

**I. The Wicked and Righteous Both Shall Die (vv 15-18).**

- A.** Solomon overviews his experience in this life under the sun, as he has throughout this book
- B.** It seems at times that justice is reversed in this life (Psa 73:4-6)
- C.** But see that God is indeed just (Psa 73:17-19)
- D.** See also the mercy of God in this —
  - 1)** God prunes His branches through our sufferings, refining us in our trials.
  - 2)** God is teaching His people that this world is not our home.
  - 3)** God would not have us look to man for our salvation.
  - 4)** God allows the wicked to prosper so that their ruin will be all the more devastating and glorious to behold.
  - 5)** God shall give to us good last and lastingly (Rev 14:13).
  - 6)** God's mercy and forbearance draws sinners to repentance.
- E.** Uses from the Text (vv 16-18)
  - 1)** Do not take pride in your righteousness (1 Cor 11:29-32)
  - 2)** Do not take pride in your sinfulness (Gen 15:16).
  - 3)** Apprehend by faith the goodness and wisdom of God's will, even if you cannot comprehend it in your mind
  - 4)** Take comfort in the fear of the Lord (Pr 14:26)

**II. No One Is Perfectly Wise or Good (vv 19-22).**

- A.** The excellence of wisdom, a theme returned to yet again
  - 1)** More fortifying than the security of sheer might (Pr 21:22)
  - 2)** Safer than the tyrannical prudence of bureaucracy (Pr 11:14)
  - 3)** Are you being strengthened by wisdom? (Jms 1:5)
- B.** The dearth of goodness (*Shorter Catechism* 14; Psa 53:2-3; Rom 3:23; Psa 6:5).
- C.** Uses from the Text (vv 21-22)
  - 1)** Beware searching what others really think about you (Eccl 7:5).
  - 2)** Be charitable when you hear something you do not like
  - 3)** Beware altogether the sin of gossip (Pr 11:13)
    - a)** Even if it is not heard by that person, it is heard by God; and you shall give an account for every word (Mt 12:36).
    - b)** How do I know if it is gossip?

- i.** To whom are you sharing concern?
- ii.** What is your intent about sharing concern for someone else?
- iii.** Consider how you would respond if the roles were reversed, and you were the one being talked about.

**III. We Are Limited in Our Wisdom (vv 23-24).**

- A.** You may desire wisdom, but you will never be wise enough
  - 1)** Why wisdom is far from us?
    - a)** Our corrupt nature and inability
    - b)** Our confusion of shadows seen through a glass darkly.
    - c)** Our personal capacities, as well as application.
    - d)** God's thwarting of us, lest we be puffed up in our pride
  - 2)** How is wisdom then gained?
    - a)** By grace!
    - b)** By the faithful use of the means prescribed by God
      - i.** Prayer
      - ii.** Scripture (Psa 19:7)
      - iii.** The fellowship of the saints
      - iv.** The creation order, or natural law
    - c)** With time
- B.** Wisdom is too deep for man (Job 28:12-23)
- C.** Uses from the Text
  - 1)** Still search out wisdom (Pr 25:2, 3:13-18); Five encouragements:
    - a)** Wisdom is itself a good thing being from the Triune God.
    - b)** Wisdom is more precious than all other treasures.
    - c)** Wisdom will sustain through trial or trouble when other means would be fruitless.
    - d)** Wisdom is a delight to the one who has it.
    - e)** The gaining of wisdom is a blessing to see answer to prayer and perseverance.
  - 2)** Be joyful with the Lord's providence (Rom 11:33-36)
  - 3)** Adoration of and comfort in the Lord (Psa 139:6)
  - 4)** Remember that while the providence of God is a mystery, the commandments of God are simple (Dt 30:11-13)
  - 5)** The glory of heaven, where we shall love to drown (as it were) in the depths of the wisdom of God (Ezk 47:1-5)