

2121 - STRANGE DISCOVERIES - Ecc 7:1-12

PRELIMS. Sol is saying that life without God is meaningless, vanity, a chasing after the wind! But with God it is exciting. **Enjoy!**

Sol says some 'strange' things! But he is a man of **experience** - wide experience! He is no **ignoramus**. He is speaking under **inspiration!** In [1] he is not just talking about *a good name*, he is talking about **dying** with a good name! Sol is looking at the **obituary column** not the hatches/matches/despatches! We get a name when we are born - which can be promising - but it is the name we have when we **die** that is **important!** **Judah** had a good name at his birth (praise) and belonged to the **royal** tribe of Israel! But by the time he died his name was a **disgrace!** [See Gen 38] He did a lot of things that were shameful/disgrace! **APP** Sol: *The memory of the just is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot*[Pro 10:7]. **Joan Collins** died last week! It depends on your **values** what you think of her!

Sol says some **very surprising** things - things which **appear** to be the **opposite** of what seems natural and obvious to humans. Yet Sol is **not** a **kill-joy!** As we already noted, he can throw a **party!** He knows there is *a time to laugh*, and wrote out of conviction *a joyful heart is good medicine* [Pro 17:22]. But he is also **serious** about life! He has learned a lot of lessons on his way through life! So he says Don't waste your life its too precious and your **choices** have **consequences!**

In [2-4] he actually says, It is better to go to a **funeral** than a **party!** Yes, *sorrow is better than laughter...the heart of the wise are in the house of mourning* [4], who is he **joking?** But he adds the **truly living will lay this to heart** [2]. Ie, those who know what life is really about [Xns] those who have God in their lives know the truth of that!

Sol is telling us what some of us have discovered but **have not practiced** - there are **hidden benefits** in some decisions which will not be **realised** until a **long time** has elapsed! And such benefits are really very well worth **waiting** for!! He is long in the tooth/patient!

He **warns** us! Now there are, in **all** proverbs/principles **exceptions/limitations!** Proverbs are **generalisations**. When he wrote *Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings* [Pro 22:29]

he was not suggesting that **every single skillful man** will receive an MBE!! He was only stating that such people will be honoured and have a standing in the community. Such people are **respected!** So....

The **Ephemeral** or the **Endurable?** Thats a **choice** we have to make very often! Oh, its not **presented** in these terms, but these elements are imbedded in the choice. *A good name is better than precious ointment* [1]! **Does** the fleeting whiff of Channel 19 on a beautiful girl, **influence** your choice **more** than the sound reputation of a diligent, wise, reliable woman? Does good **looks** and **image** impress you more than stability/honestly/wisdom/godliness? Sol says 'Be **careful!** A good **reputation** (background) is **better** than good looks!

Which do you prefer - **Birthdays** or **Deathbeds?** Sol says the day of death is better than the day of our birth [1b]! We celebrate birthdays yet *Man is **born** to **trouble** as the sparks fly upwards* [Job 5:7] But if a soul has gone to heaven then surely there **ought** to be **joy!** If we truly loved that person who has died, we ought to **rejoice** for that person. **In a sense**, any grief about a Xn dying can be said to be **self-pity!!** However, the death of a non-Xn is a **warning!** And thats good!

Parties or **Funerals?** *It is better to go to the house of **mourning** than to go to the house of **feasting!***!![2] What does he mean? It is **not fun** going to a **wake** or a home bereavement! Remember, Sol is **not** saying it is **more enjoyable** but more **profitable!** Poem: 'I walked mile with pleasure; she chatted all the way; but left me none the wiser, for all she had to say! I walked a mile with sorrow; and not a word said she; but oh the lesson that I learned, when sorrow walked with me'! The Psalmist said *It was **good** for me that was **afflicted** !!*

We might **not feel** we are benefitting, nor might we **think** we **will** benefit but Sol says *It **IS better** to go to the house of mourning.* We read of old Jacob: *All these things are against me* but he was so **wrong** - they were all **for him** - and his **family!!** When we go to a funeral we are **forced** to **contemplate** for a few moments on serious thoughts, which we will **not think of** at any other time!! We are so **busy** with the hustle and bustle of life that we **simply just do not meditate** on the serious side of life - **and** the serious side of death!

A Good Laugh or a Good Cry? Which do you prefer? I prefer a

laugh. Sol says *Sorry is better than laughter for by sadness of face the heart is made better* [3]! We have a record in Biblical history of what Sol means by *the crackling of thorns under a pot so is the laughter of the fools* [6]! It is what we read in [Dan 5:30] ***that very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed*** !

What night? The night he made a *great feast...and they brought in the golden vessels that had been taken out of the temple...that his wives and concubines drank from them. They praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.* Then a hand appeared and wrote on the wall so *the king's colour changed...his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together...you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting* [Dan 5:1cf] There was **laughing** that night I am certain! On **reflection**, that laughing **was like** the crackling of thorns under pots that night! Nero **fiddled** as Rome was burning! Some try and **forget** their **problems** and **drown** them in drink or whatever. But **afterwards**, the problems are **still there!**

But **weeping**, we are told **releases** tension! David, after weeping was able to cope with the death of his child! The **mind is filled** when weeping - the mind is **empty** when laughing! He is being **realistic**. We **do learn more** from suffering than from laughter.

Do you prefer **Congratulations** or **Rebuke**? *It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools* [5]! To be able to **graciously warn** a friend about his **faults** is worth more than gold! David Chilton's father 'You **must learn** the folly of your **choices**' and David did! **Home-truths** are a great blessing - but I fear that our generation is so **culturally conditioned** that where there **is** the will to give home-truths, they **cannot** do so because of **political correctness!** [Mail!] Many politicians have had to **resign** or be **rebuked** because they told the **truth** - which was unpalatable to **some** sections of our society! But *Faithful are the wounds of a friend* [Pro 27:6] Our society has gone **soft** on **rebuke!** We are actually **wimpish/cowardly** in stating facts which run counter to our culture!

Do not be Quick to Make Judgments! *Do not be quick in your spirit to become angry* [9] Someone said re the **Tommy Sheridan** trial 'No doubt he and wife are guilty- I don't need to hear any more!

Then heard the other side! 'Don't know!' Be *patient in spirit* [8] It is often our spirit that is wrong - our **prior views/opinions** about a person can influence our judgment before we hear the evidence. The person's **attitude** toward Tommy Sheridan was not healthy!

Admiring Past Ages - the Good Old Days that were Not so Good! Say *not* 'Why were the former days *better* than these?' [10] The **veneration** of bygone days of glory is a **MYTH!** They were **not** as glorious as you **imagine!** *it is not from wisdom that you ask this* Do you know what **makes** people ask this? Someone said 'The good old days were a combination of a bad memory and a fertile imagination'!

We must live for **today!** God has only given **us** today, not yesterday, not tomorrow! David *served his generation* - so we must serve **our generation** - it is not right or wise to dream of the past or the future! We must live in today's world with all its technology and not be 'paralysed by yesterday or hypnotised by tomorrow'! Why do we say the old was better? Ans: **ESCAPISM** from **duties/problems/responsibilities** of **today's world!** It usually comes from those who do **not want to face** present day issues, and want to **blame** the **present** generation for today's ills! It takes 30/40 years for a generation to reap what it sows! We are paying for the decisions of the **60's!**

Wisdom is Necessary for Handling Money & Property! *Wisdom is good with an inheritance* [11] but money and property is **not good** without the wisdom to go along with it! You need wisdom to **handle** money and property **sensibly**. There is a **protection** of money and property when you have wisdom with it *wisdom preserves the life of him who has it* (money) [12] As Sol wrote earlier *riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle* [Pro 23:5].

Sol wrote a lot about Wisdom. **Christ is Wisdom personified!** 'With all your getting get wisdom. Wisdom is the principle thing'. *I, wisdom...have counsel and sound wisdom, I have insight...by Me kings reign...Ages ago I was set up...before the beginning of the earth* [Pro 8:12cf] Sol was talking of **Jesus Christ**. Paul told the Galatians *you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption* [1Cor1:30]. **Christ** gives us all the wisdom we need!