chapter 23*

This twenty-third chapter of Proverbs deals mostly with self control. Gluttony, Adultery, Greed and Drunkenness are all discussed.

**Prov 23:1 When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee:**

When men of prestige invite one to a meal it is wise to be cautious and not eat like a hog. There are several reasons why this is true.

**Prov 23:2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.**

Putting a knife to one's throat only means that if one is accustomed to eating more than is needed it would be best to use restraint.

**Prov 23:3 Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.**

It is quite possible that the person has ulterior motives for inviting you as his guest. He may have set the table with his dainty food just to use your words and deeds as a part of his selfish future plans

**Prov 23:4 Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.**

Material riches are not the chief goal in life. Take God's advice and turn away from grandiose plans for amassing an earthly fortune.

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Prov 23:5 Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

If one sets his goal upon things that are easily removed, such riches can be dissolved in a day. Robbery, disease, natural disasters, failures of the economy, and many other things can cause wealth to fly off into the skies and leave one in poverty.

Spiritual riches are eternal. No thieves break through and steal. No moths eat holes in them.

Prov 23:6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:

Watch carefully whose invitation you accept for a meal. Be certain that it is not one who has malicious motives. His sumptuous food is best left alone.

Prov 23:7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.

He may appear to be gracious on the surface. But when he urges you to eat and drink to your heart's content, his heart is not centered on your welfare. He is planning to exercise his greed.

Prov 23:8 The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.

You may very well find that the tasty food has made you sick at your stomach. So sick in fact that you could vomit up the whole meal rather to find that something you said during the meal was used for evil purposes.

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**Prov 23:9 Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.**

The foolish person does not recognize the difference between words of wisdom and words of folly. There is no need to offer truth to such a person. He will continue in his foolishness regardless of any valuable instruction or correction.

**Prov 23:10 Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:**

In Old Testament times boundaries of property were often marked by stones. The property was passed down from one generation to the next and the stones were not to be disturbed.

Some were inclined to move the stones slightly into a neighbor's property. This enlarged their own estate and cheated the neighbor out of a portion of his.

If this was found out, the next of kin was expected to make certain the thief was punished and the property boundaries returned to where they belonged. Orphans and widows did not have kinfolk who could defend them.

**Prov 23:11 For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.**

They might not have earthly kinfolk to see that they were not mistreated, but the Redeemer in heaven would plead their case. Sooner or later justice would be served.

**Prov 23:12 Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.**

Instruction and knowledge should be passed from person to person. This is one of the marks of humanity. We have the capability of learning from others. The man who has information should share that information with others. Others should be eager to receive such information from one who can offer it to them.

**Prov 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.**

**Prov 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.**

Since Solomon saw fit to repeat this admonition, I shall comment on his repetition. The Bible emphasizes the importance of correction. Sometimes that correction may be effective when administered as words of admonition. In some cases, that will not be sufficient. When words are not sufficient, correction must still be administered. The word “beat” may leave some with the idea that this beating is unmerciful. That is not the case. Some have used witch hazel switches. Some have used fly swatters. Some have used small paddles, and some have used the palm of the hand for a pop on the bottom. None of these will kill the child, but they may set his steps in the right direction to avoid eternal punishment far worse than a loving whack where it counts.

**Prov 23:15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.**

The parents who correct their children may find that the child's heart will wiser when he matures. This will bring joy to the heart of the parent. We might add that God will be pleased that a soul has been saved from spiritual death.

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Prov 23:16 Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things.

The reins were the kidneys. They represent the inner feelings of the parent. When the lips of the child utter wholesome words, the parent is caused to experience inward rejoicing.

Prov 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

Sinners have disdained the will of God. They have placed themselves in a most unenviable position. They may deceive themselves into thinking they are living life to the fullest. It is not so. They are in the process of exchanging their soul for a moment of lust or greed.

Prov 23:18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

The sinner has chosen a road which comes to an unexpectedly abrupt end. It might properly be called a "DEAD END" road. The person of wisdom will avoid that road with all his heart, mind and strength.

Prov 23:19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

Prov 23:20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:

God is not telling us to direct our own steps. He has warned that we are to trust in Him and he will direct our steps. However, the wise man listens carefully to what God commands, and then guides his heart according to the law of the Lord.

Winebibbers are those who have allowed alcoholic beverages to dominate their lives. They do not eat and drink to remain strong and healthy. They act as gluttons and they drink until they lose control of body and mind.

Prov 23:21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

This verse clearly explains the previous one. Those who think they find the best life in uncontrolled appetites will find that the cost of these excesses will be much higher than the monetary price of the liquor and the food.

Laziness and drunkenness walk hand in hand. Failure to work, along with drunken stupor can leave a person in hunger and cold.

Prov 23:22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

Respect for a father when he is old is expected of a son or daughter. Even if the elder man is becoming poor of memory and stumbling of footsteps, if he has lived an honorable life he has earned a listening ear from his mature children.

I still recall the dying words of my own father as he looked his sons right in the eye and said, "Boys, go do what you have to do." I knew exactly what he meant. He was telling us we must make up our own mind how we were going to live the rest of our days. But that did not mean we could live any way we pleased.

Prov 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

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We buy that which we consider to be worth the price. Truth, wisdom, instruction and understanding really have no dollar and cents label pasted across them. They are worth at least as much as they cost.

One does not sell that which is considered to be valuable. Once one comes into possession of truth, he is advised to cling to it as tightly as possible.

**Prov 23:24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.**

**Prov 23:25 Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.**

Both the father and the mother of a child who walks with God will find great satisfaction in the contribution each has made to that child. The mature man or woman can bring a happy smile to the parents through his or her attitudes, words and holy life style.

**Prov 23:26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.**

**Prov 23:27 For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.**

These are strange words, as they come from the pen of one who had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, and who allowed them to turn his heart from God.

Let us hope these words came from his very last days and that he had used his experiences to give those who were to come after him admonition not to follow his example.

**Prov 23:28 She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men.**

Verse twenty-seven is not discussing the physical makeup of the lewd woman. She is a deep ditch and a narrow pit because she offers her body as bait to cause men to fall into degradation. She has sunk into the slime pits of sin herself. Then she reaches out to entrap others.

**Prov 23:29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?**

Practically all of us have seen hideous examples of those described here. Is there really any necessity for elaborating on each of the conditions listed?

I will add only one vivid illustration. One day I was waiting (I think at a bus stop). I noticed a man dressed in dirty clothing which was torn and worn. I saw him reach into his pocket and feel to see if something was there. It was not! He then proceeded to go through every pocket of his clothing in search of whatever he was looking for. Then he saw a nasty cigar butt lying on the ground. He reached down, picked it up, placed it in his mouth and began chewing on it. I had little doubt that he was looking in his clothing for a bottle of booze. Not finding that, he did the next best thing and partially satisfied himself by chewing on the slobber covered cigar butt.

**Prov 23:30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.**

The answer to the question the author of Proverbs asked is that this is the condition in which the drunkard all too often finds himself after a time.

**Prov 23:31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.**

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The wine of Solomon's day was much weaker than that of the present. In order to increase it's effects, it was mixed with spices which made it more powerful.

The word "oinos" is used in the New Testament for both grape juice and fermented wine. The wine of which Solomon speaks was not "grape juice." It made men drunk.

Prov 23:32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

This mixed wine may sparkle and look enticing. It may taste pleasant as it goes down the throat. The time may come when it causes severe stomach trouble or even results in deadly results.

Prov 23:33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

In a drunken state, a man may be attracted to women who are strangers to God, and strange in the sight of women who are godly.

The drunk may curse. He may pour forth filthy language. He may be abusive and insulting.

Prov 23:34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

The drunk may be as foolish as one would be to jump out of a boat and try to sleep on the deep sea.

He may be as ignorant as one would be who climbed to the top of the mast of a sailing boat and tried to sleep there.

Prov 23:35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

As he begins to come to his senses, the drunk will not be aware of what took place while he was in a stupor. He feels like he had been beaten, yet he can not remember having received any beating.

This should cause him to promise himself that he will never get back into such a condition again. He does not do that. When he becomes fully awake, he will begin plans for another drunken spree.

Chapter 24

Prov 24:1 Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

It is not always true that the evil suffer hardship in this world and the righteous prosper. Job was well aware of this fact. Also see the words of Asaph, as stated in Psalm 73.

Psa 73:3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Psa 73:4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.

Psa 73:5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.

Psa 73:6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

Psa 73:7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

Psa 73:8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.

Psa 73:9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

After pondering the matter for some time Asaph drew the following conclusion.

Psa 73:16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

Psa 73:17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

Psa 73:18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

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*Psa 73:19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.*

Every righteous person has had the same thoughts pass through his or her head as Job and Asaph did. God advises us not to desire the position of the prosperous wicked. He also advises us not to keep company with them.

**Prov 24:2 For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.**

The righteous have little in common with those who prosper through wicked means. Both their hearts and their tongues dwell on plans which are forbidden to the righteous.

**Prov 24:3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:**

**Prov 24:4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.**

This refers to more than just the construction and furnishing of an earthly dwelling. Many godly persons have lived with limited houses and furnishings. These two verses look into eternity itself. The earthly mansions of the multimillionaires may be as hovels in the sight of God. In contrast, the humble homes with dirt floors owned by the godly may be only temporary dwellings while they are furnishing the mansion in heaven which awaits them.

The latter are far wiser than the former.

**Pro 24:5 A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.**

**Prov 24:6 For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.**

The wise man draws resources from the knowledge of others. By consulting with those who are knowledgeable he prepares for all of life's battles. It is possible to gain strength from the counsel of humans. It is far more efficient to consult the knowledge which has been made available through the inspired writers of the Word of God.

The greatest battle of all is the one we fight with Satan. We shall need all the spiritual strength we are able to muster.

**Prov 24:7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate.**

In the time of Solomon the leaders of the cities met where there were open areas near the gates of the city. There were no elaborate city council chambers.

The man without wisdom might well be interested in getting close enough to listen to the discussions. He would not be in a position to be respected and heard by the leaders.

**Prov 24:8 He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person.**

This is a much stronger use of the word "mischief" than we normally apply to it. We are not discussing little pranks by five-year-olds. This mischievous person is bent on searching out sin and then practicing it.

**Prov 24:9 The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.**

The person who looks in disdain at the contributions of others is not the most popular. He is usually shunned. As a result he derives himself of the wisdom others could offer if he would accept it.

**Prov 24:10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.**

The mentally and spiritually strong will pass through trials successfully. Those who are weak in these areas will stumble and fall. We must build up a reserve in the pleasant days that will preserve us in the days of difficulty.

**Prov 24:11 If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain;**

When the innocent are accused of wrong doing and are brought before the courts, they may even be condemned to death. The man of God has a responsibility to testify in their favor and protect them from undeserved punishment.

**Prov 24:12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?**

If one knows facts that would tend to exonerate the guilty, and maintains silence by indicating he knows nothing about the guilt or innocence of the accused, that person places his own soul in danger. God knows what should have been done. He will see that both the one who

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refused to support the innocent, and also the innocent, will be ultimately treated as they deserve.

Prov 24:13 My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:

Prov 24:14 So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

John the baptist lived for a lengthy period of time on locusts and wild honey. It is a very nutritious and pleasant tasting food.

The Word of God is just as pleasant tasting and as nourishing to the soul of man as honey is to the physical body.

The person who has feasted upon true wisdom and knowledge will find that his hope will outlast physical death. There will be a reward laid up in heaven.

Prov 24:15 Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place:

Prov 24:16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

The wicked need not think they will be able to destroy the righteous. They may be able to throw an obstacle in his way and cause him to fall momentarily. It will not last. He will arise over and over again to continue his walk with the Lord.

It is the wicked person who plots against the righteous who will find himself in misery. He will be judged by the One who sees and knows all.

Prov 24:17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:

How difficult this is to do!. When one who is injured by another sees his oppressor suffering, he usually rejoices in the thought that the abuser got just what he deserved.

God denies that we have the right to rejoice over the misfortune of any other person, even if they have harmed us. "*Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay.*" As our example, Jesus looked down from the cross and said, "Father forgive them."

Prov 24:18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

It is even possible that God would be so displeased with the spirit of vengeance that He would turn his anger from the one who had been an abuser.

Prov 24:19 Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked:

We have commented on these words in the beginning of the chapter. The command is repeated for emphasis. It is important!

Prov 24:20 For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

How foolish it is to fret over the earthly prosperity of the sinful. They have no hope of eternal life. They are destined to live in spiritual darkness for ever and ever, unless they turn from their evil ways. That is something to be pitied, not to be cherished.

Prov 24:21 My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:

The king represents civil government. The Lord represents ultimate rulership. When civil government is as it should be, it allows cooperation among men and discourages social chaos. The laws of the land are to be observed. The only exception to this is when those laws conflict with the law of God. The words Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:17 apply here.

1 Pet 2:17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

However, we ought to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29).

Who are those who are given to change? Why should they not be meddled with?

These are the ones who cannot stand stability. It has been true throughout the ages that there are some individuals who think following the old paths is monotonous. Any new translation of the Bible appeals to them, not on the basis of accuracy but of newness. If some new method of expressing praise, such as hand clapping during songs, or humming rather than singing is suggested they are all for it.

It is not true that all change is progress. Change must be approached very carefully to see if it is in harmony with God's directions. If it is not in step with what God has prescribed, it should be rejected.

The principle is just as true in the field of civil government. Liberals are constantly searching for something different. Conservatives are bent on

maintaining the status quo. Again, every suggestion for change should be considered on it's own merits.

Prov 24:22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?

The changes may very well bring on confusion. The chaos may be so drastic as to bring on the destruction of a congregation or of an entire nation.

Prov 24:23 These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

What is the significance of the word “also” in this verse? It is that the thirty words of the wise, as introduced earlier have now been completed. Yet, we find there are a few more which are to be presented.

First, a wise person will not show respect of persons when making judgments. The rich and the powerful are to be judged by the same set of rules as the poor and lowly. Giving preference to individuals on the basis of wealth and power is not in agreement with the will of Jehovah.

Prov 24:24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:

A very effective way of alienating others is to condemn the innocent or excuse the guilty. If the guilty are treated as if they were innocent, others will be persuaded that the evil pathway is the more profitable. The guilty must be punished and the innocent must be absolved of all guilt.

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**Prov 24:25 But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.**

God will take note of those who declare wicked actions to be worthy of punishment. He will see that they are properly recognized for their accurate value system.

**Prov 24:26 Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.**

The kiss is used differently in various cultures. In some it is unthinkable for men to kiss men. In others the practice is quite acceptable. The meaning of this verse is that a kiss signifies approval. The person who speaks as he should will gain the approval of the godly who hear him.

This is probably related to the previous verses that deal with calling speaking out against the guilty and speaking out in vindication of the innocent.

**Prov 24:27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.**

One does not build his house until he has organized his work to the point that he can afford to build it. Many of us do not work in the fields today. The principle still holds. Placing one's self in debt without having the means to pay off the debt is an invitation to bankruptcy. Only when the income is sufficient to manage the debt should the debt be undertaken.

**Prov 24:28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips.**

This verse and the next are related. In this verse the neighbor is not to be damaged by telling falsehoods about him. This time the neighbor has done nothing which might cause one to have a vengeful attitude.

**Prov 24:29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.**

This time the neighbor has provided a cause for disgust. Even so, one is not to take revenge. We are to do unto others as we would have others do unto us. Maliciousness breeds more maliciousness. Returning good for evil reduces the evil.

**Prov 24:30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;**

The lazy or slothful person is condemned throughout the entire book of Proverbs. This time we have a picture of the lazy persons property.

**Prov 24:31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.**

Rather than being covered with a bountiful harvest, the land was covered with underbrush. Thorns and thistles were everywhere.

The stone wall surrounding the property had collapsed and lay strewn upon the ground. Everything was in a dilapidated state. Laziness is a sin.

**Prov 24:32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.**

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When the writer paused to take a careful look at the run down conditions, he found a valuable lesson.

Prov 24:33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

Do not put off until tomorrow that which you can do today. Leaning back with folded arms and taking a nap when one should be at work can very quickly show negative results. If one looks for them, there are dozens of imaginary reasons for putting off that which should be done today.

Prov 24:34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

The one who falls into such habits of laziness will find that poverty moves closer day by day just as a traveller moves down the road step by step. It may even be that those to whom he has become indebted will foreclose and use force to take away even the table, chairs and bed from his house.

Chapter 25

Prov 25:1 These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

Hezekiah reigned a little over two hundred years after the death of Solomon. He was one of the good kings. He attempted to promote a revival of spirituality among his subjects. One of the forms his efforts took was the collection and organization of several of the proverbs written by Solomon. From this point on in the book of Proverbs we have those which were selected.

We do not know which of Hezekiah's men worked on this assignment. We do have confidence that God's overruling providence assures the divine approval of the selections.

Prov 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

God is omniscient. His thoughts are infinitely higher and deeper than those of the greatest minds in the entire history of man.

Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

One of the wonders of the Bible is that no matter how long one studies, he always finds mysteries beyond his mental reach. At some later date many of these mysteries

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are comprehended by further study. It is then that we realize the truth of Isaiah 55:8-9.

There is reason to think that when the new heaven and earth come to reality, we may understand some things which are not clear at present—

*1Cor 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

**Prov 25:3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable.**

We are presently a long ways farther in respect to understanding all of the secrets of today's heaven and today's earth. However, there are still mysteries that remain unsolved. It is the responsibility of the rulers of the people to learn everything possible in order that they may lead their people.

No one really knows the heart of another person, even if that person is a husband or a wife. In particular, the king has information which leads him to make decisions that his subjects will not understand since they do not have access to it.

**Prov 25:4 Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer.**

As silver is taken from the earth, it is mixed with many impurities. It must be purified before it can be used to make glistening silverware.

**Prov 25:5 Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.**

Just as the silver is not as useful when it is mixed with dross, the king is not as efficient when there are wicked persons in the high places of his government. If these wicked persons are removed from power, the king will find it much easier to rule with honor.

**Prov 25:6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men:**

**Prov 25:7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.**

It is better to be humble when coming into the presence of the leader of a country than to push toward the highest places of prominence. Jesus recognized this truth when he gave his parable in Luke 14.

*Luke 14:7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them.*

*Luke 14:8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;*

*Luke 14:9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.*

*Luke 14:10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.*

**Prov 25:8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.**

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If one has a grievance toward his neighbor, he should be very careful about discussing it with anybody and everybody. If you are in the wrong and this becomes obvious to those with whom you spoke, you may be quite embarrassed.

Some have applied this verse to taking differences before the courts. That could be included, but it seems more likely that the passage is dealing with neighborhood misunderstandings.

Prov 25:9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another:

Prov 25:10 Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away.

It is far better to go to that person with whom one has differences and talk them over privately. The one who is spoken to in confidence may very well spread the word around and the reputation of the one who should have gone to his neighbor privately will be tarnished beyond repair.

Prov 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

We will not worry too much about whether the Hebrew word translated as “apples” could mean oranges or some other fruit. The point of this statement is that words are most beautiful when used in the proper way and at the proper time.

How wonderful it is that there are some people who have the ability to lift the heart of others who sorrow, and who can heighten the joy of those who are happy. All of us should make an earnest effort to develop such skills.

Prov 25:12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.

Even when it becomes necessary to speak out against the behavior of another person, there are wise people who can do this and lead others into better ways. An obedient ear is one that rejoices in being instructed in the best ways.

Prov 25:13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

In Palestine the time of harvest is not a time when snow is abundant. It does exist in the high places such as Mount Hermon and other elevated places.

Perhaps the servant was sent to bring back snow from the high places to refresh those who were perspiring while laboring in the much warmer harvest fields.

The point here is probably more important than just bringing snow to refresh the laborers. It may be telling us that the messenger who returns with good news is a delightful sight to those who sent him.

Prov 25:14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

The person who promises to present a gift to another and who then fails to make the promise good, is very disappointing. He is like those dark clouds which appear after days of summer heat and which then pass over without leaving rain.

Prov 25:15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone.

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If one wishes to influence others with his speech, it is wise to be patient and gentle. One does not brashly tell a person in high position that he must straighten up and fly right. A gentle approach with soft and patient words can break down those whose heart is hard as bone.

**Prov 25:16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.**

The proverbs are sometimes connected with those which come before or after them. I do not see a connection with either in the case before us. I am going to assume that the advice has to do with gluttony rather than flattery.

That which is most delicious at first can become nauseous when one is gorged with it. When I was a teenager we filled our silo with hay silage several different times. In order to prevent it from spoiling, we added molasses to it. We had gone to town for a barrel of molasses. I rode on the wagon with the barrel. The molasses had leaked out and spread over the top of the barrel. I took my finger and scooped up some molasses and ate it. It was absolutely delicious. I kept on doing this all the way from town to our farm. I realized the molasses was not as good shortly before we arrived at home.

Within a short time I became violently sick. I vomited up all of the molasses, as well as everything else that was down there. To the present day I have difficulty in tasting of pure molasses.

There are many things which are pleasant if used with caution, but may produce misery if overdone.

**Pro 25:17 Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.**

One of those things which can be overdone is visiting with the neighbor. He or she may be glad to see you on occasion. They may find your visits to be burdensome if they follow one another too closely.

**Prov 25:18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.**

All of these items were weapons of war. A maul was a sort of battle axe. That person who tells lies about those who reside near him is the same as one who would go to war with him. His intent may or may not be to destroy. Nevertheless, the lies do tremendous damage.

**Prov 25:19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.**

Judas has a lot of disciples. A trusted friend who betrays one can bring even worse than a tooth broken off or a dislocated ankle. It pays to be as certain as possible that a friend is faithful before confiding in him or depending upon him when trouble strikes.

**Prov 25:20 As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.**

The one who steals your coat in the cold of winter has increased the seriousness of the problem. When vinegar is poured upon soda, the combination creates a foaming effect. When one is in heavy grief and another attempts to cheer him up with jokes or songs it only deepens the grief.

**Prov 25:21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:**

**Prov 25:22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.**

Jesus used almost the same words in Romans 12:20.

*Rom 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

You do not heap these coals of fire upon the head of the enemy in order to gain vengeance. You do so to drive out the animosity and turn him into a friend. We are to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

**Prov 25:23 The north wind driveth away rain: so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.**

This is somewhat odd. The Mediterranean Sea lies to the north of Palestine. We would expect a north wind to produce rain, not drive it away. Adam Clarke points out that the margin reading in some of the older Bibles says, "The north wind bringeth rain." He understands this to be the correct reading.

It is acceptable to God if one rebukes a backbiter. One who gossips behind another's back should be confronted directly by the one who has been slandered. It is even right to let such a person know you are disturbed by his or her behavior. This may result in quieting the backbiting.

**Prov 25:24 It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.**

Solomon should know. He must have had a few brawling women among his one thousand.

A scolding and loud tongued woman can make life absolutely miserable. I might add that an ill tempered man can do the same!

**Prov 25:25 As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.**

If you have never worked in a hay field in the heat of August, you may not fully appreciate the truth of this proverb. The one who brings good news from a great distance is refreshing to the soul.

**Prov 25:26 A righteous man falling down before the wicked is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.**

A righteous man is a source of purity and holiness. He is like a spring of fresh water, bubbling up from the ground. When a man like this is destroyed by others who are wicked, the pure spring no longer offers what it did before.

The other possible explanation of this verse is that if a righteous man bows down before the wicked in the sense of imitating his wickedness, the purity of the righteous has been polluted. The fountain becomes riled and muddy.

**Prov 25:27 It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.**

Human glory may be pleasant and tasteful if it comes in moderate amounts and one does not boast of his own accomplishments. When one pats his own back, there



is no true glory. God abhors such an attitude. Men see through it more often than the one who revels in it thinks they do.

**Prov 25:28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.**

The man who lacks self control is minus one of the important fruits of the Spirit. Just as a city in ancient days whose protective walls had been broken down, the man is open to attacks by anyone who knows how to cause him to lose his temper. Thinking becomes emotional rather than logical when the temper takes control.

## *Chapter 26*

**Prov 26:1 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.**

This is a different thought than the previous remark about the refreshing of the snow in that heat of the harvest. This time we are talking about that which is completely out of place. Snowfall in the summer would be disturbing. Rain when one is trying to take in a harvest can slow down the harvesting and can also harm that which is being harvested.

To give honor to a fool is just as out of place as either of the other two. The fool will misuse the honor and use it to raise his level of conceit, or he will be encouraged to increase his folly.

Verse 1 marks the beginning of several verses in a row that deal with the way to deal with fools. We must remind ourselves once more that Solomon is not talking about the mentally retarded. He is talking about the one who deliberately ignores wisdom.

**Prov 26:2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.**

A bird may wander aimlessly around if it is entrapped in a small room. It does not light in any one place. The swallow who flies long distances without landing will pass right on by.

So it is with a curse which is pronounced upon one who does not deserve it. It will not become effective when aimed at the innocent.

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Prov 26:3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back.

Horses are controlled by the use of a whip on the backside. Asses are controlled by a bridle on the head. Both must be motivated by forceful methods. It is the same with a fool. He will not choose the right way on his own. He must be punished for his folly before he travels the way of the wise.

Prov 26:4 Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

When one is conversing with a foolish person it is necessary that the individual not lower himself to the level of the fool. The sober minded person should lift the conversation to higher levels rather than the reverse.

Prov 26:5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

There have been accusations from Bible critics that this verse contradicts the one just previous. This is not a contradiction. The folly of the fool is to be pointed out in order that he come to realize that he is coming far short of the ingenuity which he thinks he is displaying.

Prov 26:6 He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.

The person who relies upon the unreliable might as well cut off his own feet. The message is not liable to be delivered, or if it is delivered it will very likely be distorted, causing damage to the sender and also to the intended recipient.

Prov 26:7 The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

One who has one leg shorter than the other will walk with a limp. When a wise teaching is placed in the possession of a fool it will be crippled and fail to accomplish its purpose.

Prov 26:8 As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool.

Some are convinced that the meaning of this proverb suffer in the translation from Hebrew to English. They point out that there are two words here that mean something quite different in the Hebrew than the English words into which they have been translated. The word "margemah" which is translated as "sling" is defined in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance as "a stoneheap." The word "tsarab" which is translated as "bindeth" is defined as "to cramp." They believe the verse means that someone who places a good stone in the middle of a heap of poor stones has put it into a situation in which it is very much out of place. The giving of honor to a fool is much the same in that the honor is not deserved.

There is another possible meaning if we consider only the English words. David used a sling to kill the giant Goliath. If the stone had been bound tightly in the sling it could certainly not have done what David intended. Giving honor to a fool may be just like tying a stone in a sling and then trying to sling it at a target.

Prov 26:9 As a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouths of fools.

A drunkard would not even feel the pain from the thorn. He would be too numb to realize what had

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happened. If a parable were to be taught to a fool, he would ignore the truth which it carried.

**Prov 26:10 The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.**

Since the word “God” is not in the Hebrew, it is contended that this verse is talking about the lack of wisdom of great men who hire and pay poor workers.

This is not a logical position. Even if the word “God” is omitted from the verse, only God could be said to have formed all things. I believe the meaning to be that the same God who passes out commendations and condemnations in the day of judgment will see that both the wise man and the fool are rewarded according to their works. The fool and the transgressor will be punished for their rebellion.

**Prov 26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.**

One of the most repulsive sights one sees is that of a dog vomiting and then immediately turning around and eating the vomit. It is almost enough to cause the one who sees it to vomit himself.

It is just as nauseating to Jehovah to observe a fool feeding upon the same type of foolishness which he has been spouting out. 2 Peter 2:22 uses the same vivid language.

*2 Pet 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*

**Prov 26:12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.**

Actually the fool and the man who is wise in his own conceit are overlapping in their conduct. One of the reasons the fool is a fool is that he is wiser in his own eyes than is actually the case. These are birds of a feather. Neither has a very optimistic future unless a remarkable change takes place.

**Prov 26:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.**

We have come across this thought before in the book of Proverbs. It would certainly be dangerous to go out into the street if a lion were present. But that is not the real reason the slothful person has for failing to go out. He is too lazy and this is only a very lame excuse

**Prov 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.**

A door swings back and forth on it's hinges, but never goes from one place to another. The slothful or lazy person rolls over from one side to the other in his bed and fails to get up and get anything done.

**Prov 26:15 The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.**

It gets serious when the slothful is too lazy to even move his hand in order that he might put food into his mouth. This is surely overdone for emphasis, but it gets the point across.

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Prov 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

The sluggard has to be one who thinks he is much more clever and intelligent than he actually is. Seven is used as a statement of completeness. This person thinks he has every problem solved more efficiently than a multitude of others all combined. The truth is that he cannot even give a logical reason for his supposed solutions.

Prov 26:17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

Even domesticated dogs do not like to have their ears pulled. They will sometimes snap at those they know very well if this happens. The person who becomes involved in other people's business when he is not invited is asking for trouble.

Prov 26:18 As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death,

Prov 26:19 So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?

How would you like to be in the vicinity of an insane person who is shooting in every direction? The one who has said or done things that embarrassed or harmed another and then when asked why he did it says, "I was just joking." is much like the insane shooter. He really does not care whom he hurts.

Prov 26:20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

A fire will not continue to burn if there is no fuel to keep it going. A conflict is often kept going by some gossipier adding fuel to the fire.

Prov 26:21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

If fresh coal is put on top of embers, or wood is put on a fire which is about to burn out, the fire will blaze up anew. A man who loves contention can do the same thing to a controversy which is about to die down.

Prov 26:22 The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

The one who gossips can wound his victims as severely as one who drives a knife into another person. The words can pierce to the very heart of the victim.

Prov 26:23 Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

Warm and affectionate words that come from a heart filled with malice are as deceptive as a piece of broken pottery plated over with silver.

Prov 26:24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;

Prov 26:25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.

The one who dissembleth is a flatterer who sounds as though he is a friend when deep down in his heart he harbors an unbelievable amount of hatred.

Prov 26:26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.

The kind of hypocrisy described here is not easy to keep disguised. It will be uncovered and be recognized for what it is by the onlookers.

Prov 26:27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.

Haman built a gallows for the purpose of hanging Mordecai. It was Haman who was hanged on the very gallows he built for Mordecai.

The person who devises catastrophes for others must watch very carefully. The evil plans may backfire and do himself damage as well as his intended victim. See Esther 7:9-10.

Est 7:9 And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon.

Est 7:10 So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

Prov 26:28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

The tongue that lies about another person, and the mouth that flatters another are associated with hatred.

The hatred may come before the lies and flattery, or it may come afterward. It may be the cause of the words. Or it may come because of guilt which arises as a result of knowing harm was done. In many cases, it may come both before and after the wicked words.

Chapter 27

Prov 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

No one really knows what may happen between today and tomorrow. See James 4:13.

James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

There are two possible lessons to be drawn from this verse. One is related to overconfidence. The other deals with procrastination.

James is cautioning against looking ahead with every expectation that the long range plans we have developed will never be interrupted; that we have an unending parade of tomorrows ahead of us to accomplish great achievements.

Solomon was talking about putting off until tomorrow what should have been done today. The Lord's return is pictured as being similar to the unexpected arrival of a thief in the night. My dear friend, have you known for a long time that you ought to have believed in the Word of God to the extent that you would repent of your sins, confess the name of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized to wash away those sins? Tomorrow is not the proper time. There may not be a tomorrow!

Prov 27:2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

We have all known of boastful windbags who never tire of listing their achievements. All too often they

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magnify them completely out of proportion.

It is better to let someone else do the praising. Even if the accomplishments are genuine, most of us do not appreciate a person who spends too much time making certain everyone else knows about them.

**Prov 27:3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.**

A person could become mighty tired from carrying a large stone around all day on his back. The same would be true if the load was a bag of sand. Neither of these is as burdensome as having to endure the wrath of an unreasonable man.

**Prov 27:4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?**

Who would contend with the statement that wrath and anger are cruel and outrageous emotions. They can cause much suffering. This time the proverb teaches that envy is also disastrous.

Remember the account of Joseph and his brethren. Because of Jacob's partiality toward Joseph, his brothers sold him into slavery.

Does your neighbor live in a finer house? Does he drive a later model automobile. Does he have a better paying job or a more beautiful wife? Rejoice with him that all these desirable things have enriched his life. Do not sit around and mope because you have less than he. God will take care of you.

**Prov 27:5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.**

One who covers up your faults when he could improve your life with a gentle reminder is not as precious as the one who frankly informs you of places where improvement could be made, and does so with a loving spirit.

**Prov 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.**

This verse may be related to the one just before it. A faithful friend will not hesitate to hurt you for a moment in order to help you for a lifetime. An enemy will say all kinds of flattering things, and then contradict his words by harming you when your back is turned.

**Prov 27:7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.**

If one is satiated with pleasant food, even the finest of food may look unappetizing. The same is true with the one who becomes satiated with the Word of God. As long as one is still hungering and thirsting for righteousness, the truth will be sweet as the honey in the honeycomb. The moment the individual becomes “fed up” that which was sweet may be considered bitter. When Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, He meant there would always be a sufficient supply of the bread and water of life that one might partake of it.

**Prov 27:8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.**

At first glance this proverb seems to deal with geographical locations. A bird that leaves its nest and



wanders around aimlessly neglects that which should be attended to at the nest. A person who is ever looking for greener pastures in distant locations can also find himself wandering aimlessly without ever accomplishing what might have been done if he had remained at the original location.

The above paragraph assumes the “place” has to do with geography. It could also refer to the place God intended for him to fill in the Kingdom. Each of us has been provided with skills and talents which allow us to serve in certain capacities. Let us find our place and fill it to the best of our ability. The reader will recall the story of the one talent man who buried his talent. Find your talent and use it.

**Prov 27:9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.**

Ointment and perfume will make the company of another person more pleasant. Kind advice from a friend can sweeten the companionship when offered and accepted graciously.

**Prov 27:10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.**

Friends are precious in time of need. Do not ignore them or betray them. Then, when the calamity arises, you will have someone to give aid. A trustworthy friend who is near enough to help is better than a relative who is too far away to be of assistance.

**Prov 27:11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me.**

A father or a teacher would like to be able to defend the son or student in the face of accusations. That will only be possible if the young person has acted in wisdom. In that case the accusations will be easily answered. In that case, the heart of the father or teacher will be made glad. If the young man has not been wise, those same hearts would be saddened.

**Prov 27:12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.**

This is almost verbatim with a previous proverb. The wise or prudent looks ahead and sees the dangers. He then makes arrangements to avoid them. It is not so with the foolish man. He is so occupied with present pleasures that he walks right into destruction.

**Prov 27:13 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.**

If one is so foolish as to act as surety for the debts of another, that man should be expected to make good on his promise to pay the other's debt. This goes so far as to take the coat off his back if that becomes necessary.

Even if a man has indebted himself to a woman of ill repute, he is to pay the debt for her services. If one stands for this foolish man's debt, he should be expected to pay the debt.

**Prov 27:14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.**

A person who wakes up his friend early in the morning loudly proclaiming his praises will not be met in friendly fashion by the man who was awakened. He is more likely to let him know he did not appreciate it.

**Prov 27:15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.**

**Prov 27:16 Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself.**

Water dripping from a leaking roof can be very aggravating. It just keeps on keeping on. Argumentative woman has the same effect. Men have actually lost their temper and murdered their wives because of their incessant complaining.

The one who tries to stop such a contentious woman finds it an impossibility. It is like trying to make the wind stop blowing, or gripping a handful of oil. Neither of these is possible.

**Prov 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.**

A steel knife can be sharpened by honing it with another piece of steel. A friend can use his words and deeds to improve the appearance and also the actions of his fellow friend.

**Prov 27:18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.**

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The energetic and efficient worker is worthy of his hire. He who cares for the fruit tree should expect the right to eat of the fruit which he helped to produce.

This is but an illustration of a general principle. Any worker should be rewarded for his labor. The worker does not have to be a slave in the time of Solomon. In any employer-employee relationship, each has rights. The employer has a right to expect an honest effort from his employee. The employee has a right to expect adequate compensation for his work.

Prov 27:19 As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

Looking into a pool of water it is possible to see the reflection of your own face. Looking into the face of another man one can many times see the reflection of his own attitudes. A smile is reflected with a smile. A sad countenance may produce the same in the face of someone else.

Prov 27:20 Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Hades and the cemeteries always have room for more. We just build a new cemetery. Human eyes are the same. We are always looking for more than we presently have. What the eye sees, the heart desires. And so we go through life looking and longing.

Prov 27:21 As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.

Praise is a severe test for men. The same one who can pass through hard times will often become puffed up and ruined by having praise heaped upon him.

Prov 27:22 Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

The word “bray” is unfamiliar to the present day reader of English. There were two separate meanings at the time of the King James translation. The first was the sound of a donkey. The second was the beating of grain, etc. in a mortar. It also carried the thought of chastisement.

Thus the verse here means that if one pulverized the fool as one would grind grain in a mortar, it would be quite impossible to drive his foolishness from him.

Prov 27:23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

These last five verses have an agricultural theme. During the patriarchal age the Hebrew people were wanderers with flocks of sheep and goats, also asses and herds of cattle.

The owners of the flocks and herds were being advised to keep a careful eye on the welfare of their animals. Laxity could easily cause the loss of valuable livestock.

Prov 27:24 For riches are not for ever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

Riches come and go. Even the splendor of the reigning king is here today and gone tomorrow. Neither of these last through a large number of generations.

Livestock reproduce themselves and later generations may reap the results of the present owners responsible care.

Prov 27:25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.

If the feed for the animals is gathered and stored the flocks and herds will exist through the cold months until the spring vegetation appears.

Prov 27:26 The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.

When the animals are properly cared for they will allow the owner to pay the price of the land upon which they are pastured. The sheep will produce wool from which clothing may be made.

Prov 27:27 And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.

The milk from the goats will nourish both the family of the owners and also the servants of the household.

The lesson applies today just as truly as it did when these words were written. Hard work and careful planning help to insure that food, clothing and shelter will be available when needed.

Chapter 28

Prov 28:1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

The conscience of man is powerful. We hear of those who have been imprisoned for long periods of time confessing that they had a part in a crime that no one had even associated them with. They became so uncomfortable from guilt that they could not longer remain silent. The man with the guilty conscience is never quite certain when his past will catch up with him.

The righteous man has no such guilt complex to deal with. Any accusations made against him will be without foundation. He need not peer around to see who is following.

Prov 28:2 For the transgression of a lang many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.

A nation in which the leaders are moving it into wicked paths will lose confidence in those leaders. They will come and go rapidly until the entire nation becomes completely unstable.

If a nation is led by those who have knowledge and understanding, that nation will be more secure and the leaders will not be constantly replaced by new ones.

Prov 28:3 A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

Oppression is not confined to the upper class. It can be found among those in high places. But, it can also be

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found in the middle and the poor classes. Surely the poor ought to have suffered enough from the oppression of those who can take advantage of them that they would not treat others in that manner. Sadly, they do just that.

A downpour of rain which floods the land may carry off the food supplies which lie in front of all. Nothing is left on which men may survive. The poor who are oppressed by others who are poor may be left with nothing.

**Prov 28:4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.**

The law here can be either the law of God or the civil law of the land. In either case those who turn away from the law band together with others like themselves and defend one another.

Those who have respect for law must also combine their efforts in order that the law may deal effectively with the renegades.

**Prov 28:5 Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things.**

The wicked do not properly see the relationship between rebellion and punishment. A child who has been allowed to throw tantrums and run wild without correction, grows into a man who does not believe he will be judged and sentenced.

Those who attempt to walk in righteous paths realize there is safety in proper conduct. Crime and punishment, or sin and condemnation, both make sense to them.

**Prov 28:6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.**

In the eyes of Jehovah the wicked rich man is really poorer than the righteous poor man. Men respect riches and power. God knows true values. It will not be the wicked rich who enter into the eternal Kingdom of God. It will be the righteous, whether rich or poor.

**Prov 28:7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.**

The son who respects the law of both God and man is wise in that he brings pride to the heart of his parents.

The riotous, who break both civil and spiritual law, bring shame to their parents.

**Prov 28:8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.**

In every age and country there are greedy persons who are on the watch for those who want what they want, when they want it. These latter persons are willing to make arrangements to borrow money from the loan sharks and pay it back at exorbitant interest rates.

It is possible to make a loan to someone and help that person to obtain property that he could not afford if he had to pay cash. One who loans money for the purpose of aiding others and who charges minimal interest rates is not the one pictured in this verse.

God warns that the greedy loan shark will find that his unjust gain will finally be removed from him and placed in the power of someone who has pity and consideration for the poor.

**Prov 28:9 He that turneth away his ear**  
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from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

God desires that men pray. Nevertheless, he does not listen to the prayer of the one who does not listen to Him.

An abomination is that for which someone has a hatred. This verse agrees perfectly with Luke 18:10-14.

Luke 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Luke 18:13 And the publicans, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Prov 28:10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

Woe to that person who causes another to leave the paths of righteousness and follow in the footsteps of Satan. Such a person will assuredly find that he has been

running headlong into the pit which he has been digging for those he has deceived.

Those who refuse to be deceived, and who continue to maintain their faith through good works will be enriched by their walk in wisdom.

This again is a general principle. Job was a good man. God allowed Satan to pour many woes upon his head to demonstrate to Satan that there are honourable people who cannot be deluded. Job resisted every temptation and was rewarded for his faith.

Prov 28:11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

The rich and proud are apt to have delusions of grandeur. They really do not know how to evaluate their own worth, nor do they expect others to see through their mask. The poor see much more clearly than they themselves do, that they are worth much less than they think.

Prov 28:12 When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden.

Society is much better off when the good men are in control when the evil are. It is safe to walk the streets and only one may have greater confidence in business dealings under the governing of the upright than under that of the underhanded.

Prov 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but who confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

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The covering of sins here is the hiding of them deep down in the heart and letting no man know they exist. A man like this will find his way difficult.

The one who admits his sins to himself and confesses that he has been wrong clears his conscience. He will normally receive forgiveness from both man and God.

**Prov 28:14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.**

This is the fear of God. Very few of us fear God and keep His commandments without fail. God's faithful children try to do so.

The one who deliberately turns up his nose at divine instructions will answer for his folly. The answer is liable to be much more grievous than he anticipates.

**Prov 28:15 As a roaring lion, and a raging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.**

This kind of rulers have made an infamous name for themselves from the earliest recorded history. Roaring lions and raging bears threaten to do great damage. Wicked rulers do the same.

Adolph Hitler and Josef Stalin have been responsible for the death of millions of defenseless persons. They are only a sample of the horrors which have been visited upon others through the ages.

**Prov 28:16 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.**

Any ruler who oppresses his people is short of

understanding. He cares nothing for others. He will find his people ready to embrace a new ruler if one appears.

A ruler that serves his people and strives to make their lives more satisfying will be supported by his subjects and ay then continue his reign.

**Prov 28:17 A man that doeth violence to the blood of my person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.**

Doing violence to the blood of a man is murdering him. Such murderers are to lose their own life. God specifies that he that sheds the blood of others shall have his own blood shed.

*Gen 9:6 Whose sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

**Prov 28:18 Whose walketh upright shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.**

If those who walk uprightly in this life do happen to become martyrs who are killed by those who hath God, these martyrs will be saved from eternal separation from all that is high and holy in unending eternity.

The wicked face quick extinction here and will find a place of fire and brimstone in the afterlife.

**Prov 28:19 He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.**

It would be interesting to comb through the book of Proverbs and collect all of the verses that condemn laziness and encourage honest labor.





The slothful and those who gather with others who are of the same nature will find food, clothing and shelter in short supply. The ones who put forth an honest effort will find food, clothing and shelter to be sufficient.

**Prov 28:20 A faithful man shall abound with the blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.**

The faithful man applies himself to a productive life. He values time and friends. He will find favor in the eyes of the Lord.

The man who is constantly trying to come up with “get rich quick” schemes, regardless of the damage they may do to others will be pronounced guilty by the God of heaven.

**Prov 28:21 To have respect of persons is not good: for for a piece of bread that man will transgress.**

It is folly to butter up the high and mighty. Too many times the person of wealth and prominence has gained that position by underhanded methods. For a simple bribe such a person will betray one who supposes him to be a friend.

**Prov 28:22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.**

The evil eye is the one that constantly peers around to see if there is material gain to be seen. That kind of person will be too busy searching out earthly riches to contribute to the welfare of his neighbor.

**Prov 28:23 He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.**

Rebuke is not pleasant to either the one who does the rebuking or the one who receives it. Flattery may be much more pleasant to the one who flatters and to the one who receives the flattery.

Afterward, the conditions are often reversed. The one who rebuked and steered another into a safer path will be cherished for his concern. The one who flattered and led another into walking further into dangerous waters will be despised because he knew a warning was needed, but he did not offer it.

**Prov 28:24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.**

Unscrupulous children sometimes look in greed at the inheritance which could some day be theirs. Rather than wait until the parents pass on and the inheritance comes in the course of nature, they plan ways to obtain it beforehand.

All kinds of excuses can be given for this greed. Jesus' words penetrate to the center of this problem as he chastised those who excused themselves for not helping their parents by saying they had designated what was needed by their parents to the Lord's work. See Mark 7:11-12.

*Mark 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.*

*Mark 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother.*

**Prov 28:25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.**

**Prov. 28:26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.**

The person with the proud heart will not find it necessary to trust in the Lord. He or she will be perfectly convinced that they need no divine assistance. God says this is self deception.

See Jeremiah 10:23, also Proverbs 3:5-6.

*Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

*Prov 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

*Prov 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

**Prov 28:27 He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.**

Jesus left the riches of heaven to come to earth and enrich the lives of men who were of all classes. He loved the poor just as he did the rich. He did not hide his eyes from those who were deserving. He knew very well that one day his journey here would be ended and He would return to the glory above.

We should have a similar attitude. What little sacrifice we make here for the benefit of those less fortunate than ourselves will be very small and very short lasting. We also will finish our journey here and, if faithful, be given a heavenly inheritance.

**Prov 28:28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.**

## *Chapter 29*

**Prov 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.**

Stubborn and obstinate persons usually refused to accept reproof. This obstinacy causes them to move on straight into the danger about which they were warned. Therefore they, for all practical purposes, destroy themselves. Since they will not heed advice and turn away, there is no remedy.

**Prov 29:2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.**

This has been commented on several times already. Upright leadership promotes well being among the followers. Corrupt leadership leaves distress and mourning.

**Prov 29:3 Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.**

A responsible father who has brought up his children in the nurture of the Lord will be made happy when the child behaves properly at maturity. The foolish son or daughter who play the harlot game will leave both mother and father in tears and will live a life of emptiness.

**Prov 29:4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.**

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The highest human authority in the land is responsible for insuring that justice is administered. When such a person accepts bribes, justice is mocked and the society will rot.

Prov 29:5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

Flattery is the act of offering compliments which go beyond that which is deserved, and which are intended to bring gain to the one offering the compliment. The net which is spread is the the predicament which awaits the one who foolishly accepts the flattery.

We should also add that the one who resorts to flattery is also spreading a net for his own feet. God abominates deception.

Prov 29:6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

Because of the guilty conscience, and also because of the destructive effects of sin, the evil person walks straight into danger and distress. The righteous have no guilty conscience, nor do they find it necessary to face the consequences of traveling the broad way which leads to destruction.

Prov 29:7 The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

The righteous are not expected to impoverish themselves to enrich the poor. They are expected to show both concern and mercy when they have the means to aid those who deserve it.

The difficulty comes in ascertaining who is deserving, and to what degree.

Prov 29:8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.

The snare here is clearly the wrath which is brought about when the scornful turn up their noses at the thoughts and opinions of others.

Wise persons will hear others and properly evaluate their suggestions. This tends to remove disputation rather than promote it.

Prov 29:9 If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.

If you are wise you will not waste time debating with a fool. He will take one of two directions. He will either laugh at your position, or he will become angry with you. Either way, you can be assured that your efforts will be in vain.

Prov 29:10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.

Cain hated Abel because Abel was upright. This led to the murder of his brother. The fact of the matter is that bloodthirsty persons hate not only the upright, they hate their partners in wickedness. The life of others takes second place to their own passions.

The just person cares about the soul of the upright and does everything possible to further the life of good men. Jesus even called for the just to love the brethren and do good unto all men.

Prov 29:11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

The foolish person has a loose tongue. He will blurt out everything which comes across his mind. There are some things which ought not to be spoken.

The wise person thinks twice before he speaks. He judges the possible results of that which he is about to speak. If the results are destructive, he will refrain from speaking.

Prov 29:12 If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.

Like father, like son. Like ruler, like subject. People tend to imitate their leaders.

Prov 29:13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.

The poor man is oppressed. The deceitful man oppresses. But there is a bringing together of both. They meet together in that they are both dependent on the Lord of all.

Prov 29:14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

Under the rulership of a king who executes justice for all, the condition of the entire population will be uplifted. This will protect the king from any serious uprising.

Prov 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

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Scolding a child and explaining the seriousness of his actions is right and proper. When scolding and explaining do not suffice, reasonable physical methods should be used to enforce the correction.

**Prov 29:16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.**

When the present writer and his wife purchased the home in which they have lived for many years, the neighbors were middle class and had concern for one another. Over the years the situation has changed. There are now more who do not care about how their actions affect others.

This means that the ones who have remained upright will be made uncomfortable for a short time. This verse assures us that in the end, the righteous will see good days, and the unrighteous will face a final judgment.

**Prov 29:17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.**

There is no need for further comment on this principle. It has been covered several times.

**Prov 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.**

Vision is the capacity to see what the future holds. This may refer to the normal vision of the people, such that they obey the laws of the land. If these laws are ignored, terrible miseries follow.

Many believe that the vision in this passage is that of the inspired writers of the Bible, especially the prophets.

This would make the law be the spiritual law given by God. In that case, the people who reject the teaching of the Bible are headed for eternal torment. Those who hear and obey the teachings of God will find happiness both now and after the judgment.

**Prov 29:19 A servant will not be corrected by words: for though he understand he will not answer.**

There is a problem in dealing with underlings. When words of correction are given to them, they may understand the words perfectly. Yet they will be hesitant to voice their objections for fear of getting into worse trouble. The master may then assume that his correction has been logical to both himself and the servant. If the servant sees no reason to obey, he will avoid any change.

**Prov 29:20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.**

The man who is hasty in his words talks incessantly. He will not give another person time to offer an opposite viewpoint. In that sense, he actually is a fool. The difference may be in the reason for his lack of knowledge. He is not rebellious. He just does not stop talking long enough to find out the truth.

**Prov 29:21 He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.**

To delicately bring up a servant from childhood is foreign to our present way of thought. We do not own

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slaves. The slave child who is spoiled may come to believe he has just as much right to inherit the property of his master as do the children of the master.

An alternative solution is possible. The master who treats his slaves in a loving manner may come to have such affection for them that he would love them as he does his own true children.

Prov 29:22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

When the emotions are allowed to dominate the reasoning power, drastic results may occur. Angry and furious persons are far more likely to break the law than are the calm and reasonable.

Prov 29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

There are three major temptations men must face. They are, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Satan understood very well just how powerful pride is when he offered Christ all the kingdoms of this world. Christ refused to bow. The apostle Paul stated the matter as follows.

1 Cor 10:12 Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Jehovah appreciates humility in man. He promises that those who humble themselves shall be exalted.

Prov 29:24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.

To bewray is to “make manifest.” Thus the partner of the thief knows the attitude of God and man toward the thief. He fails to bring this truth to the attention of the thief and thus becomes a partner. He hates his own soul in that he has placed it in danger of calamity.

Prov 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

He who places his confidence in the power and abilities of men will find that there is a limit to what men can do.

Prov 14:12 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (Compare Proverbs 3:5-6.)

Prov 29:26 Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD.

The ruler of the land may have jurisdiction over one during time. The final jurisdiction remains in the hand of Jehovah. Seek the favor of God before seeking that of any ruler.

Prov 29:27 An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked.

A wise saying that has been passed down for ages states that “Oil and water do not mix.” The wicked and evil are abominable to the holy and upright. The holy and upright are just as abominable to the wicked as the wicked are to the righteous.

“Evil communications corrupt good morals.” Righteous persons do not wish to be corrupted. Wicked persons do not wish to become holy.

Chapter 30

Prov 30:1 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the prophecy: the man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal,

We have come to the end of the proverbs written by Solomon. This chapter and the one following were not written by the son of David. This one is attributed to Agur and the next is written by King Lemuel.

We know nothing about either Agur, or his father Jakeh. Neither is found in the Jewish histories. We look in vain for a record in the Bible. Some have supposed that Agur was Solomon. This will not do. The description Agur gives of himself does not fit Solomon. Solomon's father was David, not Jakeh. The same is true of both Ithiel and Ucal.

It is true that nearly all Hebrew names carried meanings. The meaning of the Hebrew name Agur is "son of the pious." That may be a clue to the lack of any historical record.

Prov 30:2 Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.

The point the author is making is that he does not speak these words because he is a learned man. There are many who are far wiser than he.

Prov 30:3 I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

He had no formal education, nor did he have any exceptional human knowledge of divine truth. He does

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not speak as a result of any exhaustive search he has made from the holy scriptures.

**Prov 30:4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?**

Agur suggests several questions which indicate his humility before the infinite knowledge of Jehovah. He has not gone up into heaven to investigate the truth. He did not come down from heaven with the truth. He is not divine. He is but a man, and not even a trained intellectual.

He asks, "Who has gathered the wind in his fists." The answer is that no man has done that. Only God has the ability to control the movements of the wind.

He asks, "Who hath bound the waters in a garment?" The answer is that no man has done this. Why do the seas and lakes contain water within their shores? God has the ability to define the location and the bounds of the bodies of water.

He asks, "Who has established the ends of the earth?" The answer is that no man decided how large the earth would be. Only God could bring it into existence and determine it's size and place in space.

There is no man, nor any son of man, who can claim complete wisdom and knowledge of such questions. Certainly Agur admits he does not have it.

**Prov 30:5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.**

God does have such answers. When he reveals truth to men that truth is not mixed with speculation. It throughly furnishes men to every good work. God knows those who place their trust in Him and acts as a shield for them against the fiery darts of Satan and his disciples.

**Prov 30:6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.**

Since God is true and every man makes mistakes, it is ridiculous to place our confidence in the wisdom of men. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps." Thus, when God hath spoken, man walks a crooked path when he adds to God's Word, Subtracts from God's Word or Modifies it to suit his own ends.

**Prov 30:7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:**

This verse and the next two describe a prayer which Agur offers to God. He pleads that God will grant him two requests while he lives upon this earth.

**Prov 30:8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:**

His first request is that God separate him from vanity and lies. Note that he does not ask to be removed from vanity and lies. He asks that they be removed from him. He wishes divine help in avoiding emptiness and falsehood from his own life.

If he had asked that he be removed from vanity and lies, he would have been asking to be separated from

vain and lying people. He realizes his own impurity and desires that God help him cleanse his own life.

His second request is that he not reach a condition of either poverty or riches. There are serious dangers in each of these conditions. He recognizes this and wishes to avoid them.

**Prov 30:9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.**

Now he gives the reasons for his request. He is fearful that if he become rich, he would be tempted to trust in material possessions rather than the Father in heaven.

If he were to be poverty stricken, he might look with envy upon others who had plenty and be tempted to steal from them. Either way he would be ignoring the authority of his Lord.

**Prov 30:10 Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty.**

It is foolish to go to the master of a servant and accuse the servant of some wrongdoing. This could irritate the master and he would make counter accusations against the one who had made the charges.

**Prov 30:11 There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother.**

The Jewish people have long history of teaching respect of children for their parents. This is in accord with God's revealed will. At every age a son or daughter should treat their parents with dignity and gratitude.



**Prov 30:12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.**

There are four verses in a row that describe abominable behavior on the part of an entire generation. This time the fault is in covering their own sins. They refuse to admit these sins, even though they may be perfectly evident to those who observe them. Often these individuals have very little recognition of the difference between evil and righteous conduct.

**Prov 30:13 There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.**

Sometimes we use the expression “turn up their nose.” The action is the same. The guilty parties see themselves as holier than thou. The scribes and Pharisees were of this class.

**Prov 30:14 There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.**

This group manifest greed and unmerciful conduct toward any whom they find at their mercy. Since the teeth are mentioned twice, we conclude that they take satisfaction in devouring their prey.

**Prov 30:15 The horseleach hath two daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:**

The short form of the word horseleach is just “leech.” The leech is also known as the bloodsucker. It fastens itself to a number of different kinds of animals and draws the blood from them. It feeds and feeds, seemingly never full.

**Prov 30:16 The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.**

Men and women have been dying since the time of Cain and Abel. Even so, the graveyards continue to open their mouth for more. They also say, “It is not enough.”

The woman who is unable to bear children usually feels uncomfortable because of that fact. She knows childbearing is a very serious part of a woman’s life. Sometimes she even adopts children to satisfy the longing.

The rains fall to the earth again and again. Still the earth is not covered. If the crops become dry the agricultural workers grieve because the earth is crying out, “It is not enough.”

The fire which has been fed with fuel consumes that fuel and begins to die down. If new fuel is added, that also will be burned. If the fire is to continue, it also let’s us know, “It is not enough.”

The point of each of these examples is that men also find themselves saying that the possessions they presently have are usually hungry for more.

**Prov 30:17 The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.**

The picture here is certainly not what the mocker would look forward to. However, he or she is so foul of heart that those same eyes that insult the parents would make suitable food for vultures.

**Prov 30:18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:**

Each of the four things about to be mentioned demonstrates an amazing puzzle. Agur felt that God knows the answer, but that he did not.

**Prov 30:19 The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.**

Why is it that a large bird like the eagle is able to maintain it's flight? At first thought it seems that it should drop to the ground since it is heavier than the air. We can partially answer this question today by pointing out the upward pressure of the air under the wings of the bird as those wings are moved. The ultimate answer is still out of our reach.

A serpent seems to slither over a large rock without effort. It seems that it would face an impossibility because of it's own slick surface and also that of the rock. We know today that the serpent is able to move the scales on it's belly back and forth in succession such that it's body is moved forward. That does not keep the movement from being surprising.

How is it possible that a giant ocean liner can stay afloat when iron has much greater density than water. It seems that it should sink to the bottom. The explanation lies in the fact that the air inside the liner reduces the

overall density to a value less than that of the water. Agur felt that only God could provide a full explanation.

The fourth puzzle was that of the relationship between a young man and his girl friend. I do not believe this example is talking about sexual union after marriage. The woman is a maid, not a wife. The first date is normally a time of concern. How should I act? What should I say? Then, as time passes and experience is gained, both the young man and the young woman learn how to conduct themselves comfortably. This was also something that Agur could not explain.

The point this time is that God knows many things that are far beyond the ability of man to comprehend. It is best to listen to God's Word.

**Prov 30:20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.**

Let us use the example of a whore in a bar room. She spots a man whom she thinks may have both money and vulnerability. She has never seen him before. She slips over close to him and begins to use both speech and caresses to excite his sexual desire. She persuade him to go with her to a private place where they can have sexual intercourse. Then, when she has been paid for her services, she takes a bath and returns directly to the bar room.

She has so little moral restraint that if one were to ask her why she acted as she did, she would reply that she was just making a living like others do.

**Prov 30:21 For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear:**

Agur is now ready to call our attention to four things which provide more lessons on that which creates confusion on earth.

This chapter is sometimes known as the numbers proverb because of it's use of triads and tetrads as presentation techniques.

**Prov 30:22 For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;**

If one is promoted to a position much higher than he has held in the past, especially if he is inexperienced and unqualified, it often results in pride, jealousy of underworkers and general disturbance.

The two persons mentioned in this verse have a similar problem. The fool who is filled with meat has received some favor with which he is not qualified to deal. He then proceeds to create chaos as he mishandles that which was placed in his possession.

**Prov 30:23 For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.**

An odious woman is one who has characteristics that are irritating. Examples might be constant bickering, lack of physically cleanliness, or pure laziness. It is not difficult to see why this kind of woman would cause strife.

There are at least two ways in which a handmaid might become heir to her mistress. One is that her mistress could die and she would be married to her former mistress' husband. The other is that she replaces her mistress in his affections causing him to turn to her and away from his wife.

We recall the Old Testament record of Sarah and Hagar. The outcome of that conflict had extremely long lasting effects.

**Prov 30:24 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise:**

This time we have big lessons from animals that are of lesser importance than humans. These animals demonstrate types of wisdom which men need to adopt.

**Prov 30:25 The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;**

A careful look at an anthill will reveal great activity. The ants may be very tiny creatures, but they have instincts embedded that cause them to make preparations for the future. They scurry about gathering food during the summer for use in those days when this would be impossible. Some humans live for today and forget that preparation for eternity should be made.

**Prov 30:26 The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;**

Some translations render the name of the animal in this verse as the rabbit. Conies are not rabbits. They do not burrow into the ground to make their home. Instead, they hide in the clefts of the rock where they are protected from enemies.

Jesus Christ is the rock of our salvation. If we, like the conies, would hide ourselves in the Son of God we would find safety from Satan who goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

**Prov 30:27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;**

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Locusts travel in massive numbers. Although they have no visible leader, they march together to make survival easier.

Christians also have no visible King. He has preceded them into heaven to take his seat at the right hand of the Father. That does not prevent the Christians from banding together in fellowship to march for the Master.

Prov 30:28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

There is some dispute concerning the identity of the animal referred to here. Some believe it to be the spider. Others believe it should have been translated from the Hebrew as lizard. Both can be said to take hold with their hands. Lizards have sticky pads on their front feet by which they can hold to slippery walls. Spiders spin their webs and then move about easily to catch the insects that become trapped.

King's palaces are not immune to either of these animals. They can enter the tents of the poor or the castles of the rich. Like each of these creatures, men need to reach out and hold tight to the Water and the Bread of life.

Prov 30:29 There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going:

Next, we have four illustrations of beings that are majestic or rapid in their movement.

Prov 30:30 A lion which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any;

The male lion is an impressive sight when he moves about protecting his domain. He is afraid of almost nothing. His gait is noble and proud.

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**Prov 30:31 A greyhound; an he goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up.**

The greyhound can cover ground almost effortlessly. He almost looks as if he had been made primarily for speed and motion.

The billy goat can jump from rock to rock in a flash. Like the lion, he is ready at all times to defend his harem.

The king Agur has in mind here is the one who has established his kingdom so effectively that he has no effective opposition.

As a former university professor in the field of science, your present author finds Agur's presentation of lessons for mankind through the use of lower forms of life to be intriguing.

**Prov 30:32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.**

One lifts himself up by bragging and boasting. This can prepare him for a fall. It ought not to be done. Let others do the lifting up rather than doing it yourself.

Even if thoughts of evil have crossed the mind, squelch them before they escape through the tongue. They can do nothing but harm.

**Prov 30:33 Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.**

Just as certainly as the churning of milk will produce butter, and the mistreating the nose will cause a nosebleed, the loss of our temper will bring about strife and conflict.



## *Chapter 31*

**Prov 31:1 The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.**

We know no more about the identity of the author of this chapter than we did about chapter thirty. There is no extrabiblical historical record. There are no other writings attributed to him.

Some believe Lemuel was another name for Solomon and that Bathsheba was the mother who taught him. We seriously doubt this. A woman who would bathe herself in a place where she was easily visible to men is not the kind of woman who would have given her son such advice as is found in this chapter.

We know the writer was a king, but we have no idea of the location or size of the territory over which he reigned.

**Prov 31:2 What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows?**

The mother gives every indication of having great affection for her son. He was very precious in her sight. She had brought him into the world. She had made certain vows to God as to how she would train him. He was dedicated to the Lord and he must honor that dedication.

**Prov 31:3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.**

Sexual excess can rob a man of his energy and leave him with various diseases contracted by that type of life.

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It was true in ancient days. It is just as true throughout the centuries.

Just because a man is a ruler does not make him immune to the consequences of such a life. A king can be destroyed just as surely as a tramp on the streets.

Prov 31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:

Wine had a weaker alcoholic content than strong drink. Either of them can lead to later addiction to alcohol. It is unwise for those who are in positions of rulership to subject themselves to the perils connected with liquor.

Prov 31:5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.

Alcohol has a deleterious effect on the mental processes. One who numbs the mind with alcohol may no longer realize what the law required or forbid. That being the case, the ruler who was expected to make judgments to protect the oppressed would err in his decisions and justice would fail.

Prov 31:6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.

If a man is about to starve and is poverty stricken, wine might be given to him to take away the agony. If one is severely depressed, wine might be given to him to relieve the depression.

Prov 31:7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.

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In the instances above it is clear that the strong drink and the wine were to be used as medicine, and not for the purpose of partying.

Jesus was offered wine when he was dying on the cross. He refused it. See Matt. 27:33-34.

*Matt 27:33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,*

*Matt 27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.*

**Prov 31:8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.**

The mother advises her son to speak up for those who have been unjustly accused of serious crimes. They very likely do not have the prestige to speak effectively on their own behalf, and need someone to support them.

**Prov 31:9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.**

The poor are a constant concern throughout the entire book of Proverbs. The person who is more fortunate is not ignore the plight of those less well off. He is to defend them and offer them other kinds of aid as needed.

**Prov 31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.**

The book of Proverbs closes with one of the most beautiful chapters in the entire Holy Book. This is a favorite reading at the funerals of women who have lived a godly life. It is a fitting salute to the kind of women described in the next few verses.

Virtue is moral character. When a woman has adorned herself inwardly with this quality she is worth more than all the gold in a national treasury.

Much has been said previously in this book about unworthy women. That would include prostitutes, gossips and those who nag and scold. Now we are to look at the kind of woman this mother tells her son Lemuel to see if he can find. She is most certainly the kind of woman God looks at with pride.

**Prov 31:11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.**

The trust spoken of here is such that her husband need not watch to see that she is careful in managing the household affairs. She will not spend and waste that which is placed under her supervision. He will not have to go out and steal in order that the home can survive.

**Prov 31:12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.**

When God created Adam, He saw that it was not good that man should be alone. He then created Eve as a help "meet" or suitable for him. This has been woman's role since the beginning.

Any man who is fortunate enough to be married to a woman who both holds his hand and holds up his hand is a lucky man. Over and over again the man who makes significant contributions to his family, his nation and his God is backed by a virtuous or worthy woman.

**Prov 31:13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.**

This kind of woman will do that which is necessary to see that her family is properly clothed. In the day in which this chapter was written this meant starting from scratch. She had to find the material to make the fabric, then weave or spin it into cloth. Today, she would be more apt to go to the store and purchase it. Still, she would need to know what to select for both usability and economy.

It might still be necessary to sew on a patch occasionally.

**Prov 31:14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.**

Ships carry merchandise from nation to nation. It would not be expected that a woman would travel to a distant nation to obtain food for her family. The food would spoil in the time required to transport it.

The heart of the verse may be that if she has not raised the food herself, she goes whatever distance is necessary to get what she can bring back to feed her family in satisfactory fashion.

**Prov 31:15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.**

This kind of woman would get up early in the morning before daylight to see that everyone was properly fed. She would even see that any servants were supplied with nourishment.

We note that the woman described has household servants. Between she and her husband, they are able to be financially independent.

**Prov 31:16 She considereth a field, and buyeth**

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it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

It is interesting that this verse follows the one just considered. Although this woman has household maidens, she is not above working to keep up a vineyard.

She is trusted sufficiently by her husband that she has permission to search out a piece of property and purchase it. She is not a shrinking violet who must be afraid to make use of her talents.

Prov 31:17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

This woman would do all that is possible to maintain her physical condition. This would be to her own advantage with respect to self satisfaction, and would also work to her advantage in her relationship with her husband.

Prov 31:18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

That which she produces for purchase by others would be of high quality. Neither she nor her husband would have reason to be embarrassed by complaints.

This verse is not telling that she kept a candle burning all night to keep thieves away. The point is that she will be found working after the sun goes down and a light is needed to see what she is doing.

Prov 31:19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

The only place one would see a spindle and a distaff today would be in an antique shop or a collectors house.

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These were used to turn wool into yarn. This woman would not hesitate to work with her own hands to see that the family was warm and well dressed.

**Prov 31:20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.**

Being more than sufficiently supplied herself, she would take note of those who were poor and needy. She would more than take note that they were in that condition. She would do something about it.

Jesus and His apostles urged those who were able to tend to the needs of those who were hungry and cold.

**Prov 31:21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.**

While some who had less insight were shivering in the cold of winter, this virtuous woman would have anticipated the needs and her family would be warm and well clothed.

**Prov 31:22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.**

The coverings mentioned here might be bed coverings or similar articles for use in the house.

She does not find it necessary to wear unsightly apparel when she meets others in public. She has a supply of attractive dresses and robes.

**Prov 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.**

The gates were of course the place where the community decisions were discussed. Because this woman would have aided her husband in many ways, he would be able to assemble with the leaders of the area to help make those decisions. She would be able to look upon him with pride. He would be able to look back and see how she had helped him to take such responsibilities.

**Prov 31:24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.**

Lydia, in New Testament times was a seller of purple. All women were not slaves, either in the days of King Lemuel, nor in the first century when Christianity was born.

The girdles mentioned were wraps which held the loose clothing in place around the waist. They were not the girdles of the type your present writer's mother used to wear; the kind that had metal stays and were worn inside the clothing.

**Prov 31:25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.**

We sometimes say of a person, "She wears a pretty smile." Strength and honor are adornments to the life of godly women. These are worthy of commendation. Such characteristics will be helpful to others and will result in a happier and longer life for she who wears them.

**Prov 31:26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.**

In spite of the mental efficiency of this woman, she is not haughty and unkind. She shares her knowledge

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and understanding with others, and she does it with kindness.

Prov 31:27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

The bread of idleness would be food which someone else had to provide for her and her family. As previously stated, she is more than worth her board and keep.

Prov 31:28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Not all of the worthy woman's children do this. For the most part she will find that those whom she has served so well will appreciate her concern for them, and they will gratefully express their strong respect for her.

It is true that even the best of mothers may raise children who are a disappointment. God Himself offers his children the very best of nurture and admonitions. Too often they use their precious freedom of choice to grieve Him.

The husband of this type woman has every reason to praise her both in private and in public. Again, this is not always the case. Some very virtuous women have found it necessary to courageously live in a godly manner when they receive little praise from their spouse.

Prov 31:29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Would it be impossible for Lemuel to find this virtuous woman? His mother seems to be saying that she is very very rare. He may not find one that meets every qualification listed, but he should do his best to marry one.

He should be able after living with her for a number of years to say, "Honey, you are the best little wife a man ever had!"

Prov 31:30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.

There are physical and mental qualities that mean very little. They fade away and are gone. The one thing that will endure is the life that demonstrates the love of God and the keeping of His commandments.

Prov 31:31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

This virtuous woman deserves to be rewarded for her contributions to her husband, her children and her community. Her godly nature will praise her whether or not others do.

From verse 10 through verse 31 we have what is called an acrostic. Each verse begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. No reason is given in the text for this special format. It is fascinating.

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**The Book Of
ECCLESIASTES**

Introduction To Ecclesiastes

The Author and the Date:

The first verse of the book of Ecclesiastes declares Solomon to be the author. The twelfth verse of this same chapter supports the statement. This present commentator is willing to accept that to be the truth. Solomon was the author.

The reader should, however, be aware of some disagreement among the Bible scholars of recent times as to the meaning of these two verses. There are many who believe Solomon to have been the inspired author of the original work, but who believe some later writer tried to make it more understandable to his own readership by injecting some Aramaic and Syriac terms. They declare that these words did not come from the time of Solomon, but from a period considerably later.

The Jewish scholars of many centuries had no difficulty with these few terms and considered it to be the work of the King of Israel who was the son of David. I must agree with their conclusion.

Solomon reigned for forty years, about one thousand years before the birth of Christ. Assuming him to be the author, we believe the book was produced in the latter period of his life, after he had examined the various means by which men attempt to achieve purposeful and happy lives.

The Purpose and Style of Ecclesiastes:

The title of the work comes from a Hebrew word “Koheleth.” The word is related to both the Greek word “ecclesia” having to do with an assembly, and the English word “preacher” which has to do with speaking to an assembly. The work was thus written by one who desired to preach to large numbers of persons. It has been compared to a written sermon. There is some similarity to the books of Proverbs and Song of Solomon, both of which are attributed to the sage. At the same time, it is less poetic in nature and more philosophical.

The purpose is presented as a description of Solomon’s efforts to investigate as fully as possible all of the means by which men try to find fulfilment in life. Jesus Christ had not yet appeared as “God with us.” He lived and taught the truths Solomon set out to discover by experimentation. Jesus taught us what men should do. Solomon taught us what men should not do. Solomon’s conclusion in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes agrees with Christ’s summary. Consider the two.

Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

There are numerous statements in the book that atheists and agnostics have removed from the entire context and used to insist there are contradictions. These statements are presentations of the thinking of men when they consider only that which is discovered

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“under the sun.” Solomon searched for meaning through many avenues. He found that the one who created the sun must be heard if man is to find his true purpose in life. We hope to make all of this evident as we look at the work verse by verse.

There is no production among the most famous wise men of the ages that equals the one great truth proclaimed in Ecclesiastes. Herein is found the conclusion to the whole matter. Solomon gave us the general purpose. Jesus Christ provided the perfect example! Without Christ all is but vanity and vexation of spirit. With Christ we have spiritual life, light and nourishment.

## **What was Solomon’s Motive?**

Solomon occupied an almost unique position in history. He was the last king of the united kingdom of fleshly Israel. He was preceded by his grandfather Saul and his father David. Each reigned for forty years. David was a man of war. He left Israel at a high peak. The enemies were subdued. Solomon came into power under these conditions. Jesus Christ is the King of the new spiritual Kingdom of Israel. God has used both of these kings to teach us the need to follow divine light rather than to follow human wisdom.

Christ was the perfect example of following God’s will. He stated that He had come to do the will of His father in heaven. Solomon was the clearest example of following one’s own heart. See Ecclesiastes 1:13.

*Eccl 1:13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*

## **A Brief Outline of Ecclesiastes:**

### **Chapter 1**

All appears to be vain and meaningless.  
He had been granted many great advantages.  
He would use these to find life's meaning.

### **Chapter 2**

A list of the pathways Solomon would try.  
Laughter, agriculture, construction,  
riches, entertainment.  
No person would ever be better qualified.  
These do not provide meaning for life.

### **Chapter 3**

Man experiences a series of choices in life.  
These choices all have a proper time.  
Man and animals both live and die.  
Man should choose God's judgments.

### **Chapter 4**

Oppression, jealousy and laziness are vain.  
Cooperation is better than isolation.  
A wise child is better than a foolish king.  
Men fail to be admonished by those who came before  
them.

### **Chapter 5**

It is important to worship God correctly.  
Abundant riches can cause sleeplessness.

### **Chapter 6**

Long life and many children are no guarantee of  
happiness.

Life is like a shadow which soon fades away.  
No man can tell what influence his life will have after  
he is dead.

### **Chapter 7**

God made man upright.  
Man has used God's blessings very foolishly.  
It is beyond man's abilities to find absolute meaning  
through their own devices.

### **Chapter 8**

The face of a righteous man will shine.  
Sinners sometimes fare better than deserved.  
Men cannot fathom the providence of God.

### **Chapter 9**

It appears that both the wise and the wicked are  
treated alike under the sun.  
The living know they shall die, and the dead have  
already died.  
Man cannot tell what the morrow may bring.  
One sinner can destroy much of what others do.

### **Chapter 10**

A little folly can badly damage a wise man's  
reputation.  
Be cautious about offending rulers.  
Laziness is a great evil in both kings and their  
subjects.  
Cursing the king in a quiet bedroom may be heard in  
the palace.

### **Chapter 11**

When you meet good fortune, share it with others.

Do not just sit around because you do not know  
whether there will be a good harvest.  
If the young man walks in the ways of his heart  
he will find that God is the final Judge.

## **Chapter 12**

It is best to serve God when one is young, before old  
age makes service more difficult.  
The conclusion of the whole matter is to fear God and  
keep His commandments.  
God will bring every work into judgment.

## *Chapter 1*

### **Ecc 1:1 The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.**

The Hebrew word which is translated as “preacher” refers to one who presents information to an assembly. This preacher feels he has something very important to offer his readers.

He identifies himself as the son of David, and as a king in Jerusalem. Solomon is the only one who fits the description. Solomon had more than one son, however only Solomon could be said to be a king in Jerusalem. This verse must be compared to verse twelve which helps to clarify this first verse.

### **Ecc 1:2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.**

This verse presents the overall theme of the entire book. There is great emptiness of meaning in the lives of most men. The use of the word vanity twice in close succession only emphasizes and give further force to the thought. The “Holy of holies” was the more holy than the “Holy place.”

### **Ecc 1:3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?**

If we take into consideration only the lives men live “under the sun” we find no real meaning and purpose. Our labors are here today and gone tomorrow. It is only when men come to the realization that there is something greater and more durable than the life which ends at the grave that any efforts put forth in the fleshly body are meaningful.

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Eccl 1:4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.

I have a genealogical record of a part of my ancestry. It is most interesting and traces the family name back for many generations. Then there is a gigantic gap between the earliest names recorded in that genealogy and the first man, Adam. The generations have come and gone. The earth is still here and may be here when that many more generations have lived.

It is not true according to the New Testament record that the earth is eternal. Peter informs us that it will pass away.

2 Pet 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Nevertheless, Solomon has made his point. If what takes place under the sun is everlasting, the life of one who is alive today and dies tomorrow is an empty one.

Eccl 1:5 The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.

Day after day, year after year, and century after century pass by. Over and over, the sun appears in the east and disappears in the west. The effect is actually due to the rotation of the earth, but from all appearances the process is endless.

Eccl 1:6 The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth

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**about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.**

The winds and the weather are so predictable that meteorologists can warn us of weather patterns which may be dangerous a week in advance. To the casual observer who has only examined that which takes place under the sun, it seems that these phenomena have been occurring forever and will continue forever.

**Eccl 1:7 All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.**

The water cycle falls into the same category. We can sit beside a river and watch it flow by for an entire century. Where does the water come from, and where does it go? The sea never runs over, and the rivers do not normally go dry.

We are aware today of the evaporation of the water in the streams, lakes and ocean, followed by the condensation of that water and it's release as rain which repeats the process seemingly endlessly.

**Eccl 1:8 All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.**

By his own labor and mental ability, man cannot discover all of the mysteries of nature. There is always more to see and there is always more to hear. If a man thinks he is going to examine the whole of natural existence and events, coming to an overall explanation of such, he is bound for disappointment.

**Eccl 1:9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.**

The truth of this verse depends upon the definition of the word "new." It is certainly true that there are events taking place which did not occur in the past. It is also true that inventions have been made that had not been discovered before.

**Eccl 1:10 Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.**

Are the radio and the telephone new? Not in the basic sense. Radio waves and electric currents have been a part of nature from the beginning. All man has done is learn how to make use of them. The automobile, the computer and artificial hearts are all based upon truths and materials which have existed as long as the world has stood.

Man's labors have only resulted in rearranging that which has been. His inventions and discoveries will be replaced by others that depend upon the same truths and materials.

**Eccl 1:11 There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.**

Multitudes of events and persons have been forgotten. The famous of today will be the forgotten of the future. Yes, we may remember them for a millennium or two. Yet, even the entertainers and the rulers of nations will

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be forgotten someday if all that is meaningful is that which takes place “under the sun.”

Eccl 1:12 I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem.

The reader should again make the comparison between this verse and verse one. The one who wrote Ecclesiastes was the son of David and also king over Israel. Solomon is the only one who has that distinction.

Some interpret the word “was” to mean the writer had been king, but was not king at the time these words were written. That does not follow. The fact that he was king does not mean he was no longer the holder of that title.

Eccl 1:13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.

This is a very important and key verse in the understanding of the entire work. Solomon dedicated himself to applying his own wisdom to find the meaning of life.

It is possible to follow three avenues in life. One is the way of the atheist who defies God and denies His existence. Such a man deliberately denies himself the advantage of God’s inspired Word because he denies the Bible as having been inspired through the wisdom of a Creator.

The second avenue is that of the God fearing believer who realizes man does not have the ability to direct his own steps, and who therefore sets out to add the wisdom of God to his own wisdom. He will fear God and keep His commandments.

The third avenue is the one Solomon decided to adopt. He decided to simply ignore God and attempt to find meaning in life through his own efforts. Solomon found out that this path resulted in emptiness. Man cannot find out the totality of meaning without consulting the one who created and sustains all things.

Eccl 1:14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

His statement here will recur again and again throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, as he tries one road and then another to apply human wisdom to the problem. He has tried it all. The end of all when one tries to direct his own steps is but vanity and vexation.

Eccl 1:15 That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.

There are many circumstances in life which are obviously not all one might wish. These he speaks of as being crooked. When man tries to straighten them out, he cannot do so.

There are things which clearly begin to find a solution, but which prove to be insufficient even after a man has applied himself to the task.

Eccl 1:16 I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.

We would not express it in the same words Solomon

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used. We would say, "I talked to myself." The wise man seems to have agreed with the saying that if you want to hear two wise men hold a conversation, just talk to yourself.

This is an error which will unfailingly lead to the precise conclusion Solomon drew after completing his experimentation. All is vanity and vexation of spirit.

He was correct in his assessment that he had as much reason to think he could reach his target as well as any man could do so. When he first took the throne, he prayed very humbly to God that he be granted wisdom to rule God's people. God responded to his prayer by giving him more than he had asked. Here is God's reply.

*1 Kings 3:11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;*

*1 Kings 3:12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.*

*1 Kings 3:13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.*

God kept His promise to Solomon. It is as if He decided to provide every advantage to this man in order that He might prove through him that every man, no matter how able, might ignore the wisdom which has existed in eternity, before the sun ever began to shine.

Solomon had wisdom greater than any before or after him. He had riches which left the Queen of Sheba shaking her head and saying the half had never yet been told. He had the throne of God's own nation of Israel. He

had horses and chariots sufficient to defend his kingdom against any who would entertain thoughts of invasion. He had food to more than fill the stomach. He had one thousand women to more than satisfy his pride and his sexual appetite. No man at any time in history had any more reason to believe he could find the way by himself than this man did.

Notice that he said, "I have gotten more wisdom." This is indication that he had forgotten the source of his extraordinary mental ability. He did not get it by himself. God had given it to him when Solomon's request had been granted.

**Eccl 1:17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.**

We might say that Solomon had decided to "test God's soap." Was there really a need for men to turn to the Word of God for ultimate guidance, or could man find ultimate meaning through his own experiences. Solomon decided to find out for himself. He would try human wisdom through education. He would also try just letting himself loose and seeking the goal through lust and pride.

**Eccl 1:18 For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.**

His conclusion with respect to the effectiveness of amassing human wisdom left much to be desired. Human wisdom is difficult to achieve. Then, after one has built up a supply of it, he becomes aware of grief and sorrow which lies around him, behind him and in front of him. The knowledge which he gained only made him more aware of the limitations men and women face.

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Chapter 2

Ecc 2:1 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.

The record in chapter one tells us Solomon had tried the avenue of natural science. He had tried the accumulation of human wisdom. Neither of them had yielded meaning. They were both dead end roads.

What else might be investigated? He would try comedy. Perhaps life is best considered to be a big joke. This path also proved to be a major disappointment.

Ecc 2:2 I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?

Why did he reach this conclusion? Laughter and giddiness denied reality. They left him wondering what was really accomplished when one finished laughing.

Has the reader ever been associated with a person who did not feel that a conversation was worth joining if hilarious jokes were not injected regularly? Such practical jokers and comedians are a bore. A joke here and there may release tension. A continuous stream of laughter is exactly as Solomon described it. It is senseless and unprofitable.

Ecc 2:3 I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

Well, if laughter does not fulfil, perhaps drinking is the answer! No. No. A thousand times No. From the

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verse, it seems that Solomon thought he could become merry with alcohol and still maintain control of himself. That is the attitude too many have taken. How many who have become slaves to alcohol thought they had the wisdom to drink and then stop? Recreational drinking of alcoholic beverages has never made any man better. It has certainly made life more miserable for millions.

It did not bring meaning to the life of Solomon, nor will it bring meaning to others. Folly is the activity of fools. One can not be wise and foolish at the same time. Solomon could not, and neither can we.

**Eccl 2:4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:**

The king will try again. This time he will investigate gardening. This was not done in a half hearted fashion. He went all out.

But, he did not enter into the gardening with the idea of enriching the lives of others. The reader is challenged to count the number of personal pronouns in the next few verses. Look for “I”, “my” and “me.”

All of this was done in order that he might be able to stroll through these wonders and take pride in what “he” had done. No doubt he also expected that others would admire “his” accomplishments.

**Eccl 2:5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:**

**Eccl 2:6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:**

The king even went so far as to collect water in pools from which the trees could be fed with a constant and plentiful supply. He had irrigation.

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Eccl 2:7 I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

We can only imagine the number of male and female servants Solomon was able to command. Not only did he buy them, he used the ones he owned to breed like livestock to increase the numbers.

The word “cattle” is more inclusive than would be the case today. We would not speak of sheep and goats as cattle. The great and small cattle of the king included these smaller animals.

Eccl 2:8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

He had enormous sources of income. Some of this silver and gold would have come from taxation. Other possessions would have been in the nature of gifts from other dignitaries who wished to cultivate his friendship.

In case having all of the possessions one could cherish, he decided to expose himself to music. He called in both male and female singers and tried to delight himself with instrumental presentations.

Some students of the Bible believe his words about the delights of the sons of men refers to sexual pleasures with his vast harem of wives and concubines. Although I do not doubt that he included such activities, the present verse connects the delights of men with the music of all sorts. What do you suppose Solomon would have attempted if

he lived in modern day America with it's collection of live and recorded music??

Music, like many other blessings, can be turned into evil ends. God has commanded that His people praise Him in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. He is pleased with that. He was not pleased when Moses returned from the mount and found Israel singing and dancing around a golden calf.

Solomon found that music was not the mountain peak of pleasure that some consider it to be. It also proved to be empty.

Eccl 2:9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.

No man, then or now, could have afforded or commanded any more avenues of possible satisfaction than Solomon. The playboys of today do not have a thing on the king.

Eccl 2:10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.

What might a man's eyes desire? The first thing that comes to mind is the gardens and buildings he had constructed. Another might be vacationing and viewing the finest scenery which could be found.

With one thousand women available to him, the possibility exists that he reveled in parading them before him in scanty clothing, if any at all.

Eccl 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I

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**had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.**

This statement may give a distorted view of the number of blisters on the hands of the king. He should not be viewed as having worked personally in the accomplishments he claimed. His menservants and maidservants were the ones with the blisters. He was speaking in the same terms we presently use when we say a president accomplished something when we only mean it was done during his term as president.

The point in this verse is that all the results of his efforts only led to emptiness of life and exasperation. He had left God out. All profit disappears when that is done.

**Ecc 2:12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.**

**Ecc 2:13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.**

He could certainly see that man can find no ultimate meaning through human wisdom, through mirth and laughter, or through musical entertainment.

Yet, it was true that it was better to follow wisdom than to deliberately choose foolishness.

**Ecc 2:14 The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.**

Why is it better to choose wisdom rather than folly? Because the wise man uses his five senses, and his mental ability to determine dangers and possibilities. The fool does not bother to look at the facts, or to apply reason.

**Eccl 2:15 Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.**

If one looks to the end of life under the sun, the fool and the wise man both end up in the cemetery. The wise man may live a bit more comfortably for three score years or three score years and ten. Then the grim reaper calls and both the wise and the foolish heed the call.

**Eccl 2:16 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.**

There are a few exceptions. Judas name has echoed down through twenty centuries. Adam, Abraham and Noah are still remembered. But, for the most part, the wise and the unwise are both lost in the pages of history.

**Eccl 2:17 Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.**

What! Here is a man who had everything his heart desired. How could the man hate life? It was because everything he was attempting was based on that which takes place “under the sun.” The will of the one who created the sun was ignored.



**Eccl 2:18 Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me.**

Who is it that makes headlines in the newspapers because they have taken their life in suicide. Very often it is one who has been both rich and famous. They have been adored and envied by millions. While they were being idolized by others, they began hating themselves. All of their accomplishments dissolved in one gunshot or one overdose of drugs.

Solomon had one thought that plagued him repeatedly. Now that he had accumulated so many possessions he wondered what would happen to them when he left them to the one who would become heir to them.

**Eccl 2:19 And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity.**

Solomon had very good reason to wonder about this. He had a son called Rehoboam who had been raised in the midst of his folly. With a thousand women, with riches beyond counting, and with entertainment and hilarity surrounding the young son, what would one suspect might take place? Solomon had his suspicions about the character of his heir.

Rehoboam later proved his suspicions to be well founded. He was a fool. He was unable to govern a united Israel and saw it torn asunder. That which his father had built came tumbling down.

Of course Solomon is not the only one who has had this happen. Within three generations most fortunes are squandered by heirs who are spoiled and incompetent.

**Ecc 2:20 Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.**

Solomon's thoughts about the future of his estate caused him to realize that if life under the sun is all there is, his efforts were insignificant. His death could very well undo all he had done.

**Ecc 2:21 For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil.**

The man he is thinking about is himself. He had worked diligently to accomplish that of which he was so proud. He was getting on in years and it would not be but a short time before someone who had not turned a hand in the accomplishments would inherit it. Surely everything under the sun is but vain and vexing.

**Ecc 2:22 For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun?**

**Ecc 2:23 For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity.**

Has the reader heard of those men of accomplishments who slept only four hours of the day and then worked the other twenty? May I suggest that this was not always because of his own choice. If one is tossing and turning in the bed and unable to go to sleep, he might as well arise and make use of the time.

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I have used this illustration before. I do not hesitate to use it again. John D. Rockefeller is said to have had conversation with a porter who brought him a tray with a delicious meal on it. The porter is reported to have told Mr. Rockefeller that he wished he had just a small portion of the wealth that the rich man owned. Mr. Rockefeller replied that he would give trade much of his wealth for the stomach of the porter, in order that he might enjoy the meal which had just been placed in front of him.

Eccl 2:24 There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.

The satisfactions of life are to have enough to eat and drink, a warm place to live, and wholesome work to do.

Now we see just the faintest beam of light in the words of the wise man. He is willing to admit that food, clothing and shelter are all possible because of the hand of God. Had you noticed the word God up to this point in the book?

Eccl 2:25 For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?

God had given Solomon an abundance of food and other necessities. No one had received more than this king. There is just a glimpse of humility in his statement.

Eccl 2:26 For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

It is true that the sinner may gather up riches and pleasures in this world under the sun. It is not true that he will retain these in eternity. The sinner is only being allowed to heap up misery and sorrow which will be his when God says, "Depart from me, ye worker of iniquity." Then the good man will hear the words, "Enter into the joy of the Lord." Jesus put it very clearly when he advised the men not lay up treasures on earth, but to lay them up in heaven where they can be enjoyed for ever and ever.

We will be allowed to follow any star we wish while we live here on earth. Entertainment, possessions, drugs, and sexual promiscuity all have their attractions. But, the Daystar which arises in the heart of the Christian leads away from vanity and vexation of spirit to the land of endless day.

Chapter 3

Eccl 3:1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

There are drastic differences in the general interpretation of this chapter and the one following. Some commentators believe Solomon was adding one more experiment to his total. That he decided to try living like an animal since man had no control over his life and whatever must be must be. If man lived like an animal and died like an animal the answer to finding meaning in life was to live accordingly.

Others deny that this was his point. They believe he had observed that man's surroundings dictate an appropriate time and place for thought, speech and actions. Thus, man will be most successful if he lives in harmony with the way God has ordered the universe.

Eccl 3:2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

Yes, it normally takes nine months for a child to be born. One also must be born before he can die. He does not die first and then be born later.

One does not plant when the snow is on the ground and the thermometer sets on ten below zero. There is a time to plant, and later one harvests the crop. Nature is orderly. God created it so.

Eccl 3:3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up.

God has commanded that one who deliberately sheds

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the blood of another man is to have his own blood shed. Murderers are to be executed.

*Gen 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*

Our society has very nearly eliminated capital punishment. It is suffering the consequences, as criminals have no fear of a slap on the wrist.

Most certainly there is a time to heal. Mothers and physicians understand this well and apply themselves to making people well.

**Eccl 3:4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;**

Tears are not a shame or a sin when shed in due season and for a valid reason. The death of a loved one will bring weeping to the heart, if not to the eyes. The one who does not sympathize in times of sorrow does not respect the time to weep.

It is just as inappropriate to laugh when others are suffering. Laughing at the wrong time is a sign of hardheartedness. Weeping when there is no cause for it marks one as a cry baby.

The second part of the verse only echoes the first part.

**Eccl 3:5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;**

One might gather stones to build a wall. One might throw away stones when they prevented the cultivation of a field.

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A man and woman have every right to embrace one another passionately in the privacy of their bedroom. The same actions in a public marketplace might well result in being arrested.

It is quite proper for a schoolteacher to hug his mother after not having seen her for a time. It would be extremely questionable for that same male schoolteacher to embrace one of his sixteen year old female students after the rest of the students had gone home.

Eccl 3:6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A young couple may get money and deposit it in the bank as they plan for the building of a new house. Then, when enough has been saved, it is right that they spend the money to construct the home.

Eccl 3:7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

Housewives know that in order to make a dress it may be necessary to cut out the cloth, then when the cutting out is completed, the pieces may be sewn together to complete the garment.

Eccl 3:8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

We are told to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are also told that God loves us and that, having been created in His image, we are to imitate His example.

But God also hates. Isaiah spoke for God when he told Israel God hated their feasts when they were corrupted

by immorality and hypocrisy. God's children must also hate sin.

There is a time for confrontation. When evil is visited upon either ourselves or others, we must stand up for that which is right. In contrast, when it is possible to promote peace and harmony, that time should be used well.

Ecc 3:9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

Is Solomon saying here that it is really quite useless to work, since we will die someday and all will come to naught? Or is he suggesting that the reader to ask himself why he works? I tend to think he is leading up to a conclusion that there is good reason to work, even if one can not see the final rewards.

Ecc 3:10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

Solomon had taken note that God has made the universe in such way that men must work in order to eat. The apostle James said, "If a man will not work, neither let him eat."

The sons of men here include all of mankind. Both the godly and the ungodly have the responsibility to work, even if some do not do so.

Ecc 3:11 He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

When the sixth day of creation was finished, God looked upon it and pronounced that everything was good.

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If man had not sinned he would have multiplied and filled the earth with no death. Man was created to live in the presence of God eternally.

When sin entered death followed. However, that did not erase the longing for eternal life. Men cannot comprehend the entirety of God's wisdom and purpose in bringing them into being. Still, that fact should not keep them from fearing Him and obeying His commandments.

**Eccl 3:12 I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.**

It is a serious mistake to see this verse as a statement that not an iota of good in any man. Some contend that all men are born in sin and are not capable of doing good. This verse is one to which they appeal.

This verse teaches the exact opposite. The word "but" is the key to the passage. The mission of men is to **do good**, and "whistle while he works."

**Eccl 3:13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.**

God intended that all men should have enough to satisfy their real needs as a result of their labor. The labor, as well as the enjoyment are only possible because God arranged it that way.

**Eccl 3:14 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.**

No man has the ability to alter the eternal goals of the Creator. Men may defy His will. They may align themselves with Satan. But in the end, God will have a family who will live with him forever.

**Ecc 3:15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.**

The laws of nature have not changed. God's eternal plan is intact in spite of confusion which has resulted from sin. The basic requirements for men have been seen in every age. Lying, stealing, adultery, etc. are just as wrong as they ever were.

**Ecc 3:16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.**

Solomon had observed the injustices which are rampant in human society. The courts were supposed to be places of sentencing for the guilty and establishing the innocence of the guiltless. Instead he had seen that wickedness had not been punished, and the innocent had been counted as guilty.

**Ecc 3:17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.**

Even if men did not apply justice properly, God's will would prevail in the judgment. Righteous purposes and good works will finally find their reward when the time arrives.

**Ecc 3:18 I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest**

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them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

What is the condition of men as they live under the sun, without seeking the favor of Jehovah? Solomon will proceed to explain their predicament.

They have lowered themselves to the state of an animal. They need to recognize their folly and rise up toward the image of God in which they were created.

Eccl 3:19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

In the time of Solomon Jesus Christ had not yet been raised from the grave. Men longed for life beyond death, but had little evidence that it could be achieved.

The animals died, and men died. The animals breathed and reproduced. So did men. If the grave is the end, man has no advantage over the beast world.

Eccl 3:20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

If one does a chemical analysis of the body of men and women, the same chemical elements make up their bodies as make up the bodies of beasts. These chemicals can all be found in the dust of the earth. The bodies of both man and beast decay and become mixed with the dust.

Eccl 3:21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Does anyone truly understand the difference between the spirit of man and the spirit of the beasts? Only God can comprehend fully what is meant by saying that after God created the beast world, He created man in His own image.

One great difference which has been revealed to those who will listen is that the spirits of just men made perfect will someday return to God who gave them.

Heb 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.

Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

By living as a child of God, a man can be assured that he has differentiated himself from the level of the beast and has prepared his spirit to be welcomed in heaven with those of others who have walked in the ways of the Father of spirits.

Eccl 3:22 Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

Man was given work to do in the very beginning. He was to work six days and rest on the seventh. The works men accomplish while here on earth do not purchase their salvation. They do please God, and this is the whole duty of man.

God expects men to work the works of God. He expects

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them to be grateful and rejoice in the fact that they have been permitted to serve. Someday their time in fleshly bodies will come to an end. They will not return to this globe upon which we live to see what effect their activities had until the earthly history of man has ended.

One more point must be made clear. While the spirits of the beast world go downward, there is no evidence in the scriptures that they will exist forever. This is not true of men. Their spirits will either return to God and enter the joys of the Lord where time is no longer, or they will be consigned to the horrors of hell which are also eternal.

## *Chapter 4*

**Ecc 4:1 So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.**

This chapter deals with self centered attitudes and oppression. The person who cares nothing about the welfare of others will oppress them. This will not lead to a meaningful life for the oppressor. It will only lead to vanity and vexation.

When Solomon says that "I returned.", he is referring to the general theme which runs through the entire book of Ecclesiastes. That theme is that all which is done under the sun, without consideration of eternal values and hope for life after death is futile.

One of Jesus main concerns was for the poor and oppressed. He taught that those who followed Him must demonstrate love for the downtrodden. These persons are at the mercy of their oppressors. They have no one to comfort them in their distress, nor do they have the power to rise up and resist.

**Ecc 4:2 Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.**

In view of the conditions described in verse one, and not considering an afterlife, the dead are better off than those who are still living in the midst of such inhumanity.





**Eccl 4:3 Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.**

The dead is better off than both those who are still in oppression, and those who are yet to be born and live amidst such injustice.

**Eccl 4:4 Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.**

Again Solomon considers the results of heavy labor and upright thought and actions. The result is that those around him become envious of the righteous person and become covetous of his possessions and his reputation. This can hardly be meaningful if life ceases with the grave.

**Eccl 4:5 The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh.**

Although the foolish man envies his hard working neighbor, he makes no effort to follow his example. His laziness results in a shortage of the necessities of life. He must either live off the efforts of others, or die from starvation .

**Eccl 4:6 Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.**

There are two possible explanations of this verse. First, it could be an expression of the attitude of the lazy

man who folds his hands together and quits. He does not have the necessities of life, but neither does he have the work and disappointment of the energetic man.

The verse could also mean that it is better to have very little and be free from the envy and oppression which is directed toward the one who has worked hard and saved for the days ahead.

Either way, Solomon sees nothing but hopelessness. The lazy man starves. The righteous man is envied and oppressed.

**Ecc 4:7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun.**

Solomon is ready to present another unhappy set of circumstances; that being the difficulty of isolation from one's fellowman.

**Ecc 4:8 There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.**

This is a description of the person who either decides to live alone, or who has come into this condition through circumstances beyond his control.

This person has no other with whom to share life. He has no wife, no child and no brother. He is *alone*. Some persons are gregarious. Others are more comfortable by themselves. This does not mean that the one who prefers living alone fails to recognize the need for cooperation. Some single persons have little choice.

Still, this verse seems to be talking about a miserly



type person who is addicted to the amassing of riches. When all is said and done, he has to ask himself what comfort he has in the treasures he has laid up on earth. He has no one to share them with. He has not made the world any better through his selfish life.

**Ecc 4:9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.**

If the man discussed in the previous verse had someone to share with, there would be far more reason to rejoice. Both labor. Both can encourage each other and comfort one another.

**Ecc 4:10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.**

Perhaps one of the best illustrations of the truth presented in this verse is that of one elderly person living alone. If that person falls and breaks a bone, there is no one to give assistance. The person may lie helpless for many hours before some one discovers their plight.

Obviously this verse also applies in a much more general fashion. Any time two persons are cooperating in an endeavor, either one of them may give strength and assistance to the other when he or she falters. God did not intend that man should live alone.

**Ecc 4:11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?**

It is surprising that most of the commentators avoid the husband and wife relationship and illustrate this

verse with a child sleeping with it's father, or a traveller sleeping near his donkey.

Without any attempt whatever to be carnal minded, your present writer believes the first thought which comes to mind in reading the above verse has to do with the warmth a husband and wife feel on a cold night when they lie side by side and find warmth with would not exist if they slept alone.

**Eccl 4:12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**

If one person is oppressed when he is alone, he may be overcome. If that person has the help of another, he is much less likely to fall victim to the oppressor. The greater the number who band together, the less danger exists.

**Eccl 4:13 Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.**

These last four verses appear to be related. A poor and wise child may rise to someday take the throne of a nation. An old and foolish king who has become stubborn and unwilling to take advice is on the way to oblivion.

**Eccl 4:14 For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor.**

A king may have risen from the poorest of circumstances to take the throne. At the same time, one who has had the very best of life may become poor. The present conditions

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are no guarantee that either poverty or prosperity will continue without end.

Eccl 4:15 I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead.

The second child does not have to be a fleshly brother. The first child would be the one who rose from poverty and imprisonment to be a king. The second child could be another who had followed the same path. The second child would take the place of the first when the first became old and foolish.

Thus the world turns. Here today and gone tomorrow. Even kings are replaced by others when the days of their glory have passed.

Eccl 4:16 There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Solomon concludes that whether a man lives alone, or whether he rises to be the king of an entire nation, he is but a link in a chain which goes on unendingly if we restrict ourselves to only that which takes place “under the sun.”

The life of each and every person would then be but a speck in the dust of the earth. The grave would be the end.

Chapter 5

Eccl 5:1 Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

Solomon was in all probability thinking about those who went to the temple which he had caused to be constructed for worship. That does not limit the application of the principles taught here to his day and time. They apply as fully today as they did then.

Watch how you walk when you meet with the assembly of the saints for worship. Sacrifice is worse than meaningless when it is offered in insincerity. Such ritual is the height of folly. Those who offer in this manner are going through the motions. They do not realize the seriousness of their sins. Jehovah has always looked upon vain worship as a serious abomination.

Eccl 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

One commentator has presented the meat of verses one and two in a nutshell statement. "Keep your ears open and your mouth shut."

You may well fool your fellow man. You will not deceive the Living God. If you can see the hypocrisy in others, do you not believe God can see it in you? Think about what you are about to say before you utter that which does damage rather than good.

Eccl 5:3 For a dream cometh through the

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**multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words.**

When one spends the day in trying to do more than he can accomplish, he is reminded of it by his dreams in the night. When one speaks rashly with many foolish words, his speech broadcasts his lack of character to hear him. This is particularly true with God. He is not deceived by hypocritical statements.

**Eccl 5:4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.**

In the days of Solomon many religious vows were made. God did not command them to be made, but when they were made, He expected them to be kept.

A vow could be a promise to give God a monetary contribution. It could also be a promise to say or do something that the individual believed would be pleasing to God. For example, a child could be dedicated to His service.

Whatever the vow consisted of, it was to be made in sincerity. The money was to be contributed. The action was to be completed.

**Eccl 5:5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.**

It was better to make a vow than not to make one if the vow was kept. If the vow was broken, it would have been better never to have made it.

Let us consider the vow a Christian makes when he is baptized into Christ. He implies that he desires to be a part of the Church, which is the Bride of Christ. He will forsake all other objects of worship, whether these gods be silver, gold, or pleasure.

Large numbers of persons who have been baptized into Christ do not keep their vow. They turn back to the world. It would have been better for them never to have become a Christian than to have tasted of the fruit and then turned back to adoration of worldly things. Peter described the attitude of God toward such persons.

*2 Pet 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

*2 Pet 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.*

*2 Pet 2:22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*

**Ecl 5:6 Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?**

By making a vow and then failing to keep it, the mouth has caused the body to sin. The worshipper must worship in spirit and in truth. Anything short of this will result in God's disfavor.

What is the identity of the angel in this verse? The majority of the writers seem to think it was the priest of Solomon's day. The vows were made before the priest. The word angel does often mean "messenger." The priest was considered a messenger of the Word of God.

I think there is more here. The word angel can also mean "watcher." God's angels are continually watching





over His people. It is very possible that the warning is intended to prevent men from making promises before the angels of heaven, and then breaking those promises. The entire context at this point indicates the need to realize that God is the judge. We dare not mock Him or we face His wrath, both in this world and the one to come.

**Eccl 5:7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but fear thou God.**

A person can imagine all sorts of achievements through dreams and imaginations. That does not insure that he may bring them to reality. One might promise God that he would baptize one hundred persons in the coming year. This might be possible, but it could also be possible that the promise was no more than empty words.

We are taught to pray, “Thy will be done.”

**Eccl 5:8 If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.**

The topic has not been completely changed as we enter this verse. God sees the vanity of many rash promises. He also sees the oppression and injustice taking place on earth.

The Christian’s relationship to civil government has long been a source of contention among those who wish to please Him. Christ taught that the Christian should render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s. He was talking about taxes. We are also taught to “obey them that have the rule over you.”

There are numerous kingdoms on earth. Most of them exist to organize society with respect to the

accomplishment of order and productivity “under the sun.” However, there is one Kingdom which stands at a higher level than all others combined. It is the Kingdom of God. It is concerned with spiritual order. It is ruled over by the “King of kings.”

Civil government has been useful in the prevention of crime and the building of educational systems and highways. But along with this usefulness, civil government has always been poisoned by corrupt office holders. These persons are more interested in personal gain than in the general welfare of the people. This is the main reason we have the rise of those such as Adolph Hitler and some of the immensely wealthy Maharajas of the east.

One is not to be surprised that such persons who are greedy of riches and power gain those ends by oppression of the poor and by the perversion of justice. One is to do the best one can under the circumstances and trust that this world is not the end of all things. God is more powerful than the mightiest potentate who ever existed. He is also richer than all of the most wealthy of all time. He will see that each receives the final destiny which is deserved.

**Ecc 5:9 Moreover the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.**

The greedy king needs to come to the realization that not only do his subjects depend on the blessings which the earth brings forth; so does he. His power and riches depend upon the cooperation of his people. They also depend upon the providence of the Almighty.

**Ecc 5:10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.**

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How could Solomon have been so certain about this statement. The reader will remember that this man was an expert on the subject. He was in the same category as the most famous computer guru of today's world. This latter individual has been predicted to become the first trillionaire. A billion is a thousand million. A trillion is a thousand billion.

Solomon says that those who love silver will never be satisfied with the amount they already have. He had evidently found this truth out the hard way. God had commanded Israel that when they choose a king they were to choose one who would not amass silver and gold. Solomon had to see if God was right.

Eccl 5:11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?

As a rich man gains wealth, it is necessary to hire more laborers to produce it. The only thing the owner of the wealth is to look at it and admire it. Neither his acreage nor his bank account lead to a finer life for the common man.

A bank account is not sinful within itself. The ownership of property is not sinful within itself. Both can be used for the service of God. Both become sinful when they are the primary goal of selfish persons.

Eccl 5:12 The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

The one who works by the sweat of his brow will lay his head on the pillow at night and sleep much more peacefully than the one who frets over whether he is going to lose what he has gained, or whether he will gain again

tomorrow. He may be very poor and not have much to eat. He may have enough to provide a reasonable amount of food, clothing and shelter for himself and his family. In either case, he will sleep more peacefully than the gold digger.

Ecl 5:13 There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

Restless sleep is not the only peril associated with the accumulation of riches. There are many ways that they may corrupt the soul and destroy the body. The rich can afford to purchase the lust and pleasures of the world. Satan very much aware of these weaknesses which he can prod. Lavish so-called recreation can rot the inner man. Selfish pride only leads to greater pride.

Ecl 5:14 But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.

Riches may be lost through all kinds of unpredictable obstacles. Health may fail. Bankruptcy may result from stock market failure. Unwise decisions may result in mammoth financial losses. Jesus spoke the truth when he urged men to lay up treasures where they could not be stolen.

Whose hand is it that has nothing in it? Is it the hand of the son who wastes the wealth which he has inherited from his rich father, or is it the empty hand of the once wealthy man who has suffered the loss of everything he owned. Either way, it is an evil under the sun.

Ecl 5:15 As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall

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**take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand.**

A newborn baby has nothing in the way of property, power or a wallet full of thousand dollar bills. If that baby should become the richest man who ever did, or ever will, live he will leave every earthly possession behind when he returns to the dust of the earth.

I must borrow a statement from Burton Coffman. Coffman reminds us that hearses do not have U-Haul trailers behind them. That is a very meaningful truth.

There are things which one can send beforehand. The saints whom he has aided in living the righteous life will greet him. The prayers he has uttered in sincerity will have risen to the throne of God. The greenbacks will matter little if the streets are paved with gold.

**Eccl 5:16 And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?**

All of the effort and concern of the man who gathered great riches is as if he had never begun. He leaves this earth in the same condition as he entered it. The wind comes and the wind goes. Even so did the wealth of the rich man.

**Eccl 5:17 All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness.**

The eating in darkness is the consumption of earthly goods. He only thinks life is meaningful because he walks in darkness and does not see where he is headed. He is indeed s-i-c-k. Along with his spiritual sickness, he has brought the wrath of God upon him.

**Eccl 5:18 Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion.**

One should participate in honest productive work. He then has the right to eat and drink, and also to be happy in the knowledge that he has been pleasing to God in discharging his responsibilities. It is man's charge from his Maker that he work for a living. That is his portion. If a man will not work, neither let him eat.

**Eccl 5:19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.**

Man owns nothing which did not come from the hand of God. We are only stewards. It is a gift from God that we have life and the ability to work. We should rejoice in whatever degree of health and opportunities which are granted to us. The man of faith will offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the chance to serve.

**Eccl 5:20 For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.**

The man who manifests the attitude prescribed above will not be anxious over many things. The labor and travail of life will only point his footsteps toward that which awaits beyond the sun.

## *Chapter 6*

**Eccl 6:1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:**

This chapter is only an extension of the discussion presented in the previous chapter. Wealth is not a guarantee of happiness and security.

The word “common” is one which is a matter of degree. Common could mean that the condition appeared often enough to be quite noticeable, or it could mean that the majority of persons have experienced it. Solomon had not only seen this evil in other persons, he had experienced it first hand.

**Eccl 6:2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.**

The three things mentioned here are three which Solomon had in very great portions. He had silver and gold. He had livestock and land. He had honor and fame. In fact, he had everything that any man could desire while living “under the sun.”

The problem Solomon saw was that the rich and famous can only enjoy eating that which fills the stomach. They can only wear one suit of clothes at a time. They can only live in one house at a time. One day, after the passing of the wealthy, others whom he does not even know will consume and make use of that which he has left behind.

**Eccl 6:3 If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years**

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be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.

A large number of children was important to the Hebrew people in the time of Solomon. We have no idea how many children Solomon had, but with 700 wives and 300 concubines, there could have well been one hundred children. According to Judges 8:30, Gideon had seventy sons.

Judges 8:30 And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives.

A prestigious burial was also considered to be of great importance to the persons of Solomon's day. A man who died without enough honor among others to give him a decent burial was a nobody. As evidence of this attitude, consider the pyramids of Egypt which were built to honor the Pharaohs.

Only the man who had filled his soul with spiritual riches would be complete. The man who ran hungrily after the treasures of earth was worse off than an aborted fetus which had never seen the light of day

Eccl 6:4 For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.

The aborted fetus entered the world in a meaningless fashion. He was not even given a name. He will not be remembered.

Eccl 6:5 Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.

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The basic difference between the aborted fetus and the foolish man who made wealth and fame his goals in life is that the fetus will not suffer than agony that the rich man will after the judgment.

**Eccl 6:6 Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?**

Methusaleh lived to be over nine hundred years old. If the rich man lived to be twice as old as Methusaleh and possessed riches untold for all those years, he will be buried in the ground just as the fetus was.

**Eccl 6:7 All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.**

The wisdom of this verse applies to any appetite man has. It could be food. It could be sex. It could be possessions. Just because one has accumulated enough to satisfy his hunger at one moment does not mean that hunger will disappear for all time. Nor will these appetites diminish. More often, when they are filled, they become even more insistent on being filled.

**Eccl 6:8 For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?**

The wise man and the fool are both destined to return to the earth and to judgment. The poor and the rich also face the same fate when the grim reaper calls.

**Eccl 6:9 Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.**

If one spends great amounts of time and energy searching out the desires of his imagination, he will always find there is more in the imagination than he can claim for his own. It is better to be satisfied with that which God has placed within his reach.

It is not necessary to envy the one who lives in a mansion if one has a modest home. It is not wise to envy the multimillionaire if one has sufficient means to provide for the necessities of life. Longing for that which lies beyond one's reach results in mental stress and physical ailments.

**Eccl 6:10 That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.**

The laws and materials which constitute this universe were brought into being in the beginning. There is nothing new under the sun. Man may discover radio waves or electricity. He may invent new devices. However, the materials and laws which he discovers have been in existence since the time of Eden.

Though man may try to fill his mind with all knowledge, or gain control of all the riches on earth, he will find that he is grasping at the wind. Man cannot contend with an omniscient and omnipotent Creator.

**Eccl 6:11 Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?**

The more man has, the more he desires. All that happens in the filling of his appetites is that the emptiness or vanity and vexation increases along with the attempted filling of the appetites. He is not better off afterward, if he has failed to feed the soul.

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Eccl 6:12 For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

Man studies the rocks and the history books in search of that which has gone before him. He studies nature and it's laws in the attempt to find out what will happen in the future. One day his life will be like a shadow when the sun rises. It will vanish away.

Then he will wonder what has taken place under the sun after he departed. No amount of searching will allow him to predict all things unto the end of time. God has seen fit to give us a partial picture of the future. He has not seen fit to grant His eternal and infinite wisdom to any human.

We must not make our lives vain trying to compete with Jehovah.

Chapter 7

Ecc 7:1 A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

There are two avenues to respectability. One may douse himself with perfume in order that any offensive odor is covered, or perhaps just to enhance his presence. He may also live in such a way as to develop a reputation for dependability and true friendship. A splash of after shave may make one's presence more desirable. A good name is something which money can not buy.

The latter clause of the verse will depend upon the character of the person's life. If one has followed the works of the flesh, the day of death can be nothing but horror. Death has a sting, but when we add the agony of eternal separation from God, the day of death is hideous. If, however, one has lived through the trials and labor of life walking in the footsteps of the Saviour, the day of death is better than the day of birth because one is leaving this sin stained world and departing for joy untold.

Ecc 7:2 It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

It is natural to think attending a feast would be preferable to visiting a funeral parlor. Solomon asks us to look beyond the surface. The experience of mourning can cause a man to examine his heart to see if all is right with God. When the proper corrections are made, life can be made better.

It is not wrong to attend a feast. God set three major

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feasts for the people of ancient Israel. They were joyful celebrations of gratitude and prayer. Jesus attended a wedding feast.

**Eccl 7:3 Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.**

The telling of jokes is usually not spiritually uplifting. Many times the jokes do just the opposite. When times of sadness come, the face may be streaked with tears, but the heart can be made clean through reflection on the way life can be enriched.

**Eccl 7:4 The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.**

The wise will take a serious view of life. They will share one another's burdens and sorrow. They will seek out ways of assisting and encouraging others.

The fool is attracted to giddiness. His days must be filled with hilarity for him to be satisfied. He is more apt to be found listening to a comedian than to a teacher of the Bible.

**Eccl 7:5 It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.**

Rebuke is not pleasant. We do not like to be told we are in need of a change of direction. Yet, rebuke given in a loving and helpful manner is most profitable.

It may be more pleasant at the moment to hear the wagging of an idle tongue. When we look back later, we find that the party is over and all we have left is a

headache. The tavern may vibrate with the songs of the drunk. The ribaldry does not last!

**Ecc 7:6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.**

Thorns were not used to produce fire for cooking food. Logs were better. Thorns made a lot of crackling sound. Logs cooked the food. The cackling of fools is temporary and meaningless.

**Ecc 7:7 Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart.**

Even a wise man may be prodded into losing his temper. When that occurs, he forfeits part of his reasoning power, saying and doing things he would not do if he maintained self control.

The wise man, or any person for that matter, may have his judgment biased by a bribe. It has been pointed out that both the giving of a bribe and the receiving of one can corrupt the soul.

**Ecc 7:8 Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.**

**Ecc 7:9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.**

Rather than flying off the handle and doing that for which one may be sorry later, it is better to wait things out until they can be more properly weighed. The proud spirit will react too quickly. The patient spirit will carefully evaluate what action should be taken.

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Eccl 7:10 Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.

It is not profitable to reflect upon the good old days when comparing them with the present sinful ones. The truth is probably that there were some things about the days when the old man was a child that were better. It is also very probable that there were some things that were worse.

We can not reverse time and return to the days of yesteryear. What we can do is attempt to make the present days better for everyone concerned.

Eccl 7:11 Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

Those who see the sun are those who live “under the sun.” During our lives here on earth a combination of wisdom and an inheritance is of value. They should be used with thanksgiving.

Eccl 7:12 For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

The one who has wisdom is capable of looking ahead and choosing his paths in accordance with the dangers and possible security ahead. Human wisdom can aid in living this present life. Hearing and obeying Divine wisdom can prepare us for eternal life.

Eccl 7:13 Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?

There are many things which man can not change. He must accept the providence of God and make the best possible use of that which comes his way.

This verse should not be understood as saying "Whatever will be, will be." There are many things man can change. Still, there are some which resist our best efforts. That which we cannot change must be accepted.

Eccl 7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

When life is pleasant and full of joy, the Christian should give thanks to the Giver of all good and perfect gifts. A righteous life can include a happy heart.

When life is full of gloom and adversity, the Christian should reflect upon the reasons why such miseries afflict us. Job had occasion to do a great deal of this kind of meditation. He came to the conclusion that good men and women suffer and wicked men and women rejoice.

There are reasons why these apparent injustices take place. Part of it has to do with the fall of man in the garden of Eden. Part of it has to do with the influence of Satan in the present. We must live through both joy and sorrow with our eye on that place where there are no tears.

Eccl 7:15 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 longeth his life in his wickedness.

Solomon himself lived a very wicked life for many years. For much of this time he was no doubt envied by

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those who had much less than he did. He was rich. He was powerful. He filled every appetite. He could very well say that there is a wicked man who longeth his life in his wickedness. Sometimes the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper. What should we conclude?

**Eccl 7:16 Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?**

My own remarks on the meaning this verse and the next one are a bit different than most of what I have read on them. The reader is to carefully examine them to see if the view I have presented is that which Solomon intended. If not, it should be rejected.

Can one be too righteous? Even Christ was not more righteous than He should have been. You can not exceed perfection.

As I see the point of this verse, the man who has a full life with an abundance of blessings must be very careful that he does not see the blessings as a result of his great righteousness. There is not a direct correlation between the amount of righteousness in a person's life and the lack of sin. Jesus Christ lived a perfectly pure life. Yet, He was rejected and pinned to the cross between to thieves.

If one makes the mistake of equating his righteousness with his lack of sin, he may evaluate his condition as much more righteous than it truly is. In this case, "*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* (I Cor. 10:12)"

**Eccl 7:17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?**

Is Solomon saying that it is alright to be a little wicked, as long as we do not become extremely wicked? I hardly think this is harmonious with truth. It certainly is true that all men *have* sinned and come short of the glory of God. It is not true that all men *must* sin. God made man a creature of choice. Any man who sins has chosen to sin.

What then is the message behind the statement, “Be not overmuch wicked?” I believe the meaning is that one is not to explain his suffering as being a result of his own terrible wickedness. He could just give up and turn himself over to wickedness, thinking that it is inevitable. He may be suffering as Job did, even though there are other reasons for the suffering.

If he does give up, curse God and die, he will do just that!

**Ecl 7:18 It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.**

What is the reader urged to take hold of? He is to avoid both of these dangerous positions. All of his suffering is not due to his wickedness. All of his blessings are not due to his righteousness. The proper thing to do is fear God and keep His commandments. Then God will see that justice rules and the man of God will be victorious.

**Ecl 7:19 Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city.**

A city in Solomon's time was protected by a defensive wall. A wise man inside the city could use his wisdom to do a more efficient job of defending the city against attackers

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than could ten men with swords and muscles. A wise man outside the city could be more effective in taking the city than ten mighty men who were inside the city defending it.

Joshua was a wise man. He followed the advice of God and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

Ecc 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

The man who claims he has not sinned is a liar and the truth is not in him. Every man has sinned and come short of the glory of God. The only persons who can claim purity of soul are those who have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb of God.

Ecc 7:21 Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee:

It can be dangerous to take every idle word at face value. People say many things hurtful things about others. Is there a man or woman who has not ever said such things to the very ones they love the most? Has not every employer heard unjustified complaints from his employees? Certainly! How should the man of God handle these hard words?

Ecc 7:22 For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

The proper response is to remember that you have also spoken spiteful things which should not have been said. If the other person was expected to pass off your own remarks as unjustified, you should also do the same when you have been the victim.

Ecc 7:23 All this have I proved by wisdom: I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me.

When he was appointed to be king of Israel Solomon prayed earnestly that he might have the wisdom needed to govern that great people. He said he was but a little child and needed divine help. God granted him that for which he had asked. He even granted him riches and influence for which he had not made request.

The wisdom Solomon received was not infinite. He had a larger portion of human wisdom than any before him or any that would come after him. He should have applied it to hear and obey the One who had answered his prayer. Rather than doing that, he set out to use that wisdom to direct his own steps and see if God's way was the right way.

He knew that his wisdom was not complete. He needed to know more than God intended. Just as Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Solomon intended to use his human wisdom to put the test to God's wisdom. He realized that what he had set out to do was impossible.

Ecc 7:24 That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?

The atheist considers the Bible to be a collection of fairy tales. Nothing could be farther from the truth. One can mine the riches of the Bible for a hundred years and still realize the wisdom of Jehovah is as far above his own as the heavens are higher than the earth.

Ecc 7:25 I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness:

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Rather than setting out to find ultimate truth through the application of his own mind, he should have continued to pray that God would give him that portion of wisdom which was needed to rule Israel. Every man must wait until that time comes in which we shall know as we are known. Even then, we will be finite and God will be infinite.

**Eccl 7:26 And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.**

It is most interesting to compare the words written here with those found in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs. In that place the writer praised the worthy woman and said her price was greater than rubies. The words of that chapter are said to be the words of Lemuel. We do not know whether they were words collected from Solomon, or Lemuel's own words. If they were the words of Solomon and only collected for the book of Proverbs by Lemuel, then his picture of women is vastly different. In view of the contrast it seems more likely that Solomon did not write the last chapter of Proverbs.

This sounds more like the description of the "strange woman" spoken of in the fifth chapter of Proverbs.

*Prov 5:3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:*

*Prov 5:4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.*

*Prov 5:5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.*

Women who use their hearts and their hands to ensnare men can make life hell on earth for both

themselves and the men they seduce. Men who are at first flattered by sweet words find themselves agonizing over those that annoy like a constantly dripping faucet. Such women can take a man straight to hell. Life can become more bitter than death.

**Eccl 7:27 Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account:**

When I count the money in my billfold I separate the bills one by one and check the value of each. Solomon had used this method in the evaluation of women. What did he find?

**Eccl 7:28 Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.**

The wise man had surveyed a thousand men. Most of them were foolish. Only one in a thousand was wise. It was even more serious when he evaluated a thousand women. He did not find even one who had wisdom.

This is not surprising. The thousand women whom Solomon collected for his harem did not have husbands or children. They did not have wifely duties in which to take pride. All they had was the glitter of the palace and the unlikely chance that they might share the bed of the king. They were playthings. They acted the part. If Solomon had looked in the right places he would have found wise women. The Son of man came into this world through the womb of a righteous woman.

**Eccl 7:29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.**

What a pessimistic view of mankind! There are some good things that could have been said. It is a tragedy that much truth is found in the verse.

When God made man, He pronounced him to be good. That condition did not last long. Satan's temptation that man could become as wise as God if he would only eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was accepted. Satan is the father of liars. Man did not become as wise as God. He brought sin and death into the world.

The word "inventions" used here cause some to say that men should not seek out scientific inventions. That is not the sense of the verse. The inventions are the plans devised in the minds of men whereby they design their own paths rather than walking in the light of God's Word.

## Chapter 8

**Eccl 8:1 Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.**

Be careful, you who think you are wise. No man is omniscient, knowing the meaning of all things. It is true that men become very bold when they rise above others in the accumulation of education and in the ability to interpret our natural surroundings. Yet, though the man's face may shine with confidence, the man falls far short of full knowledge.

**Eccl 8:2 I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.**

What king is Solomon speaking of? Is this king Solomon himself? Is the King God? Is the king any king who has dominion over subjects?

We recall that God has given directions for men to honor the king who reigns over them. (See Romans 13:1-5 and 2 Peter 2:17.)

*Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

*Rom 13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

*Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

*Rom 13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good.*

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But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Rom 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

1 Pet 2:17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

There is another side to this. The people are to honor their earthly king, but that earthly king has the responsibility to seek out the commandments of Jehovah and harmonize his own demands with the commandments of the Lord.

It is my own contention that Solomon was referring to both his own kingship and also that of the ultimate King of heaven. The rest of this chapter intertwines the two realms.

Eccl 8:3 Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him.

Solomon was presenting guidance for God's people. He expected them to recognize his authority and respect his orders. At the same time, he knew full well that they had no reason to obey him if he failed to govern according to the will of the Lord.

We speak of the "divine right of kings." There is no divine right unless that ruler respects the right of the King of all kings.

Eccl 8:4 Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?

God is the greatest Ruler of all. It is the height of folly to ask God, "Why do you allow the righteous to suffer and

the wicked to prosper?" When God has spoken, it is not man's right to disobey on the premise that he does not see *why*.

Eccl 8:5 Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.

Solomon is answering the objection of the man who sees only that which lies "under the sun." The one who keeps the commandments of both the King of heaven and the king on earth who guides according to the will of the King in heaven will feel no evil thing. This is only true when death is not recognized as final. The heart of a truly wise man will do right while he is alive in order that he may judge correctly here and be fearless in the last day of judgment.

Eccl 8:6 Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

When man attempts to go it alone, without the guidance of God, that man will be plagued by misery. There is a time in which each choice must be made and made correctly. That time will come when God is ready for it to come. That choice or judgment as to how one should act at a particular moment must be guided by One who knows all things, and not by the mind of weak and frail men.

Certainly we can know when we need to buy a new pair of shoes. We can know when we need to marry. What we cannot know without the help of God is whether these choices are right or wrong in view of eternity.

Eccl 8:7 For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

By this time the reader may feel he or she has been

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overexposed to the idea that it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps. Do not become bored with this repetition. The proper response is the realization that God wants that truth known. Adam and Eve did not respect it when they ate the fruit. Ananias and Saphira did not respect it when they lied to God. Uzzah did not respect it when he reached out and touched the ark. Nadab and Abihu did not respect it when they offered strange fire on the altar of God.

Because man is finite, he cannot know the final consequences of his actions. Only God knows that. We must listen to Him!

**Eccl 8:8 There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.**

There will be an end to every persons life here on earth. The only way a man can control the time of his death is to commit suicide. Suicide is the same thing as murdering one's self. God has commanded, "Thou shalt not murder." We can not command our spirit or soul to inhabit our body for another year, day or hour when the time of death comes. We cannot resign from life in the attempt to prolong death. Living a hilarious life will certainly not prolong it. It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment.

Solomon had come face to face with the fact that his own earthly life "under the sun" was not eternal. If he intended to solve the problem which faced him, he must find a way to defeat death. Riches would not do it. Earthly armies would not do it. Wisdom greater than any other man would not do it. The man who lived as he had lived was in the greatest of trouble.

**Eccl 8:9 All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt.**

The man with so much earthly wisdom had set his heart to try every path to a meaningful life. He had been appointed as a ruler of Israel. He had not found that his decisions had profited those over whom he ruled. They had, on the other hand, caused problems. But to go further, having ruled Israel as he had was detrimental to his own life. He had not found meaning. He had found only vanity and vexation.

**Eccl 8:10 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.**

Solomon had seen good men and women buried and forgotten. They had lived close to God, yet they died and their memory was erased from Israel's history books. That left an emptiness which he would like to have avoided.

**Eccl 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.**

The truth of this verse can easily be seen in it's results when children are constantly warned about misbehavior, but are not punished. They decide there will be no punishment. Wicked men and women come to the same conclusion. Because the evil workers are not punished by the Lord immediately after they commit sin, they feel there will be no punishment. Thus they continue in their wickedness and multiply the evil.

**Eccl 8:12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times,**

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and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

The facts of the matter are that no matter how many times a sinner escapes without being punished, and though he lives a long life, it is far better to cast one's lot with the righteous who fear God and obey Him.

Eccl 8:13 But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

In the end, it will not go well with the wicked. The time will come when the days of that long life will come to an end. Then they will seem like a shadow which is here now and gone a moment later.

Eccl 8:14 There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity.

Solomon was not alone in noticing that there were upright persons who endured the kind of grief that were due to sinners. All of us have taken note of this sad state. We have also seen the wicked prospering as we might expect the righteous would fare if all was just. Solomon was moving back and forth between condemnation of God for not acting in just fashion, and remembering that God knows infinitely better than we do when and how men should be rewarded and punished.

Eccl 8:15 Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to

eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

When he saw that the wicked often prospered, he was tempted to go that route. After all, one did have the pleasures of sin for a season, even if he did die later. Since that was the case, live with gusto!

Eccl 8:16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)

Wisdom cried out that there was something seriously wrong with the eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you may die viewpoint. Worming around in the back of his mind was the thought that a man could lie awake night after night tossing and turning without finding the whole duty of man through human wisdom alone.

Eccl 8:17 Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

The wise man had tried with all his might to explore the actions and thoughts of God. It did not matter how diligently he applied himself, there were many things he could not control, and many things he could not understand. If he could not do so with the riches, power and wisdom which he had, no other man might expect to surpass his effort. A man might think he could read the mind of God without help. Such a man was headed for disappointment.



Chapter 9

Ecl 9:1 For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them.

Solomon had carefully considered the statement he was about to make. He was convinced that man cannot fathom the depths of all knowledge by observation of the world around him. God knows far better than man just what humans should think and do. The righteous and wise are apt to draw wrong conclusions about whether God hates them or loves them. They may well decide that because they have endured suffering, God must hate them. They really do not have the ability to make that judgment.

Ecl 9:2 All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.

Pleasant and unpleasant things take place in the lives of both the righteous and the wicked. Some of the righteous and some of the wicked prosper. Some of the righteous and some of the wicked suffer. A life of sacrifice and holy living does not make one immune to misery.

Solomon may have been going overboard here. God promises that there will, in general, be a better life on earth for the righteous than for the wicked. Job was



described as a “perfect and upright.” That did not prevent the Devil from testing him to the limit. Christ was reviled and persecuted while here in the flesh. The best of men and women may face adversity. However, the general statement that the righteous live longer and are happier is a true statement, even if there are exceptions.

Eccl 9:3 This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

Evil is everywhere. It is in political circles. It is in business. It is in athletic competition. It is even found within the church of God. Every man living “under the sun” thinks, says and does sinful things. If one is not careful he will conclude that men live for a while in a sinful world; that they all share in the sin and then they die they no longer are conscious of what is happening. With the exception of a very few who were caught up before death, and also a consideration of the return of Christ, when the living will be caught up to meet Him in the air, all men face physical death as a result of sin.

The finality of physical death, is of course the view of the one who lives “under the sun.”

Eccl 9:4 For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

This same view would hold that just like a dog who is alive is more powerful than a lion that is dead, a man

who is alive has hope for the next day, but a man who is dead does not.

Eccl 9:5 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.

The living do know at least one thing. They will die. According to the man who lives only for this world, death is the end. They will no longer be rewarded for their work, as was the case when they were alive. They will soon be forgotten and those who are alive will replace them in the minds of men.

Eccl 9:6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Solomon continues to describe the attitude of the man who does not look farther than the stars and find God. Their emotions no longer exist. They do not love. They do not fear. They do not feel jealousy. Their world goes on, but they no longer have a portion in it.

Eccl 9:7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

The pessimism goes on. The man who lives under the sun will decide that he should eat, drink and be merry. God will not destroy him any more than he would the righteous.

There is an alternative explanation here. The advice

may be to the righteous man in that since he faces a future of unknown length, he should continue this present life being thankful for food and drink. Be satisfied with the blessings and opportunities God provides. You still have time to work while you are alive.

Ecc 9:8 Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment.

Keep your garments attractive. Be sure to use your after shave and your best perfume. Enjoy life while you can. It won't last.

Then again, the meaning may be that one should live a clean life and do not go around in sack cloth and ashes with a perpetual frown.

Ecc 9:9 Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.

Get out of marriage whatever satisfaction you can. You do have a few days to live under the sun. Then you will leave everything to the next generation who will also come and go.

The alternative meaning would be that a good marriage is to be cherished for whatever time one has to enjoy it. Use the blessings God has given you as He would have you do. Life under the sun must prepare for life beyond the sun.

Ecc 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device,

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**nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.**

If you see something under the sun that you would like to do, enter into it with great enthusiasm. It really does not matter whether it be good or whether it be evil. Death will bring an end to everything. When you die you will know nothing. You will do nothing. You will simply be erased! This would be the view of the unbeliever.

The other possible interpretation is that all men should work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work. This would be the view accepted by the believer in God and eternity.

**Eccl 9:11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.**

From where had he been, and to what had he returned? He has been presenting both sides of the question. Should man strive to enjoy the pleasures of life for a season and then lie down in the sleep of death, to be forgotten forever? Or should man live here on earth with the hope that sometime, in some way, justice will prevail and we shall receive punishment and rewards according to fruits which we have produced.

**Eccl 9:12 For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the**

**sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.**

After all, men are much like the bird who has no idea he is flying directly into a snare which will cost it its life. Just as fish that think they are swimming in perfect safety are taken in surprise by the net of the fisherman, man moves along unwittingly without being willing to accept that his days may come to an abrupt end at any time.

**Ecc 9:13 This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:**

**Ecc 9:14 There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:**

An example is now given in which a man of wisdom did apply his wisdom. Solomon was appreciative. A small city was being attacked by a powerful king with strong forces. This king was capable of building ramps to scale the walls and using battering rams to knock down the walls. He did not succeed in taking the city.

**Ecc 9:15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.**

The reason he could not overcome this small city was that there was one lone and poor wise man who devised a method whereby the city was delivered. He was not rich enough to buy protection. He did use his wisdom to

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accomplish that which riches could not.

The people of the small city should have given much honor to the poor wise man. They did not. Soon his name disappeared from their memories. The ingratitude of the citizens is astounding. Even though wisdom is proven to be better than force, it is not valued as it should be.

Eccl 9:16 Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

From his observations of this ingratitude, Solomon realized that wisdom can defeat power, but that wisdom may be improperly received because of the folly of men's hearts.

Eccl 9:17 The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

A poor wise man may save a city by his wisdom. He will not be awarded great honor. The ruler who makes a great show will receive the honor though by his folly, he destroys that which the wise man offers.

Eccl 9:18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

It is better to have wisdom than weapons. But that which might be accomplished by wisdom can be demolished by a foolish ruler who reigns over a foolish people.

Solomon knew. He had played the fool by trying to rule Israel while ever moving farther away from his

responsibility as king to base his rulership on the word of Jehovah. He was miserable and the nation was ready to split when he died.

Chapter 10

Eccl 10:1 Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.

This verse is a continuation of the thought in the last part of chapter nine. A small amount of folly can destroy a large amount of constructive effort. This is true with respect to warfare. One wrong decision by a general can result in the death of thousands of those under his command.

It also applies to many facets of individual life. A young man lives a good life for many years and builds up a solid reputation. Then he makes one foolish decision and is saddled with venereal disease for as many years as it took to build his reputation.

Eccl 10:2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.

The heart in this case is the mind and the intention to act. This writer is left handed. It is uncomfortable that the Bible often associates the right hand with good and the left hand with evil. But, since the Bible does use this method, we will follow.

The right hand is normally stronger and more effective than the left. The wise man uses the most effective means of accomplishing things, particularly when they are right. The fool is more apt to choose ineffective methods, and to do that which is wrong.

Eccl 10:3 Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.

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The foolish man or woman is one who thinks he knows everything and knows very little. A very short observation period will reveal his character. As soon as he opens his mouth, those who listen will know him for what he is.

**Eccl 10:4 If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.**

The ruler is sometimes a king or president. It does not have to be. This verse applies to anyone who holds a place of authority. It could be an employer. It could be a traffic policeman. In any such case, if one has provoked one who has authority over him, it is best to give the person time to cool down rather than to fire back at them. Given time to think things over, the angry authority figure might be pacified into less drastic action.

Don't argue with the traffic officer!

**Eccl 10:5 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler:**

There is a very serious mistake which is made by many in authority. This error can cause immense damage to whatever organization is involved.

**Eccl 10:6 Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place.**

The choice of foolish persons to serve in high position is disastrous. When able individuals are discriminated against there is a loss of possible progress. The advancement of incapable persons as a result of partiality results in the same.



The result is often uprisings as those who have been exalted make mistakes, and those who could have handled the responsibilities see that they could have done better. Sometimes the anger goes so far as to result in removal of the poor administrator from his supervisory level.

**Ecc 10:7 I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.**

Reader, do you remember how Jesus rode into Jerusalem at one time. He was not riding upon a white war horse. He rode upon the foal of an ass. Servants did not ride on horses in the time of Solomon. The nobility rode the horses. The servants walked. A servant who was riding on a horse was in all probability being exalted above that which he deserved. The prince who was walking was denied the dignity which he deserved.

**Ecc 10:8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him.**

The foolish man may injure himself in many ways. Let us suppose he sets some kind of trap for another person. He may find that he has fallen into the trap himself.

Hedges were used to keep intruders from trespassing. The one who broke a hedge and tried to invade another's property could find that he had disturbed a poisonous snake which then bit him.

**Ecc 10:9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.**

Stones were used to mark the boundaries of property. If a foolish man decided to move the markers and claim some of his neighbor's land, he took the risk of injuring himself while handling the stones.

There is a faint possibility that the examples just cited are not talking about intentionally trying to injure another and injuring one's self in the process. It may only be declaring that a fool will make decisions that endanger his life. The second part of this verse does not seem to be related to anyone other than the one who cuts the wood. He can place himself in danger by not using good judgment.

**Eccl 10:10 If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct.**

An ax which has not been sharpened requires far more energy to do same amount of work. As soon as it can be seen that the edge of the ax is dull, the wise thing to do is to sharpen it. The foolish man will continue to use the dull ax.

**Eccl 10:11 Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better.**

Certain serpents such as the cobra can be charmed through the use of musical instruments. They will actually sway back and forth with the music. As long as they are in this charmed state they will not strike. If they do strike, the bite is deadly. In the case of the babbling fool one is never certain when he will open his wide mouth and the bite will sting like an adder.

**Ecl 10:12 The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.**

That which is gracious causes well being in others. God is gracious and therefore offers blessings beyond what men deserve. The words of a wise man build others up. The words of the foolish man not only do damage to others, they turn back upon him and result in his own destruction.

**Ecl 10:13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.**

The damage done by a babbling fool multiplies over time. It begins with useless and vain talk. But this can lead to deliberate and destructive anger.

**Ecl 10:14 A fool also is full of words: a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell him?**

The fool is so busy being heard that he has no time to listen to warnings or guidance from others. He is so certain that he has the answers to all future problems that he needs no assistance. He is wrong! No man can foretell the events of the future. The fool will never know just how much damage he has caused after his folly has been applied.

**Ecl 10:15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.**

Everyone has to make up for the inefficiency of the fool. While he is creating havoc, the rest have to rebuild what he is destroying. He does not have enough sense to find his way to the nearest village. In more modern wordage, he does not have enough sense to come in out of the rain. Everyone else must work harder to make up for his misdirection.

**Ecc 10:16 Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!**

There have been instances in which a young man less than twenty years of age inherited the throne. He did not have the experience to make the necessary decisions of state. The government became corrupt and the people disgruntled. The officers of the government turned to revelry and feasting.

I am not at all certain that this is the primary lesson in the verse. We sometimes use the word “childish” to describe an immature person. The land that is governed by an immature and childish ruler will have woes.

**Ecc 10:17 Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!**

The condition of the land is quite different when the governor is qualified. In that case proper decisions may be expected. The officers of the country will go about their tasks with sobriety.

**Ecc 10:18 By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.**

The wise man turns to the evils of laziness. The slothful person will not turn his hand to repair the house in which he lives. As a result the building runs down. All of us have seen houses where the roof has actually fallen down into the rooms below it.

Some believe this verse is a continuation of the thought in the previous verses. This seems out of order. The previous verses were not talking about slothfulness or laziness, although the lack of qualification of a ruler would cause his “house” to fall.

**Ecc 10:19 A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things.**

This writer has difficulty with the verse. If this is the view of the fool, it is certainly a quick switch. The verse just before this one is a very true and obvious statement. This one is the type of thought that the foolish man might utter. Through much of the book of Ecclesiastes we have seen that money will not buy everything. Riches, power and wisdom are all vanity, etc. Now money is presented as the answer to all?

The reader is invited to produce his or her own explanation as to why this verse is embedded in surrounding true statements.

**Ecc 10:20 Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.**

Speaking out against authorities can be dangerous. Don't even think of calling down misfortune on the highest ruler in the land. Do not think that you can

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enter into the privacy of a secret room in your house to condemn the rich. One never knows who may be in hearing range. Then, when the words reach the ears of the ruler or the rich man you will have to answer for your indiscretion. Gossip of this kind can travel faster than birds fly. Remember the statement, "A little bird told me."

Chapter 11

Eccl 11:1 Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

Bread is the staff of life. Without the necessities of life, there can be no life. Some of us have more than enough. Some have barely enough. Others have not even enough to survive.

There are those who believe the statement here had to do with sowing rice upon flooded fields in anticipation of a later harvest. That is not the meaning of the verse. Nor does it refer to entering into business ventures. The verse deals with giving. Those who have more than enough are expected to share with those who are suffering from want.

Jesus helps us to understand when he said in Matthew 5:42—

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

And again in Luke 6:38—

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Eccl 11:2 Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

Do not give once and then consider your obligations to have been discharged. Seven and eight are used in the

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same sense as Jesus used the term seventy times seven in telling us how many times we are to forgive those who trespass against us.

We do not know what circumstances might arise in the future that would prevent our help of others. Life is unpredictable. The giver might suffer some mishap which would erase his ability to help. The one in need might reach a point where he or she was beyond help.

**Eccl 11:3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.**

Natural processes go on. One does not know when or how the storm clouds may rain down upon us. We do know that there comes a time when it becomes difficult or impossible to take action. When a tree falls, it falls in the direction toward which it leaned at the time of it's fall. After the fall, it remains where it falls.

Man should recognize the direction in which his life is leaning. He must see that the direction is that of righteousness rather than evil, and of generosity rather than selfishness. After death all good intentions fade away. Work while it is yet day.

**Eccl 11:4 He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.**

The one who waits until he knows conditions are absolutely perfect before casting his bread upon the waters will never do it. Man is not capable of completely analyzing the reason for the need of the one whom he

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could help. He can not know just what effect the help will have. It may be wasted. It may save one or more souls from an eternity in hell. But if one waits until he knows all of these details, the time of help may pass by.

Eccl 11:5 As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

If you really wonder about the existence of an intelligence far superior to that of humans, consider the wonders which go on in the womb of a pregnant woman. The more able you are, the more you must be amazed at this mystery of life. This is but one of a myriad of mysteries related to the all wise God. If you wait until you have explored all of the possibilities, you will wait forever.

Eccl 11:6 In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

We have a precious song containing the words “Sowing in the morning” and “Sowing seeds of kindness.” You do not know when is the best time to go to the aid of a needy person. The time to act is when the need is seen and the ability to give is present.

Eccl 11:7 Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:

Solomon has moved from one position to another concerning the relative value of life and death. At one



time he wrote that it was better to die and make an exit from this world of suffering. At another time he wrote that it was better to be a living dog than to be a dead lion.

Now, toward the end of his deliberations, he declares that life is sweet when we are able to see the sun. It is good to be alive!

Eccl 11:8 But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Still, if a person were to live an exceptionally long life, he should remember that days of darkness will come. Life is not all sugar and spice. Are the days of darkness the same as the days when an elderly person becomes blind, as he will tell of in the next chapter? Are the days of darkness the days when life is over and the grave has claimed the body?

I believe Solomon is talking about the days when opportunity to cast one's bread upon the waters and go to the assistance of others has passed. The one who was once able to help others will then find himself in need of others to help him.

Eccl 11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

The young person is advised to enjoy life. He is to be cheerful and to do those things which his heart desires. **B-U-T** he is to remember that if his eyes are allowed to

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search out lust and his heart's desire is to do wickedness, he will ultimately find it necessary to account to God for his thoughts, speech and deeds.

Do not think that Solomon just happened to come across this truth. His own life was passing by and he was becoming aware that he faced the same accounting he was detailing to the young man.

**Eccl 11:10 Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.**

Two basic principles of godly living are found in this verse. The man of God is to "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice." A long face is not the mark of a righteous heart. Sorrow and tears will come, but they must not dominate or destroy the man of faith.

Youth has many temptations, without the advantage of experience. Solomon advises that those days of youth are to be filled with purity and not corruption. The time will arrive much sooner than one thinks that those days will be seen as fleeting and impossible to call back. Those early years must be used in the service of God. Then when the evil days of old age draw near one can be thankful that the days of youth were well spent.

## *Chapter 12*

**Eccl 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;**

There are a few mountainpeak chapters in the Holy Book. Among these are Genesis 1, Exodus 20, Psalm 23, and Revelation 22. This twelfth and last chapter of Ecclesiastes stands with them. In view of that which has been discussed in the first eleven chapters, what is the conclusion to be draw about finding meaning in life? What should the human reaction be toward the wisdom presented?

**Eccl 12:2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:**

Solomon will first draw a picture of old age and death. Those events will come much more quickly than most men realize. The wise reader will take heed of the brevity of life and will make preparation for both the frailties of the elderly and the certainty of death and judgment.

Every word in these present verses is to be understood in relation to aging and the cessation of life. In youth the sun, moon and stars are clearly seen on a cloudless night. It is not so in the latter years. Their light seems to have dimmed because the elderly can not see them as well. When the clouds gather during a rainstorm, it is more difficult to see. The storm is ordinarily followed by clear sky and sunshine. The contrast is easily seen by youth. But to the aged, it may be more difficult to tell that the



storm has passed. The sky continues to be gray rather than bright with fleecy clouds.

**Eccl 12:3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,**

The present writer is seventy-three years of age as he types these words. The hands have become so trembly that far more mistakes are made in writing than once were. It is but a matter of a short time before typing will be impossible. The keepers of the house are trembling.

The strong men are the legs which support the body. The aged find it much more difficult to stand after sitting for some time in a chair. The legs do not have the strength to lift the body quickly. Finally they weaken to the point where the body may be confined to a wheelchair.

The grinders are the teeth. A visit to the nursing home will quickly verify that many of the patients have lost so many teeth that they can no longer chew food which they once ate with ease. They must be fed special food that is easy to swallow and digest.

Those that look out of the windows are the eyes. Age results in changes in the fluid of the eyes such that the light can not pass through and relay messages to the optic nerves. Many who have reached the age of ninety or above are almost completely blind.

**Eccl 12:4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;**

The doors that shall be shut are the ears. Outdoor sounds which would have been heard without difficulty in youth are almost inaudible. The aged rise at the break of dawn when the birds are singing. The other possibility here is that the aged are awakened at the slightest sound such as that of a chirping bird. The latter is not as logical an explanation as the former in that the elderly would have a harder time hearing the bird.

The daughters of music are the vocal cords. The voice that once was able to sing melodiously and speak with flexibility can no longer hit the extremely high and low notes on the scale.

**Eccl 12:5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:**

I once thought it was folly to require a handrail on buildings where there were as many as four steps from one level to the next. It is not. With advancing age the ability to judge distances becomes limited. The focus of the eyes is not as sharp. The climbing of ladders becomes a dangerous activity.

There comes a time when the reflexes are so much slowed that driving in traffic is far more hazardous than it was at the age of thirty. Many fears arise about disease, loneliness and becoming bedridden.

The blossoms of the almond tree change from a bright color to one almost precisely that of the gray head. Hair that once waved gracefully becomes coarse and unruly. In many cases it falls out.

The grasshopper becomes a burden because the strength to carry burdens is no longer there. I have a brother who recently had a sizable portion of his intestines removed. When he came home from the hospital and began to feed himself, he remarked that the silverware had gained weight since he last lifted it.

The desire that fails is more than sexual desire. That is certainly one of the desires. However, the appetite does the same. There is less exuberance about many things which were exciting in youth.

The mourners who go about the streets are those who are waiting to express grief when the terminally ill finally leaves the land of the living.

**Ecc 12:6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.**

The meaning of this verse is less certain. There are alternative explanations. This writer believes the silver cord to be the spinal cord which carries messages from the brain to and from all parts of the body. The golden bowl would then be the brain which sends and receives those messages.

The pitcher broken at the fountain and the wheel broken at the cistern can well be compared to the circulatory system, and other systems of the body. The person is dead! Then what!

**Ecc 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.**

At this point, Solomon believed in life after death. He had made some earlier remarks which might appear

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to be contradictory to this. In those earlier days he may have been in the midst of his experimentation with the wisdom of men compared to that of the Almighty. He is now through with his testing of the various avenues of meaning in life. He realizes that there is both an outer man and an inner man. There is body and there is soul. In the beginning God breathed into man's body the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

At death this phenomenon is reversed. The body decomposes and the chemicals again become a part of the earth, the hydrosphere and the atmosphere. The spirit then leaves the body and returns to God who gave it.

This gives rise to one of the major questions with which the student of religion must concern himself. What is the relationship between the body, the spirit, the soul and the mind? What is actually meant when we are told man is made in the image of God? I will not pursue the question further at present.

Eccl 12:8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

Solomon's favorite phrase throughout the book of Ecclesiastes is back once more. The statement explains the conclusion when only life under the sun is contemplated. If when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl is broken, all is ended life is but vanity and vexation. There must be more!

Eccl 12:9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

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The preacher is Solomon. He introduced himself this way at the beginning and relates what he is about to say with what he started out to test at first. He is prepared now to offer his conclusion to any who will listen.

**Eccl 12:10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.**

It was not sufficient to carelessly write down what he had to say in crude fashion. He knew he must choose his words with extreme care. The result must be true. At the same time it must be upright and uplifting to the reader. He had a duty toward God, and also toward man.

**Eccl 12:11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.**

The words he was about to pen were from the One Shepherd. David once said, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Solomon is indicating that his final statement is not merely his own. It was divinely inspired.

The words of wise men are expected to be words of truth. When truth is presented, it should spur those who hear or read it to alter their lives in order to bring them into harmony with it. Nails fasten things tight. Solomon urges his reader to listen to that which is able to make life meaningful, and allow his wise words to hold their lives securely.

**Eccl 12:12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.**

Books were once written on stone or metal. There were not as many then. Later they were written on paper with pen and ink. The number became greater. Presently books are written through keyboards on computers, or even by dictating into a computer and letting the computer type out the words. The number of books increases in astonishing fashion.

If one were to set out to absorb all of the material written by men, the effort would be tiresome beyond description. If learning all of these facts is impossible, what can we do?

**Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.**

The thing to do is to search out the commandments, and through them the will of God. This is not an impossible task. The memorization of the Bible is not necessary. The digesting of the principles is absolutely vital.

This fear of God is not the petrifying fear which might take hold of one if a large and vicious dog came charging at him. It is the awe and respect which are due God because of His glory, power, wisdom, grace and love. It is the kind of emotion which will lead one to find out what pleases Him and do it. Only that way of life will make it truly meaningful. That is the duty of man in a nutshell.

**Eccl 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.**

This verse does not really specify when God will bring every work and secret thing into judgment. But since a



major portion of this chapter dealt with the importance of using our lives well before death separates the body and the soul, we conclude that Solomon was referring to a final day of judgment when the sheep are separated from the goats.

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**The Book Of  
SONG OF SOLOMON**



# *Introduction To Song Of Solomon*

## **The Author and the Date:**

This present writer believes the Song of Songs, which is the title of the book, as presented in the first verse, was written by King Solomon. It states that fact, and the statement has been accepted for about thirty centuries by God's faithful. This present writer does not intend to explore the insults which have been heaped upon the work by athiests and Bible sceptics.

Although the book does not use the word God in any of it's eight chapters, it is joined in that peculiarity by the book of Ruth. Both of these books have tremendously strong lessons which harmonize with the entire tone of the Holy Scriptures. We take note also that there are similarities in the style of writing to the other two books that are attributed to Solomon. These are Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

One can read through the Song of Songs in a relatively short time, perhaps less than an hour. When this is done it becomes clear that not only is this book a song; it has given birth to dozens of the songs found in present day hymnals.

Some have pointed out that the first verse does not prove conclusively that King Solomon wrote the book himself. The verse says,

*The song of songs, which is Solomon's.*

This could mean the work was "about" Solomon just as well as it could mean that it was written by Solomon.

With respect to the date of writing, Solomon took the throne of his kingdom about 974 B.C. He reigned for forty years and died His death is recorded in the last verse of the eleventh chapter of I Kings. In the course of the book, we find him having a harem of sixty queens and eighty concubines. Later, he had accumulated seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. This could mean that it was written early in his reign. This is not conclusive. He could have written the material later in life by looking back at his past experiences. It is certainly possible to conclude from the Bible that the book was written between during Solomon's reign, somewhere between about 970 B.C. and 930 B.C.

## **The Nature and Purpose of the Book**

The book is a song of love. Solomon wrote over one thousand songs (I Kings 4:32). The author did not hesitate to include some very personal and vivid statements about the words and actions of lovers. Some Christians hesitate to read Song of Solomon, especially in public, because of these descriptions. That attitude should not be taken. The book is not pornographic. It is filled with beauty and meaning. That is the reason it has inspired as many Christian hymns as it has. A carnal mind will be convinced that it finds carnal passages. The spiritual mind will be lifted to greater heights because of the emphasis upon true and faithful love.

There are many approaches to understanding the meaning of this song. We will not take the time to make an extensive listing. We will consider only those which are more prominent.

(1) The Jewish Rabbis believed the work pictured the love of God for the nation of Israel. If this were to be the correct view, the book would harmonize with the

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statements of a number of the prophets. If the reader will turn to the book of Hosea, it will be found that Hosea presents Israel as the wife of Jehovah. Idolatry is considered to be spiritual adultery.

There is a serious problem with this application. The ancient nation of Israel has been replaced by the new spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. Jews have been unwilling to accept Christ as the King.

(2) The Song of Songs has been presented by many Christians as a picture of the mutual love between Jesus Christ and His church. The church is then seen as the Bride of Christ. See for example Ephesians 5 and Revelation 21. We would not take issue with the fact that the church is the Bride of Christ, and that Christ loved the church enough to die for it and to someday come back for it and take it with Him to everlasting happiness.

Again this writer has reservations in seeing the Song of Solomon in this light. It takes a far stretch of the imagination to accept Solomon as a type of Jesus Christ. Solomon prayed two of the most impressive prayers in all of history when he rose to the throne and when the building of temple was concluded. (See I Kings 3:6-11 and I Kings 8:22-54).

God responded positively to both of these prayers. He granted Solomon wisdom greater than any who had come before him, and greater than any who would come after him. In addition, God promised him riches, honor and length of days. He did add that these promises were dependent on Solomon walking in God's ways and keeping God's commandments.

In spite of his early humility before Jehovah, Solomon did not walk in God's ways, nor did he keep God's commandments. God commanded that the kings of Israel were not to multiply riches, horses, or wives. See Deuteronomy 17:14-17.

Deut 17:14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;

Deut 17:15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

Deut 17:16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Deut 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

God had delivered his people from one of the richest and most powerful men in the world, that is the Pharaoh of Egypt. The people of Israel had no horses and chariots at that time; they were slaves. Neither did they have riches until God caused the Egyptians to offer them such riches in order to avoid further plagues. They had no multiplicity of wives because this was a mark of prestige and wealth. A man of riches could afford to support many wives, even though he had no intimate relations with them. Israelite men could not support a harem.

Jehovah did not want his people to return to the type of life found in Egypt. He desired that his people avoid pride. He commanded that those who reigned over his people follow the same walk of life.

King Solomon departed from God's instructions. He used the wisdom God granted him to gather an army with 1400 chariots. His riches left the Queen of Sheba in amazement. He collected a harem of 700 wives and 300

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concubines. He loved many women of the nations whom God had forbidden to the Israelites. See 1 Kings 11:1:3.

*1 Kings 11:1 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites:*

*1 Kings 11:2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.*

*1 Kings 11:3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.*

When Solomon died he left the kingdom in serious trouble. Take note of the following quote from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, page 2825B.

“With all his wisdom, he gave himself up to the pursuit of luxury and splendor for his own sake, forgot the best interests of his people, and nearly wrecked his government. “He died,” as Sayce expresses it, “worn out by excessive self indulgence, leaving behind him an impoverished treasury, a discontented people, and a tottering empire.” There is no repentant note, like his father’s 51st Psalm, in his life. He died as he lived, self centered.”

Does this sound like one who should be considered as a type of Jesus Christ. Such a position is incredible!

To be as fair as possible, we do need to compare Luke 11:31.

*Luke 11:31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn*

*them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*

This verse is thought by those who support the idea that Solomon was a type of Christ. That is not the case. All the verse does is to admit the great reputation which Solomon had, and then declare that Christ's greatness surpasses that of Solomon. If the Queen of Sheba came a large distance to see for herself just how wise this man was, certainly men today ought to open their ears to the wisdom of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

(3) The third supposition is that Song of Solomon is composed from a number of other love songs and was given Solomon's name to add to its prestige.

This commentator does not accept that explanation because of the general agreement over some thirty centuries that the book is inspired and is to be attributed to King Solomon. It has had far too much influence in the production of dozens of songs in later hymnals for it to be a work of deception by a few persons who were misguided.

(4) We turn then to what your present commentator believes to be the best explanation of the purpose and meaning of the Song of Songs.

It is a song, written as many songs of today are written. The writer was a unique individual who made the attempt to find out the whole duty of man. He tried all the methods he found available to him as he searched for that truth. He accumulated riches. He amassed a powerful army. He gathered a great harem of women, including the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt. He read many books.

When all was said and done, Solomon reached his great conclusion which is stated in the last chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes. See Eccl. 12:12-14.

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Eccl 12:12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Eccl 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

If the reader will place these words side by side with those of Luke 10:25-28, he will be much enlightened.

Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

Luke 10:26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

Luke 10:27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Luke 10:28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Let us add one more passage to the above. Jesus said,

John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Why did Solomon find it necessary to follow the footsteps of the Devil in order to draw his conclusion that the true meaning of life is to fear God and keep His

commandments. One thing is certain. We do not have to do such experimentation. God has made His will clear. Jesus came as “the Way, the Truth and the Life. We must follow *Him!*”

In Burton Coffman’s commentary on Song of Solomon, he even goes so far as to say if Solomon was a type at all, he was a type of Satan rather than Christ. I would not go that far, but I certainly cannot accept the allegory which present Solomon as a type of the Son of God.

I believe that Solomon, in his latter days, decided to write a love song which would express the importance of marital faithfulness. It would not surprise me if he did not have the experience of attempting to make love with a beautiful young woman from out in the country, and then find that she was determined to be faithful to her true love. If so, she preferred her country shepherd to the glory, riches, power and knowledge of a great king. Though over a thousand women had accepted his advances, there was at least one simple country girl who would not betray her true love.

J. Vernon McGee adds a last line to his introduction which I believe is very suitable in assessing the purpose of this book. He closes his introduction with the words, “We love Him because He first loved us.” Song of Solomon is a love song.

This does still leave us with a serious question. How is it possible that the three works of Solomon, that is Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon, all present the basic truth that man is to fear God and keep his commandments, when Solomon himself lived a life so completely opposite to the truths which are so forcefully presented in these three books?

It is just possible that God knew beforetime just what Solomon would do. He could know that and still leave Solomon with free will. It would only be a matter of Solomon choosing as God knew he would.

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God desires to have a family with Him in eternity who wish to live according to the truths He knows will be best for all. When man was created and placed in the Garden of Eden, God allowed him the opportunity to choose between good and evil. From that time until the present, and throughout the entire history and future of man, up to the time of the judgment, God has been watching to see which of us truly wish to be with Him forever. Think very carefully about the following possibility!

Solomon may have been granted that which Christ refused when Satan tempted Him. Lust and pride are the attractions of the world. Solomon was given greater wisdom than any before him, or any to come after him. He had one of the most powerful armies of his day. He had astonishing riches. He had hundreds of women at his beck and call.

Now just what happens to men when they have all that Satan offers? Solomon may have been allowed these things as a means of proving to man that there is something far more important than pride and lust.

He could well have begun by setting out on this way of death because he thought he could quit at any time. Then after becoming entangled, he could have found it far more difficult to reverse his direction than he had expected. It is your present writer's belief that there are television speakers and preachers in the public eye today who have had just such experiences. When one comes to Acts 2:38 and preaches that one must repent for the remission of sins, but leaves off the rest of the verse which places baptism side by side with repentance, that preacher knows he is not presenting the full truth. However, if he did admit he was wrong, he might feel he would bring confusion into the minds of those who had trusted him in the past.

Solomon may have found himself in this type of

predicament and just made his decision to live life out in accordance with the pattern upon which he had built his reputation, wealth and power.

Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He resisted the temptations of Satan with the power of divinity as an aid. Solomon faced similar temptations as a human. He is a powerful example of what happens to men when they allow themselves to direct their own steps.

Why then would Solomon write the morally uplifting truths found in his books? Because he knew full well that he was wrong, and desired to let those who came after him in time know that the way he had lived was contradictory to the way God expected men to live. His life was a sad commentary. His writings are the opposite.

A conclusion is in order. Mankind in general chooses to direct their own steps. They are being allowed to do so. They have both Solomon's life to show what happens when men do turn from God. They have Jesus example to demonstrate what men will discover if they hear God and keep his commandments.

Someday, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Those who have followed the way of the Saviour will find themselves in an environment far superior to this sin scarred planet upon which we know live.

## **Outline of the Book**

Outlining the book is very difficult. Much of it consists of dialogue. It is nearly impossible to determine in every case just who is speaking. It is just as difficult to tell when one speaker has concluded and another has begun.

I take the liberty of modifying the outline given by A.F. Harper in the Beacon Bible Commentary, page 607.



I. The name of the author and the work. 1:1

II. Awakening to reality. 1:2-4

III. The King's Visit to his harem 1:4-2:7

A. The Shulamite and the maidens.

B. The King and the Shulamite.

IV. A Visit from the Beloved. 2:8-3:5

A. The Beloved Appears.

B. A Dream of the Beloved.

V. The King Makes Another Visit. 3:6-5:1

A. The Royal Procession.

B. The King Insists.

VI. A Song of Her Beloved. 5:2-6:3

A. A Second Dream.

B. The Song of Love.

VII. The Final Proposal of the King. 6:4-8:4

A. The King woos ardently.

B. The Shulamite refuses.

C. The Harem Appeals.

D. A Cry for True Love.

VIII. Reunion With the Beloved. 8:5-14



## Chapter 1

### **Song 1:1 The song of songs, which is Solomon's.**

As mentioned in the introduction, this work has been accepted by the vast majority of Bible students as coming from the pen of the wise man. This verse has been appealed to as a proof of his authorship. That might not be true. The verse could also mean this book is written *about* Solomon rather than *by* Solomon.

As evidence for Solomon as the writer, we can go back for some thirty centuries and find records stating this position. This commentary will present the view that Solomon was the author. And that he wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit of God.

### **Song 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.**

The fourth verse proves that the man spoken of here is a king. The maiden who is letting her thoughts run in erotic paths clearly fantasizes about the joy she would experience in the arms of the king. Either she has already found his kisses sweet and his lovemaking exquisite, or she is dreaming of what it might be like. At this point she would invite his attentions with eagerness.

### **Song 1:3 Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.**

Shave lotion and perfume has long been used to enhance the attractions of one who looks forward to close physical relationships with a possible lover. When the

maiden reflects on the glory and reputation of the king, she can understand why the virgins would be excited to be near him.

Most men who have great wealth and power are surrounded by women who would like to share in those qualities. Famous athletes, political figures and executives in large corporations will understand this from the view of the king.

**Song 1:4 Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.**

She will join the rest of the women who seek the attention of the king. He has sought her out and brought her to his quarters as one of many who are pleased to have been chosen. She, like the others will remember having been with him with fondest memories. She sees nothing wrong with giving herself to him. She considers it upright.

**Song 1:5 I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.**

She is somewhat concerned because she has a very dark complexion. She has been brought into the company of other women who are of fairer skin. She could be rejected because of their attitude toward her appearance.

At the same time she is convinced that she possesses some degree of beauty. The young Israeli women need to take note of that. The tents of Kedar were composed of dark goatskin. The curtains of Solomon must have also been of dark color.

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The mention of Solomon's name here is not evidence that he is the king to which she is attracted. It could only be a reference to an impressive example of dark beauty.

Song 1:6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

She does not wish the others to snub her because of her color. She has a good reason. Because her sisters were jealous of her, they caused her to work out in the sun taking care of the vineyards. This had contributed to her complexion.

Song 1:7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

It is unreasonable to think the king would have been off somewhere tending flocks of sheep and goats. Is this the same person speaking as the one in the verses preceding this one? If it is, she must be thinking of someone other than the king. The one speaking here loves a shepherd with all of her soul. She would like to know where he is as she ponders the matter. Where has he halted to allow his sheep to rest.

She does not wish to turn to other men as a result of his absence. Now, if she is the one who was speaking in the first few verses, she has had a chance to reflect on one whom she has truly loved in the past. She may be having second thoughts about the desirability of being

but one among many in the king's palace. How can she betray the love which she had for the shepherd?

Song 1:8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

This verse sounds like the sarcastic remarks of Solomon's other women. If this foolish maiden has had a change of heart and no longer wishes to be a member of the king's harem, let her go out to where the sheep and the goats feed and lead her own sheep along with the rest of the shepherds.

It is difficult for the others to comprehend why she would leave the splendor of the palace and go back out to the life she had left behind.

Song 1:9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

Now we return to words of the king. He is pouring flattery upon her with such enthusiasm that we are made to wonder if she will falter in her faithfulness to the shepherd of the sheep.

Personally, I would not be particularly happy to be compared with horses drawing the chariots of the Pharaoh of Egypt. I do not think my wife would either!

Song 1:10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

The king continues. He sees her bedecked with precious gems upon her face and chains of gold around her neck. Is this her actual condition, or is it what he is promising her if she stays with him.

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I find it interesting that even a king cannot force a woman to love him. He must woo her if he expects a genuine response.

**Song 1:11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.**

The promises are now more certain. What are these borders of gold and studs of silver? The translations are not agreed here. The borders of gold could be threads of gold which could be intertwined in her hair. The studs of silver could be either mounted along the strands of gold, or they could be fastened in the hair separate and apart from the gold.

We believe there is little doubt that this verse continues the king's praise of her beauty and his efforts to sway her feelings back toward him.

**Song 1:12 While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.**

Is she sitting at the king's table, where he can smell the perfume she has used to please him, or has he gone to his own table and left her alone with her thoughts. The latter seems more reasonable in line with any coherent analysis of the entire eight chapters of the book.

**Song 1:13 A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.**

It does not appear that this is the maiden's thoughts about the king. Her beloved is the distant shepherd who has sent her a present of sweet smelling spikenard. Although he is not present, it will be as if he were present with his flowers lying between her breasts.

**Song 1:14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.**

She is not referring to the king as her beloved. She is talking about the shepherd out in the vineyards from which she had been taken. His simple gifts would mean more to her than the offerings of the king.

**Song 1:15 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes.**

The maiden now imagines she hears the words of adoration which her beloved shepherd would speak to her. The term "fair" does not indicate a light complexion. We noted before that she was dark. It does mean she would be told of her beauty.

I think I would rather be told my eyes were like doves eyes than to be told I reminded my suitor of a mare pulling one of Pharaoh's chariots.

**Song 1:16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.**

The imagines the word "fair" to be repeated. How many times does a woman hear such words as these before she becomes bored? If this maiden is anything like my wife, no man is apt to use such endearing terms more than his beloved wishes to hear them.

You need not be in the palace of the king to share the joys of love with the object of your affections. The green grass under the trees in the great outdoors would be a luxurious couch.

**Son 1:17 The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.**

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There are many who believe this verse implies that the king is literally speaking to the maiden here. I do not think so. As I understand it, these beams and rafters are not the magnificent ones in the king's palace. They are the limbs of the trees overshadowing them as she envisions her shepherd and herself reclining on the grassy mattress upon which they rest. The grass and the majestic trees of the outdoors are more important to her than the wonders of the king's palatial bedroom.

The emphasis should be on the words *our house*. My wife and I live in a modest house in an average subdivision. We would both rather be together in *our house* than to be separated and live in the president's mansion.

Chapter 2

As we move into chapter two, the reader is reminded that this book is introduced as a song. It is not a book of history. It may well have been inspired by some experience King Solomon had as he attempted to add to his harem a fair young maiden who was first infatuated by his attentions, but who quickly came to her senses and realized the importance of fidelity to a shepherd of the fields who was her true love.

If this is true, the song could be applied to the love of God and Israel in ancient times. It could be applied to the love of Christ and His church in this Christian age. But, it could also be applied to faithfulness between a man and a woman who love each other deeply and are determined not to allow anyone, or anything, to come between them as long as they both live. This would be true in courtship, and it would be true after having celebrated the golden wedding anniversary.

Song 2:1 I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

The maiden is not at home in the glitter of the king's chambers. She is more at home in the countryside where the roses and the lilies bloom.

This is, of course, the text from which the hymn writer was inspired to compose the song, "Lily of the Valley." He saw Christ as the fairest of the lilies and the bright and morning Star.

The words of the verse may only mean that the maiden is very beautiful when compared with others. When one looked at the lilies she surpassed them.



Song 2:2 As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

Just as a beautiful lily would stand out among a field of thorns, the maiden's love for her shepherd stood out among the other women when compared with theirs. This is not Solomon talking about the maiden as "my love." It is the maiden talking about the intensity of her love when compared with the other daughters of the land.

Song 2:3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.

Why did she love her shepherd so deeply? Because he stood out among the men of the land like an apple tree when compared with the wild trees of the forest.

A good part of the happiness of any woman is in convincing herself that her man is the "cream of the crop."

I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

The maiden joyfully reminisces over past experiences with her true love. She thought of him as a protector. A shadow on a hot day in the blazing sun is most refreshing.

Fruit is taken from a fruit tree. She had just described her shepherd as being like an apple tree. Now she eats from the fruit which he offers and finds it delightful. The fruit could be the kisses of his lips. It could be an embrace. It could be his loving words. Could we call them "love apples?"

Song 2:4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

A banqueting house is a place where fine meals are served. Her beloved had provided her a banquet of love. This is not the king's dining room. It is the bedroom where she and her lover reclined on the grass and were sheltered by the overhanging limbs of the cedar and fir trees. There, they had feasted upon their shared affections.

Here is the basis for another very beautiful hymn. We often sing "His Banner Over Me is Love."

Song 2:5 Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.

The maiden saw herself as drinking from an abundant supply of kisses which were sweeter than wine, and devouring the caresses and words which the shepherd delighted in offering to her.

We sometimes make the statement, "I am sick and tired." That is not the way the word sick is used here. She is so intoxicated by the feast which she enjoyed that she could be said to be "lovesick."

Song 2:6 His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

She imagines him lying beside her with one hand under her head and the other wrapped around her. This is a very intimate scene. Both men and women are noted for such dreaming as the maiden was doing. She can see the scene as clearly as if it were actually taking place.

Husbands and wives will fully understand the peacefulness of this kind of companionship. If it were to be taken from them, the results would be hunger for the love feast.

Song 2:7 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.

The roes and hinds of the field are unable to reward the keeping of a vow, or punish the breaking of a vow. This is only a way of requesting that the women not interfere with the peaceful rest of her beloved. In her imagination, he has fallen asleep after the lovemaking and she does not want him to be disturbed.

Song 2:8 The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

Suddenly the scene changes. Her shepherd lover actually appears. Just as the roes and the hinds skipped upon the hills and leaped from one crag to another, the shepherd was coming to her!

This is presented by some commentators as an appearance of the "Great Shepherd" Jesus Christ. This may or may not be a type. Let us not be presumptuous.

Song 2:9 My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.

Is the maiden still in the land of imagination, or has her beloved come into her presence and appeared, moving from one place to another as he first stands outside the wall, then looking through the window and making himself visible to her through the lattice of the window? Let us watch carefully as the action is continued.

**Song 2:10 My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.**

Her lover calls out to her to leave the palace of the king and come with him back to the beauty of the countryside.

Song 2:11 For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

Spring is the time of love. June is a favorite month for weddings. The blood runs warm at that time of year for both young men and fair maidens.

Song 2:12 The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;

He calls to her mind the scenes of the past. The earth has come to life. Flowers are in bloom. Birds are singing. The turtledoves are cooing. Romance is in the air.

Song 2:13 The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

For a country girl, these reminders would strike deep into the heart. The palace could not offer anything which would rival the wonders of their past meetings.

Song 2:14 O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

The maiden replies to her beloved. She has used the word dove before in reference to him. She does so again. This time she adds that he lives in the clefts or crevices in the rock, far away from the hustle and bustle of palace life.

She wishes with all her heart to see his face and listen to his voice. The sound of his voice and the sight of his face were precious memories of yesterday. She longs to renew those experiences.

Song 2:15 Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

Foxes love grapes. They have gotten into the vineyard of love which the maiden and her beloved have feasted upon in the past. It is time for the foxes to be driven away. Their tender love was being threatened.

Was the reason the maiden accepted the invitation of the king and allowed herself to be taken to his chambers the result of a lover's spat? This is only a supposition. We do not know.

The fullness of life can be spoiled very easily by trivialities. There was no need for the separation to be allowed to continue. Both the maiden and her shepherd know full well they love each other. It would be a tragedy to remain apart, and for love to be dissolved.

Song 2:16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.

The two are reunited. Feeding among the lilies is but a description of the happiness of being together once more. Any infatuation which the maiden had held for the king now lay in the past. She with her shepherd, and he has claimed her as his own.

Song 2:17 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

The roe and the hart are two types of deer that live in the high places of rock near the Jordan River. As they leap and play, our young maiden wishes to enjoy such happiness with her companion.

I think explicit descriptions of the sex act are out of order here. The beauty of this song will not allow us to entertain suggestive thoughts that would detract from that beauty. Let us just say the two are as delightfully happy as the young deer who jump from rock to rock. Throughout the night, until the break of day, they will feast on love.

Chapter 3

Song 3:1 By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

We have another change of scene. The maiden had been extremely happy when reunited with her shepherd. Now he has disappeared again. She has looked for him with no success. What was she to do next/

Song 3:2 I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.

Here conclusion was that she should set out in search of him. She would look everywhere until she found him. Again her search found no trace of him. Her disappointment was sharp.

Song 3:3 The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

While she was still searching, she was found by security persons who were patrolling the city. She asked them if they had seen her shepherd lover.

Song 3:4 It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

Shortly after having asked the security guards, she found the one for whom she had been searching. How

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wonderful it was to realize she had not lost him forever! She determined that she would cling to him so tightly that he could never leave her again. In order to do that she invited him to her mother's house and into the bedroom where she herself had been conceived. There she would be able to prevent his departure.

**Song 3:5 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.**

Again we have the same vow that she extracted from the women before that by the deer who play on the rocks, they not disturb her lover until he was ready to arise. I assume this would include herself. She did not wish for anyone to interfere with their happiness without an invitation to do so.

**Song 3:6 Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?**

There is no hint of the amount of time which has elapsed between verse five and verse six. All we know is that Solomon is approaching. He is bedecked with pomp and glory. He has come to persuade her to return to the palace with him. There is little doubt that he could have taken her against her will, but even the King knew this is not the way to gain a positive response from the heart of a woman.

He can be seen from some distance as he approaches. He has made special efforts to impress her and take her back with him.

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Song 3:7 Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.

He is accompanied by sixty of the finest soldiers in Israel. He rides in a bed carried by his servants. She must realize just how important and influential this King is.

Song 3:8 They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.

Each of these sixty soldiers has a sharp sword and each of them know very well how to handle it. They are capable of protecting King Solomon and of taking the maiden forcefully if they choose.

Song 3:9 King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

The conveyance in which Solomon rides is one he has either constructed himself, or had constructed under his supervision. It is made of wood from the forest of Lebanon, probably cedar.

Song 3:10 He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.

The chariot is actually a litter with posts and a canopy overhead. The maiden will have a magnificent ride if she decides to accompany the King back to his palace. There are silver post supporting the canopy. It is covered with a spread of luxurious purple cloth.

In the view of the King any woman of Israel should be more than happy to ride with him back to his chambers. The bed was perfectly suited to romantic journeys with the King's women.

Song 3:11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

We can well suppose that the women of Israel would be awed by the splendor of their King. He is even wearing the crown which was bestowed upon him when he reached the age of manhood and replaced his father David.

Chapter 4

There are apparently two love songs in this chapter. The first is presented by King Solomon to the maiden. This occupies the first eight or nine verses. The rest of the chapter is a second love song presented by the beloved shepherd.

Song 4:1 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

Previously the maiden had spoken of her shepherd lover as having dovelike eyes. This time it appears the compliment comes from Solomon as he pours compliments upon the maiden in an attempt to influence her affections in his direction.

For some reason Solomon chose to describe her beauty in terms of animals. Before, he had compared her to a beautiful horse harnessed to the chariot of Pharaoh. Now we come to doves, sheep and goats.

Song 4:2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.

The maiden had come from the rural areas where she was familiar with the clean appearance of a newly shorn sheep. None of her teeth were missing. Her mouth was full and the teeth were of great beauty.

Son 4:3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

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Her lips are attractive and that which is uttered from between them is pleasant to the ear. Her hair curls around her forehead encircling her face. The contrast between the hair and the temples is very impressive.

**Song 4:4 Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.**

The tower of David was was a structure which housed the weaponry of the soldiers. Upon the walls of this armory hung the shields of the men. Solomon was pleased to compare the neck of the maiden to the strong tower and the shields to the jewelry which adorned her neck.

**Song 4:5 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.**

The breasts of young women call the attention of men. The women know it and the men know it also. Solomon is not telling us anything of which we are not already aware. The King has found himself attracted to this part of the maiden's anatomy.

**Song 4:6 Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.**

It is not likely that the King is talking about the sunrise the next morning after he presents his love song. He is more probably speaking about loving her deeply until the end of time. He declares that her body is formed with great majesty. He would like to enjoy making love to her until the shadows of this life are replaced by the sunlight of an everlasting day.

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Song 4:7 Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.

It does not matter which part of her body the King observes, it is perfect. There is no defect from head to toe. We note, however, that he has had less to say about her personality than about her physical appearance. If Solomon considered wisdom to be of paramount importance, it seems that he would have complimented her knowledge and her wisdom. He did mention that her lips spoke pleasant things. That was it.

Song 4:8 Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

Who is pleading with the maiden to leave Lebanon and go with him? It is my understanding that this is the last verse of the song of the King. He has fired his complete arsenal of flattery in her direction and believes she will be unable to resist his invitation.

Song 4:9 Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.

The word spouse is first encountered at this point. Those who believe Solomon's words continue through almost all of this chapter see this as an indication that the maiden had been considered as one of Solomon's wives or concubines.

Those who believe in the two lover explanation of the book believe Solomon's words end with verse eight and

this verse is the beginning of the counter plea by the beloved shepherd. They think it may be possible that the maiden and the shepherd were married at the time she was taken to the chambers of the King, as presented in the first chapter. They also suggest that it was a lover's quarrel that caused her to leave and go to Jerusalem with the King.

Song 4:10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

No horses, sheep or goats used as a comparison this time. Her love is said to be fair or exceptional. Her odor of her perfume is delightful. We can appreciate this when we remember that showers under running water and best selling items such as Chanel No. 5 were not a part of a country maiden's life.

Song 4:11 Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

He hears her words as being sweeter than honey in the honeycomb. Even her clothing had an odor as fresh as the evergreens of Lebanon.

Song 4:12 A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

The shepherd bemoans the fact that he has been prevented from partaking of the fountain of love which would have available to him if the maiden had

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not been taken from his presence and kept from his arms.

**Song 4:13 Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard,**

**Song 4:14 Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices:**

**Song 4:15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.**

This garden he described was incredibly pleasant. It's appearance is beyond compare. It's odors were exquisite. It's fruit was a treat to the mouth. To drink from it's waters was like receiving new life.

**Song 4:16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.**

This last verse is not the response of the maiden to the King. It is clear that she intends for her country shepherd to enjoy the wonders of her garden, and not the King. True love is about to triumph over the gold and glitter of the palace.

I must add this note as this chapter is brought to a close. It is true that Jesus Christ is called both the King of kings and the Great Shepherd. If the shepherd lover is a type of Jesus Christ, he is certainly not the rejected King. We cannot serve both God and mammon. The maiden chose that which is more important.

Every man and woman who has reached the age of accountability must choose between the temporary allurements of the world and the eternal values found in the love of the Great Shepherd.

## *Chapter 5*

**Song 5:1 I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.**

The shepherd accepts the invitation to enter into the garden of love. He has tasted of the fruit of the garden in the past. He is prepared to enjoy a full meal this time.

All things are ready. Come to the feast.

**Song 5:2 I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.**

These are the words of the maiden. She dreams of the coming of the shepherd. In her dream, he is even at the door. He has come to her in the night. He has had some difficulty in coming. The dew and the rain have fallen upon him.

**Song 5:3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?**

He has cleansed himself before entering her quarters. His feet are washed as would be the custom of a guest. He has removed his coat and requests that his preparations not be in vain. He does not wish to leave and return to that from which he had just come.

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Song 5:4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

The shepherd had reached out to open the door of her quarters. She was deeply moved as she looked forward to holding him in her arms.

Song 5:5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

She rose up in her dream to open the door and let him in. She placed her perfumed hands upon the lock to swing it wide that he might feel completely welcome.

Song 5:6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

When she opened the door, he was gone! What a horrible experience to have come this close to feasting in the garden and then to have been deprived of that joy!

She looked everywhere. She called out to see if he would answer. He was nowhere to be found.

The allegorical nature of this book is as impressive at this point as it is anywhere. Jesus Christ is the Great Shepherd. He came to seek and save the lost sheep. He is married to the church and both the Shepherd and the church await the full meal of love which will take place when He comes back to claim his bride. The waiting is difficult, but the wait will end in glory.

Song 5:7 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

The maiden wanders about the city in an attempt to locate the Shepherd. The security patrolmen found her and mistreated her severely. She was beaten and wounded. By taking away her wedding veil, they removed the evidence of her espousal to the Shepherd.

This could refer to the persecution of the church through the ages. Christ's faithful have been beaten, wounded and mocked by the world. The antichristian spirit has denied the marriage of the Shepherd and His bride.

Song 5:8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

There is some question as to whether the maiden is asleep or awake at this time. Is she actually wandering through the city and come upon some women whom she might ask if they had seen her lover? Or, is she still in dreamland? There is no real indication that she awoke when she opened the door and discovered that her beloved was not there.

Song 5:9 What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

Whether in dream or reality, she receives a mocking answer from the women whom she asked. Why are you so set upon finding this man? You are a beautiful maiden.

Are there not many others who are just as fine as the one you seek. Today we might ask if there are not “other fish in the sea.”

Just why are Christians so determined to endure tribulation and mockery in their constant search for reunion with the Great Shepherd and the joy of heaven? There is a reason, and the maiden will give some of the details of that reason.

Song 5:10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

You could look the world over and not find his equal. Ten thousand is but a way of saying the Shepherd is supreme. She would never find another like him.

Let us hope that every woman who falls in love feels that she could never find a man who would be able to take her man's place. If she feels this to the bottom of her heart, she will not fail in her commitment.

Song 5:11 His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

Song 5:12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

Song 5:13 His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

Song 5:14 His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.

Song 5:15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

Song 5:16 His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is

altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

How foolish of these women to wonder why she would seek her Shepherd and refuse to be satisfied with any other! He is perfect in appearance, in Word and in deed. All others are lacking in some way. None else than He can satisfy her love.

Christ's bride, the church, loves Him with all her heart, soul, mind and strength. She has eyes for no other. She will seek Him until he returns to catch her up to the land of endless day.

Chapter 6

Song 6:1 Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

After hearing the maiden's response to their question as to why she was putting forth the effort to find this one lover, the daughters of Jerusalem appear convinced that they too should help her search for him. If he is as perfect as she has described him, they need to see him.

Song 6:2 My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

The maiden's Shepherd has preceded her. He is waiting for her to find him. She has done so. The women who were to help her find him disappear from the scene for the moment as she rejoices in being reunited.

Song 6:3 I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

The two are together. The Shepherd is hers. The maiden is his. Love is grand!

Song 6:4 Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.

The Shepherd expresses his admiration for her in terms such as he had used before. She is as beautiful as either Tirzah or Jerusalem. The Jews considered both of these cities were considered to be places of exceptional

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beauty. She far surpassed all other women in the Shepherd's sight.

**Song 6:5 Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.**

He is completely entranced by her presence. The words now are addressed directly to her. The same comments that were made on these expressions in chapter four hold here. There is no need for further elaboration. What a wondrous reunion this was.

**Song 6:6 Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.**

**Song 6:7 As a piece of a pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.**

**Song 6:8 There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.**

The Shepherd has the same concern for the uniqueness of the maiden as the maiden had for the Shepherd. She would not seek any other because of the perfection of her Shepherd. He would not consider any other than the maiden because she cannot be surpassed.

Are these the words of Solomon speaking of a time previous to the accumulation of his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. I think not. These are the words of her beloved Shepherd when he compares his maiden with all other women.

**Song 6:9 My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one**

**of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.**

Just as the maiden informed those who questioned her that she would not be satisfied with any other lover, the Shepherd says that she is but “one among a million.” She is the favorite of her mother. Her sisters recognized her excellence and agreed that she was unblemished in beauty and in character.

Even the most desirable among women, such as the favorites of the dignitaries of the land, realized she was worthy of praise.

Dear reader, there is but one church. That church is the chosen of the Son of God. He waits for her to join Him in the New Heaven and Earth. Then the Great Shepherd and His Bride will pick lilies together in a Garden of love which reminds us of the original Garden of Eden before the entrance of sin.

**Song 6:10 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?**

The last words of this chapter are probably the words of the king. He has been trying to claim the maiden as one of his collection of women. This one is a special prize. She is both beautiful and difficult to conquer.

**Song 6:11 I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded.**

Like the Shepherd, the king had determined to go to the garden where the fruits of love could be gathered. He

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was checking things out to see if there was any chance of swaying the affections of this choice maiden in his direction.

Song 6:12 Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.

There is a strong tendency for the commentators to throw up the hands when they arrive at this verse. Even the most scholarly admit difficulty.

I will not claim to be one hundred percent confident of the following possible explanation. I merely submit it as a possibility that falls in line with what has come previously.

The chariots of Aminadab were recognized as being speedy and associated with victory in battle. The king supposed that his overtures to the maiden would finally be successful. He would conquer her affections and cause her to return to his chambers.

If the king represents worldliness, this explanation harmonizes with the attitude of world toward the church, which is the present day bride of the Great Shepherd. The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are always ready to present their allurements to the church. The one who offers them is persistent and does not accept the possibility of defeat.

Song 6:13 Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.

The king cries out confidently for the Shulamite, or the maiden, to come back to take a place of honor among the many who have already submitted to him. He wants others to see the wonder of this maiden.

Why should they desire to look upon her? She is as awesome as two armies of soldiers. He wants to show her off as if he had conquered a formidable foe. He will find in the end that her spirit is more powerful than he thinks.

Chapter 7

Song 7:1 How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

The king is speaking. He is ready to go all out in winning the maiden over. We must admit he has mustered all of his forces in the attempt to capture her heart. He begins with her feet and his eyes move upward. His tongue follows.

It is almost amusing to note what he has to say about her feet. He does not say her feet are beautiful. Most people's feet are not the most attractive part of their body. He says her feet are beautiful *in shoes*.

He calls her a prince's daughter. She may be from the country, but no one would know it by looking at her. She is as noble as any daughter of royalty.

Her thighs are like the works of the finest of craftsmen. The hips are like precious gems.

Song 7:2 Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.

Song 7:3 Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

Song 7:4 Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.

Song 7:5 Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.

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**Song 7:6 How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!**

**Song 7:7 This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.**

**Song 7:8 I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;**

**Song 7:9 And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.**

She looks and smells good enough to eat! He mentions a tummy like a glass of wine, breasts like clusters of grapes and breath that smells like apples.

I am not sure I would be suitably impressed if my lover told me that my neck and my nose reminded them of a tower. Perhaps towers were more beautiful to these two than they are to the present day reader.

If smooth talk could accomplish what the king set out to do, the maiden should have been absolutely overwhelmed. It may have just possibly occurred to the reader that this sweet talk is a bit transparent. The maiden has seen through it.

**Song 7:10 I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.**

Will she melt into his embrace and plead with him to take her back again to Jerusalem where she can be seen and admired by all as being the fairest of the entire harem of the king?

Hardly! She lets him know in no uncertain terms that she belongs to her Shepherd and that she is confident in his return of her love. She would rather pick the lilies of

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the Garden of love with her Shepherd than to return to the palace and join the crowd.

Song 7:11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.

The reader must remember that this is a song. The abrupt change from that which is addressed to the king to that which is addressed to the Shepherd might be expected in such a composition. She has rejected the palace. She is ready to go with her Shepherd out into the fields and the villages. The king would not be comfortable in those surroundings. She and her Shepherd would be.

Song 7:12 Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

The maiden continues to make it plain that she prefers her Shepherd to the king. She and her Shepherd lover will rise early to investigate the beauty and offerings of the garden which has been discussed throughout the entire book. The maiden offers herself to her Shepherd with all of the pleasures both of them anticipate as they partake of the fruit of that garden.

Song 7:13 The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

Just ahead of them, she knows there are all manner of delicious fruits only waiting to be picked. The maiden

has been waiting anxiously for the delightful feast they are about to share.

Christians await the time when they will be caught up to be with the Great Shepherd in heaven.

Chapter 8

Song 8:1 O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.

The maiden is impatient. The two of them walk along together, but according to the customs of the day and place they must refrain from kissing in public. If they were brother and sister, this would not be frowned upon. As husband and wife, or as those who are betrothed, such open affection is considered out of place.

Song 8:2 I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

She is not speaking to king Solomon. That would not be the place for a night of love with him. She would not take him to her place. He would take her to a magnificent bedroom in the chambers of the palace.

She would take advice from the Shepherd's mother as to the delicacies which she would be able to offer her beloved.

Song 8:3 His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.

Song 8:4 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.

We have seen these words twice before. The maiden can see in her mind just what kind of caresses she could expect from her companion.

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She envisions the situation after the love feast has been enjoyed. Her Shepherd is happy and relaxed. She desires that he be allowed to rest without disturbance until he awakes on his own.

**Song 8:5 Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.**

The one who reads or hears this song is expected to see the couple as they stroll nearer to the country house.

The Shepherd reminds the maiden that it was he who awakened her affections for him here at her own home. He made love to her under the apple tree and she responded to his kisses. It was here that she was born and it was here that she moved from childhood to maturity. It was here that she belonged; not in a palace in Jerusalem.

**Song 8:6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.**

The Shepherd expects that the maiden will be faithful to their love. She must put a seal upon her heart and never allow any other to break that seal. The two of them will go arm in arm until death separates them.

There was no need for either of them to provide a reason for jealousy to the other. Jealousy burns like a fire. It can be so heated as to result in the murder of a rival.

**Song 8:7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would**

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give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.

Love is so powerful that nothing in heaven or on earth can break it down. The bonds of love are so strong that they can not be overwhelmed by obstacles. It is so valuable that if a man were faced with the choice of parting with every possession he had, or giving up his wife, he would very easily choose his true love.

Song 8:8 We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?

The maiden is now speaking. She wishes to assure her Shepherd that she has not been promiscuous. She has waited for him.

She uses her little sister to make her point. What should they do for the sister to ready her for the day when she will be wed? She is still just a child. They must do everything possible to protect her chastity as the maiden herself has done.

Song 8:9 If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.

A wall is constructed for the purpose of protecting that which is inside the wall. For a woman to be a wall would be to maintain her purity for her future husband. For her to be a door would be to act as an entrance for one man after another.

Song 8:10 I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.

The maiden states emphatically that she had not been a door. She had been a wall. Because that was true, she knew she would find favor in the eyes of her beloved Shepherd.

Surely the maiden is the church that is betrothed to the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ. If she is to be approved and taken to heaven with her Shepherd, she must maintain her fidelity to him. She must not allow herself to become a door to every worldly temptation which confronts her.

Song 8:11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

Song 8:12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

The vineyard which is mine is that of the the Shepherd. He has but one. Solomon has one thousand.

The vineyard of Solomon was his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. We must ask ourselves what is meant by his letting out the vineyard to various keepers for a price of one thousand pieces of silver.

Were the keepers of the vineyard the eunuchs who guarded his harem from the attentions of those who might approach them? Were they men who were allowed to pick the fruit of his vineyard for a sizable price? I leave the reader to answer the questions. Two hundred men would still be only a one to five ratio between the one thousand women and the two hundred men.

Song 8:13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.

These two closing verses present the intense desire of both the Shepherd and the maiden to enjoy the love fruit of the garden. Verse thirteen is the voice of the Shepherd calling out for his betrothed to speak to him. Others hear her voice, but he wants her to give her attention to him.

This may have reference to prayer on the part of members of the church. The citizens of this earth do hear the voice of the Bride as she praises her Shepherd. Nevertheless, there is something else which is vitally important. The Shepherd must hear her voice lifted up to him in song and prayer until she is taken up to be with Him.

Song 8:14 Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

Now the song is closed with the voice of the Bride, as she calls out for him to come and claim her. We can do no better than to present the words of Revelation 22:20, and also Romans 8:35-39.

Rev 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Rom 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

AFTERWORD

Our study of the Song of Solomon is concluded with a few remarks which it is believed could be helpful.

The book has been given many different interpretation by a variety of commentators holding contrasting theologies. Because of this fact, the student of the Bible is earnestly advised to place the Word of God before any of these commentaries, including this present one. They can be used for clarification. But they must not be used in place of the Holy Scriptures.

It is the conviction of the author of this present commentary that there were two suitors for the attention of the maiden in the Song of Solomon. One was a king. The other was a Shepherd. One represented the glitter and glory of the world. The other represented the deep love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ for the faithful.

The world reaches out with the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Christ calls out with His perfect life and His words of truth. The church must choose between the two. This book pictures her as having rejected the overtures of the world and remaining true to the Great Shepherd.

The book is ascribed to Solomon as the author. Solomon tried riches, chariots and women. He was

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granted wisdom above that of any other human, either before or after him.

He tried the world and found it vain. He wrote this precious book to impress men through the ages to choose God rather than mammon. In his own words, "This is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

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