

PRELIMS. Sol has been writing of wisdom and folly and of judgments on nations and having children as kings, having those who are not mature or experienced in the work of ruling nations.

Sol starts with one of his **more positive** statements about **investing** resources in many places *Cast your bread upon the waters for you WILL find it after many days* [1]! *Give a portion to **seven**, even to **eight*** [1,2] I like the way ‘The Message’ puts it ‘Be **generous**: Invest in acts of charity. **Charity yields high returns**’! It is **beautiful** to witness a charitable person being cheerfully generous.

What Sol is really saying is: Do as much good as you can! In the long run its rewarding! You will find blessing! You see, friends, life on earth was always **meant** to be **good**! The world is great place to be in. A place with hope, happiness and blessing! It was **man** who **ruined** life on earth. But God has come and redeemed it in principle and is in the process of redeeming it actually and practically.

Remember God created life out of pleasure and joy and He was so happy with His creation, *He saw it **was good*** that He created **people** with the **express purpose** of them **enjoying** it **with Him**! Not in **isolation from Him**! God by **nature** is **happy and good** - and **kind**! The whole idea of God making mankind, was that mankind would be happy **for ever and ever**! That was the big idea behind God creating man and planting him on the earth - with creativity!

God even **gave** man the **opportunity to seal** for himself the enjoyment and blessings of this world (and remember, it was originally a world without sin or sadness or badness)!! **That** of course is **how** the world all went wrong! Man **distrusted** God’s **genuine** goodness to Him and **transferred** his **allegiance** to an **unknown** and **untested** source of so called ‘wisdom’!! It was....

Wisdom that turned out to be ‘**folly**’ of the greatest kind. That choice of Adam was the **worst** and **most fatal** tragedy of all time & history! Every tragedy in the world can trace its **source** back to that one event - even, dare I say, in the horrendous **earthquake** and **tsunami** in

Japan this past week! Because **MAN'S SIN** was the **reason** why the **GROUND** was **cursed!!** Listen to God's Word: *And to Adam He said 'Because YOU have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree...cursed is the GROUND because of YOU'* [G3:17]! The ground is in **disorder!** There is **distortion/corruption** in the earth - it does not function as it was created. There are weeds, nettles etc which were not there initially! Man is to blame for all sorrow!

Sol has been acknowledging that in this study - his findings has shown that man (himself) is still foolish - but God is **still in control**. There are still **laws** in the universe which are reliable that we can depend on. *If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth, and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it shall lie* [3] The **law of gravity** still operates!

So, Sol is **promoting** kindness and generosity saying that it yields **rewards**. He is calling on us not to be **negative** in our outlook - yes, there is the possibility things may go wrong - yes, there are **clouds** and **winds** but if we **only look** at them we will not do any good.

We must sow and plant and do as much good as we can. *as we have opportunity let us do good to all men and especially to those who are of the household of faith* [Gal:6:10] No one is wasting their time doing good, especially assisting God's people! Everyone can tell of their **own lost opportunities!** *Who of us have not heard someone say 'If I was **young again**, I would.....' Do you know what is? That is **admitting** I had an opportunity but missed it! It says, 'On reflection, as I look back, I did not realise it at the time...' Of course **everyone over 60 yrs old** can say, 'If I had done this or that, I would be well-off by now', but nevertheless, we all had opportunities!

Paul in Rom 2:4 reminds his readers that *God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance*, but goes on to warn them of **storing up wrath** for God's Day of Judgment. Well, Paul also indicates that we can **store up blessings** for that Day also! *to those who by patience in well-doing ... eternal life* [Rom 2:5-7] **That** is what Sol is saying 'Store up' good works for a great reward - do as much good as you can, for blessings in heaven are **related** to our works!

Sol **bolsters up** his point by reminding us also that God works in a **mysterious** way when He does marvelous things *As you do **not know** the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, **SO** you do **not know** the **work of God** who makes everything* [5] God may be doing something great when you don't know - [So] *In the morning sow your seed and in the evening withhold not your hand* [5,6] No one can tell what good work God is doing behind all the events that are taking place in the world! Its simple philosophy really - 'The more **shots at goal**, the more likely you are to **score**'!

'Any good that I can do, I must do it now - for I shall not pass this way again'! Sol now tells us to do the **NOW**! And he particularly mentions when we are **YOUNG! Rejoice** *O young man in your **youth**, and let your heart **cheer** you in the days of your **youth*** [9] Sol is all for enjoying oneself - even in our **youth** - and that is **just as God intended** - in our **youth** as in old age!

Now not many of us can remember **Helen Shapiro's** song 'Don't Treat me Like a Child' in the 60s which had a line: 'The **best years** of my life I know are those when I am **young**; And since **I'm sure** that this is so; Gonna have **my fun**'!! And so, 'Gonna be my **own advisor**; Cause my mind's **my own**'!! It was typical of the new liberality of the 60s! Helen is a Jewess and became a Christian and some of us heard her in Perth some years ago! So, being Jewish she may well have been familiar with these words of Solomon.

Sol would have **AGREED** that our best years could indeed be when we are young! - **IF** we know God! '*...**LET** your **HEART cheer** you in your **youth**. **WALK** in the ways of your **HEART** and the sight of your eyes* [9] Now the **heart** is the '**seat**' of the soul where God would sit if He were King! Whoever is our 'King' reigns in our soul AS Paul put it *You are **slaves** of the one you **obey**, either of sin which leads to death, or of obedience which leads to righteousness* [Rom 6]

Sol does **not** think youthfulness is sinfulness - we can enjoy youth the way **God intended young people** to enjoy God in life! There **ARE** some things which can **ONLY** be enjoyed in a youthful body and mind! Good things! Things God would approve of!

Now of course Sol's **understanding** of 'fun', 'enjoyment', 'best years' would be very **MUCH DIFFERENT** from Helen's and the young people in the 60s! But Sol **experienced BOTH** 'types' of fun - the godly and the ungodly version of it! So he **IS** qualified to give his judgment on which is best! He has already told us to **Rejoice with the wife of your youth** [Pro 5:18] and now just **Rejoice in your youth** [9]

I do not think Sol is being sarcastic and ironic as if to say 'Yes, yes, go on, and enjoy ourselves in any way you like, but remember God will **jolly well** call you to task for enjoying your youthful pleasures'. No, there **ARE blessings** of youth!! Sol is saying God will give you a **fair and honest** judgment when that time comes. Sol is **not warning** against youth, but **advising** and **encouraging** young people to enjoy **God's** gifts. But, like everything else, at any age, never forget you have to give account to God for our lives. Sol is speaking against **IDOLISING** the state of youth! Youth is going to end!

Sol is so **positive** here that he even tells us to **get rid** of any **negative** thoughts about enjoying our youth. But of course we need to enjoy it in **faith** - faith in **God's goodness** and **not** in **selfish gratification!** Youth is a time when **selfish** gratification is at its most **powerful!** The **fleshly** sins are **more dominating** when we are young! There **IS** a strength and energy in youth which we **cannot** enjoy in **old age!**

You see, there are many people who **DREAD** getting old! They **CAN'T COPE** with the **thought** of getting old and being **unable** to **enjoy** life! But you see, it is the life they lived in **the past!** This is where **Xnity shines!** Xn pleasures are **timeless**, they are **spiritual** - not **necessarily connected** to youthfulness! They can be enjoyed when young **and** old at all ages - from childhood to **dotage!** The very nature of Xn joy is tied to the **soul** of man - not his body! *For **UNBELIEF** there is **no future** - everything is **running down**, fading away! But for the **Xn** the **future** is bright, **best is yet to be!** There is brightness and lightness and Sol says *Light is sweet* [7]! Jesus *I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me...will have the light of life!* [J8:12] And Paul said *Christ Jesus...brought life and immortality to light thru the gospel* [2 Tim 1:10]