

A REFLECTION OF WISDOM AND FOLLY

Ecclesiastes 10:1-11

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INTRODUCTION

The wisest and richest man of the East, King Solomon changes his pattern of sermon in this chapter to a set of wise sayings (Proverbs) to be sententious – to show his strong opinion of what people should and should not do from his study and observation.

He cautions us against folly and recommends wisdom to us in everything we do (private and public dealings). Our text therefore will be exposed as shown below.

THE ADVANTAGES OF WISDOM (Verses 1 – 3)

The wise preacher portrays the carefulness of those with wisdom and honour not to dent their reputation as little folly is like dead flies to a precious ointment/perfume which sends out a stinking odour.

Little folly can destroy the integrity of wise men and so men of wisdom and honour especially those who profess religious ethics

must abstain from all appearances of evil (**1 Thessalonians 5:21,22**).

According to him, the wise has a great advantage to do his business with dexterity as his heart is at the right hand, he manages his business or affairs very well and successfully.

But the fool's heart at the left hand cannot do well even if the work or business is important as he does it like left-handed person who is soon at loss. We must use wisdom to do well whatever our hands find to do (**Ecclesiastes 9:10**).

He further said that the fool cannot hide his folly – when he walks by the way, his wisdom fails him (**verse 3**) – he demonstrates foolishness anywhere in what he says or does but the wise is not so. As sin is the reproach of sinners anywhere so is folly to the fool always.

MUTUAL DUTIES OF PRINCES AND SUBJECTS (Verses 4 - 11)

In these verses, Solomon advocates subjects' loyalty and dutiful to the government.

During the reign of the king, the people were rich and lived ostentatious life. When taxes were high though they had enough money to pay, they would want to revolt and thus gives the basis of Solomon's caution in this part of our study.

THE RULER AND THE SUBJECTS (Verses 4 - 6)

The preacher cautions subjects that if as a result of misinformation or any other thing, your ruler or prince is angry with you, remain loyal and submissive, and do not abandon your duty especially when there is no one to replace you or rebel for he is not impeccable.

It is better to do this than to confront the ruler and incur more of his wrath which may be catastrophic. He continued that there is an evil act or error under the sun committed by rulers (*verse 5*), as they put their personal interest above that of the public.

Also, he said, "*folly is set in great dignity and the rich sit in low places,*" (*verse 6*) that is, those in authority perpetrate this folly (*abuse of power, personal interest,*

etc.) but men of standard and integrity (*in this case, the rich*) do not do anything about this mistake of leaders or those in government.

WISDOM IS REQUIRED NOT NOBILITY (Verses 7 - 9)

That he has seen servants who did well with wisdom ruled over the house (*Proverbs 17:2a*) and princes or men of noble birth roaming or walking ordinarily on the earth like servants. It is wisdom that matters most in all that we do not power, position, wealth or education with folly.

Therefore, rulers should not abuse the peoples' rights and liberties and the people should not raise up violence against rulers or government. For he who digs the pit, will fall into it, he who breaks the hedge, serpent will bite, he who removes stone will be hurt and he who cleaves wood will endanger himself.

The New Testament says, whatsoever a man sows, he will reap (*Galatians 6:7, 8*). God in His infinite wisdom has made both the ruler and the ruled accountable for their actions.

WISDOM IS PROFITABLE (Verses 10, 11)

Only a fool uses a blunt rod or knife with much strength achieving little but the wise sharpens and uses it with much

ease effectively and achieves much.

Those who will not use enchantments, serpents will bite but wisdom is profitable to direct us to use mild words or enchantments with meekness in all our dealings or relationships in order to avert evil even as Abigail used enchantment for king David and protected her family *(1 Samuel 25)*.

CONCLUSION

In the text of our study, king Solomon cautions us seriously against foolery and advocates strongly the use of wisdom in everything we do especially in our relationship as rulers *(government officials, religious leaders)* and the ruled *(subjects, followers)* for mutual benefits as wisdom cannot be compared and that all people are accountable to God for their deeds *(Proverbs 8:11, 2 Corinthians 5:10)*.