



## ***"More Bitter Than Death"***

***Eccl. 7:23-29***

July 5, 2020

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26 And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured by her.

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#### **• "all this" –**

- funerals are better than weddings
- God gives adversity as well as prosperity.
- Some who are righteous live a short life, some who are wicked live a long life.

• Solomon said he tried to figure it out.

• The key here is that Solomon says, "I will be wise."

• The wisdom needed to understand sin and righteousness and the meaning of life can only come from God.

• All of the gurus of the world, all of the college professors of "higher" learning, all of those who claim to be wise "under the sun" will never discover what life is all about.

### **Rom 1:22-23**

22 **Professing to be wise**, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

### **1 Cor 1:18-25**

18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written,

"I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE,

AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom;

23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness,

24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

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• Solomon knows that he does not know – that's wisdom.

• True wisdom comes from God. The ultimate wisdom does not reside "in the land of the living."

### **Job 28:12-13**

12 "But where can wisdom be found?

And where is the place of understanding?

13 "Man does not know its value,

Nor is it found in the land of the living.

**24 What has been is remote and exceedingly mysterious. Who can discover it?**

• Look at the plan of God in history.

• Solomon wanted to use wisdom to perceive into the very counsels of God and understand why God is giving adversity to some and prosperity to others.

• But there is no way one can peer into the counsels of God.

• You simply cannot see beyond the veil that separates the Creator from the creature. It is too far from me, he says. It is remote and exceedingly mysterious because it is hidden in God.

• The world is just too big and history too mysterious for any person to know everything. Even Solomon realized it.

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- Solomon tried "to get his mind around" everything.
- The goal of his search was threefold - "to know, to investigate, and to seek".
- "explanation" - Solomon wants to know "why."
- Philosophy courses at universities ask "why."
- That's the big question in the human race:
  - Why the universe?
  - Why life?
  - Why man?
  - Why is there consciousness?
  - Why evil?
  - Why COVID-19? Why now?
  - Why the murder of George Floyd?
  - etc.
  - etc.

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**So for 3 verses, Solomon is saying he has done an investigation into 4 things:**

- The depth of his wisdom.
- The explanation of life.
- The evil of folly.
- The foolishness of madness.

## What has he discovered?

1. Remember what Solomon was investigating – the evil of folly.
2. Solomon says, let me give you an illustration: Folly (foolishness) is like a seductive woman, she will lead you to your destruction.
3. Men are too vulnerable to the schemes of evil women to escape through their own wisdom and strength.
4. It takes God to protect and deliver them, but God will protect them if they trust and obey Him.
5. It is not a foolish man who is entrapped by her, but any man who is not trusting and obeying God. Only the man whom God is watching and protecting escapes her snares.
6. By contrast, Solomon said a sinner has no way to escape an evil woman's grasp.

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## Prov 23:27-28

27 For a harlot is a deep pit  
And an adulterous woman is a narrow well.

28 Surely she lurks as a robber,  
And increases the faithless among men.

- If any man knew what effect a seductress might have on a man, Solomon knew.
- Solomon compared the power of an evil woman:
  - to a trap to catch animals.
  - to a snare net to catch fish.
  - to chains to bind prisoners.
  - In just a few words, he gave three vivid descriptions of the power of an evil woman to damage men.
  - His bitterness with them was worse than death.

The only hope is God and His Word.

## Ps 119:9

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By keeping it according to Your word.

- *The evil of foolishness therefore will lead to destruction.*

*27 "Behold, I have discovered this," says the Preacher, "adding one thing to another to find an explanation,*

- He's still trying to figure out why what happens happens, what the plan of God is and how that can be explained.



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### **Prov 8:1-3**

1 Does not wisdom call,  
And understanding lift up her voice?

2 On top of the heights beside the way,  
Where the paths meet, she takes her stand;

3 Beside the gates, at the opening to the city,  
At the entrance of the doors, she cries out:

### **Prov 12:4**

An excellent wife is the crown of her husband,

### **Prov 18:22**

22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing  
And obtains favor from the Lord.

### **Prov 19:14**

14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers,  
But a prudent wife is from the Lord.

### **Prov 31:10**

10 An excellent wife, who can find?  
For her worth is far above jewels.

***28 which I am still seeking but have not found. I have found one man among a thousand, but I have not found a woman among all these.***

- This could easily be misunderstood.
- Solomon is not making a general comparison between man and woman.
- Solomon held women in high esteem.

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- This is speaking more about Solomon's choice of female companionship than it does about the relative wisdom of men and women.
- Solomon says that he's found no upright women – but remember he had 1,000 women around him (1Ki. 11:3), 700 wives and 300 concubines.

## 1 Kings 11:1-4

- 1 Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,
- 2 from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love.
- 3 He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.
- 4 For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

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### **Honesty in the sinfulness of mankind.**

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- Solomon says that he's found no upright women – but remember he had 1,000 women around him (1Ki. 11:3), 700 wives and 300 concubines.
- No wonder he could not find a wise woman—those who dominated his life drew him into idolatry and a departure from God and His Law.
- Perhaps if Solomon hadn't married 1,000 women, but just married one who was godly, he'd have found his righteous woman.

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- When the smoke clears, here are the only 2 things that have been found:

#### **1. God made men upright,**

##### **1. Think about it:**

- God made Adam and he was very good.

#### **Gen 1:31**

31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

- Adam loved God. He did not have to work at it. He never said, "I ought to pray" and "I ought to worship." There was no "ought" about it for Adam. He did it all and it all came naturally.
- Adam didn't need the law. He didn't need rules. He needed no external restraint. The knowledge of good and the instinct of what was right were just *in* him.
- He could go by feelings.
- He could be impulsive.
- He could do the first thing that came into his mind.

- If Adam and Eve would have remained upright, everyone living today would be upright. But that did not happen.

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**"devices"** = explanations – vss. 25, 27- **הַשְּׁבוּרִים** - khash-bone – fabrications.

## **2. But men have sought to go their own way.**

### **Man comes up with his own explanation for:**

- Why and how the universe exists.
- How man came into being.
- How to make it to heaven.
- Adam and Eve chose another way another explanation.
- The Pharisees chose another way . They felt that they were upright, and their religion reinforced their belief. They had made themselves upright – called self-righteousness.
- As long as you believe you are upright, you will never come to Christ.
- All of the religions of the world apart from Biblical Christianity have sought out there own explanations, their own inventions. They all feel that man can be upright apart from the saving work of Christ.

**"There is a way which seems right to a man,  
But its end is the way of death."**

**Prov 14:12**

## **Solomon's conclusions:**

1. It is not God's fault for the condition of man. The trouble with this world is not with God, but with man. Man's problem is that he had departed from the way God made him. Great point when sharing the gospel.
2. All of the investigating by man's wisdom for the meaning of life and why things happen, is futile. The answers are found only in God.
3. The only truth that is rock-solid is that God created man sinless with natural righteousness but man deliberately chose to go his own independent way. He now must have righteous imputed to him.