

## 2123 - SOLOMON'S CONFESSION - Ecc 7.13-29

PRELIMS. Sol has been making comparisons and contrasts in the realm of wisdom and folly in decision making. Strange discoveries!

He now asks *Consider the work of God* - He is the one who runs the world, according to His plan! **No** one can **frustrate** Him! *Who can make straight what He has made crooked?*[13] God has made **both** prosperity and adversity - man will **not find out** the answer to the mystery of providence! Sol: in his *vain life* **I have seen everything**. *There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing* [15] So Sol **warns** man in his wisdom has a **tendency/inclination** to be 'holier' than God! *Be not overly righteous and do not make yourself too wise. Why should you destroy yourself?* The Phars were **far stricter** than God! **Asceticism** is a **pagan** ideology - people have killed themselves doing it! **Read** 'The Early Christians', page 66, etc!

One wise man is better than 10 city councillors! [19] **Read 9:14,15!**

On [v20] he states the obvious - **everyone sins!** The **very best** of us!

He now **warns** *Do not take to heart all the things that people say*[21] He is really speaking about **listening** to **gossip**. Listening to what is said in the **grapevine**, (ie, the circulation of **unofficial** information)! If we continue to listen we will **get hurt!** ...*lest you hear your servant cursing you* [21] **Eavesdropping** is a forerunner of trouble!

We can be very **affected** about what we are not supposed to know! it is **Satan's** way of **distracting** us! We can get very **angry** at what was not meant for our ears. It can make us **angry**. Whatever **angers** us, **dominates** our **thoughts, and what dominates our thoughts** really **controls** us! As Xns we are to let **Christ control** our thoughts.

**APP** We must not allow the sin of others to become our sin also! If we **enjoy** hearing ill of our neighbour, and especially if we **spread** what we hear, God reminds us that it will very likely come back on us! For He has written *Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you* [Mat 7:1cf] **Whoever slanders his neighbour secretly, I will destroy!** [Psa 101:5]

Our own experience of life, **ought to teach** us that God has a habit of returning on our own heads, any criticism we make of others. *Your heart knows that many times you yourself have cursed others* [22] If you gossip, beware, it will happen to yourself. I have seen it often!!

## SOLOMON'S SEARCH

Sol as we know had a **chequered** career. He **admits** here that he *said 'I will be wise' but it was far from me* [23b]. Sol is so **honest!** He tells us plainly his attempt at being wise didn't work! He tried to be wiser than God, ignoring God's Word, and **failed!** So, in **grace**, having learned from the experience, Sol is **warning us** of falling into the same trap of trying to be wiser than God! Here is someone who has **experienced** the folly of living for pleasure - without God!

He again mentions how he **concentrated** in this study on the **thorough examination** of **wickedness!** *I turned my heart to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the scheme of things and to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness of madness* [25] He has **already said** all this in [1:17] - but Sol wants to **emphasise** it. Sol is **no amateur**, he is a qualified, experienced philosopher, so we need to heed what he says. **God is using** Sol's wisdom to help us!

Here God 'uses' the **foolish and wicked part** of Sol's life to **confirm** His own Word - Holy Scripture! The **Holy Spirit**, is **employing** Sol's experience, to **testify** to the **utter folly** of **sin!** Because here, we have Sol **confessing** one of his greatest discoveries! Sol is here recording a **personal experience** *I find something more bitter than death!*[26]

What is Sol saying in verses [26-28]? Sol is **not** here running down women per se although it may appear so! He is **not saying** that women are awful people - **avoid them like the plague!** Sol is here alluding to **his own sad experience!** *I find...* and *this is what I found* in my personal experience. **For Sol**, it was **women** who **led him astray** so that he almost **lost His soul!!** There are **many men** who can testify to the same! Read the papers! Of course, **men** can lead women astray **also!** Sol himself says so - under inspiration also.

Sol described **men** are **devious** and who **delight** in **evil**. He wrote: **Christ** (under the name of Wisdom) delivers us *from men of*

*perverted speech, who...walk in the ways of **darkness**, who rejoice in doing **evil and delight** in the **perverseness** of evil, **men** whose paths are crooked and who are **devious** in their ways [Pro 2:10-15]*

Sol is **not** really saying women are **worse** than men. Just look ***One** man among a **thousand** I found, but a woman among all these I have not found [28]* There is **not much difference** between one in a thousand and none in a thousand! You could say, ‘no difference’!

You see, Sol, sadly, went astray by **involving** himself with the **wrong type** of women! He **allowed** himself to be corrupted by women - just as some people today, and both men and women, can allow themselves be corrupted by the opposite sex! **HOW DID** Sol **allow** himself to be corrupted, and **HOW DID** he get **involved** with corrupt women? By doing the **opposite** of what God said!

He **married hundreds** of **pagan** women who **turned** his heart against God - **against God clear commands!** Look: *Now King Solomon loved many **foreign** women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning **which the LORD had said** to the people of Israel, “You shall **not enter into marriage** with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will **turn away your heart** after their gods.” Solomon **clung** to these in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And **his wives turned away his heart**. For when Solomon was old **his wives turned away his heart** after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father [1Kin 11:1-4]* Tragic!

I am not going to deal in depth with the ‘problem’ of how so many Godly OT saints married so many wives, apart from saying that it was the **culture of the times**, and God in His **mercy and love** ‘closed’ His eyes, as it were, from the common failures of ‘a whole culture’! Just as the Great Judgment Day will reveal how much God ‘closed’ His eyes to **our generation**’s sinful excesses which would be abomination to these OT believers! But we too **today** break these **very same commandments** and God has been forbearing **with us!** The **7th commandment** has been broken right, left, centre in UK!

In the OT, God was **gradually** bringing a nation out of the darkness

of **heathendom** and **permitted** many sins which even under His gracious hand, would take generations to fulfil. There are some sins **germane** to our **fallen humanity** which **takes decades to overcome!**

So, Sol here is **not simply singling out** women as **more** wicked than men, but giving us **his personal experience** of his sinful past! **Both** men and women are wicked by nature, both men and women **need** Jesus Christ, the **true Wisdom** from heaven!

This I think is **confirmed** in [29] *See, this alone I have found, that God made **man** upright but they have sought out **many schemes** [29]!!* The word for ‘man’ is for ‘**mankind**’ both men and women. It is not the word ‘ish’ for man/husband, but ‘adam’ for mankind!!

Sol tells us plainly, that mankind, **both** men and women, have gone astray by **seeking out many schemes** [29]. Not content with the wonderful world that God gave them, they **sought** something better - as soon as the **suggestion** of being a god came, they grasped at it!

As Isaiah put it *We all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his **own way** [Isa 53:6]* We please ourselves all the time. God does not come into the equation when we make decisions.

Notice what is the **root cause** of our sins - **self-centredness!** It is **Man’s Free Will, not God’s Sovereignty**, that is given the blame here, **they** (mankind) *have sought our many schemes* [29c] Everywhere, man thinks of himself. That is the result of the Fall. We were created **upright** (straight) without defect but we had, and still have, a **free will** that is **self-centred!** But we were not created **immutable (unchangeable)**. Although being created upright, we could **become** corrupted - **only** God is immutable and cannot change from being what He is). We on the other hand, **have been** changed from being upright to being corrupt through the temptation and Fall!

Thankfully, there is a **good** side to our immutability!! We can be changed **back** to being upright in Christ! And that is the gospel, we can be **new creatures in Christ!** From *having **no hope and without God in the world***, Paul says to the Ephesians believers *But **now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ** [Eph 2:13].*