

Eccl. 7:27-20 (WCF 4) "Made Upright"

For the Children: Where did we come from? How did the world get here? What is truth and what is error, what is right and what is wrong? What does it mean to be a human being? Is there a God and what is He like? These are questions many people ask. They often study them at university, but come away knowing even less than when they started their studies. For most don't know the answers, even the very smart ones. But even our *children* can answer many of these questions. For God's Word tells us the answers. Don't ever let anyone convince you to stop believing God's Word so you end up knowing nothing! **Questions:** Where *did* man come from? How did God originally make Him? How was he damaged and how can he be made right again?

Introduction:

First Point: What Wisdom Is

- 1) Simple Wisdom: Our text is part of the writer's research into the nature of wisdom. Throughout the Book, wisdom at its most fundamental level is a matter of accepting God's Word – both law and Gospel; discerning between good and evil options; making godly application; and seeing all this as fulfilled in Christ. This is absolutely essential for every believer. It ought to be the aim of us all to be wise in this sense
- 2) Philosophical Wisdom: However, the writer is investigating wisdom in another, more specialized sense as well. He is investigating whether one can find a satisfying philosophy apart from God's Word. Philosophy is an academic discipline that deals with "ultimate questions" such as the nature of reality and existence, origins (metaphysics); how we know what we know (epistemology); how we then live (ethics); and how all these 3 areas tie together. God's people also want to know how to destroy empty speculations and defend the faith (apologetics, a related area of study). Hence the writer wants to know about "what is/has been" (metaphysics); to direct his mind to "know" (epistemology); and to know about evil (ethics). But he draws a blank from his study apart from God's Word

Second Point: From Where Wisdom Comes

- 1) Created by God: Once the writer turns to God's Word, however, he finds sure answers – "Behold, I have found only this." His answers come from Gen. 1-3, re God as the Creator; Who made man originally good and upright. This says a lot about the nature of man and God, as well as our origins. There can be no true philosophy without these truths. WCF 4 goes on to explain that man differs from the beasts in being created with a reasoning, immortal soul. Moreover, at first he was endued with righteousness, holiness and the knowledge of truth (Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10). This enabled him to use his faculties to serve God. He had the ability to keep doing so. It is not God's fault that man lost this uprightness
- 2) Taught in His Word: All of this we learn from God's Word. That is our starting-point for all knowledge, including these ultimate questions. Any other presupposition leads to empty speculation and foolishness

Third Point: Where Wisdom Has Gone

- 1) The Fault of Man: At the Fall, man used his ability and freedom to change, to break God's commandments. He lost his original holiness etc., leaving him now only able to use his reasoning in a futile, sinful way. As a result, he turns to clever "devices" – speculations and justifications, "inventive degeneracy.." That is where the world's false religions and philosophies derive
- 2) One in a Thousand: No wonder the writer says he could only find 1 man in a thousand who had wisdom. It's hard enough to find those who have the basic wisdom that begins with the fear of God. Harder to find those who apply that to these philosophical questions. When he says he found no women who did so, we do not need to take this as an absolute. But in his research, he found no female philosophers on the right track. This is no insult, as he did not include himself as a great philosopher either
- 3) Wisdom Restored: What is essential is that we seek the restoration of righteousness, holiness and

knowledge of truth, from Christ. He supplies all His people, male and female, with basic wisdom. It would also be good for more of God's people to study how to apply this wisdom to the subject of Christian philosophy, the tearing down of foolish speculations and the defense of the faith

Conclusion: