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**We are in a section of Ecclesiastes that reads very much like the Proverbs: Solomon writes about a myriad of things from his beholding of fallen humanity: From (7-7:12):**

Oppression or extortion, the end of a thing BETTER than the beginning, the patient in spirit BETTER than the proud in spirit, be not hasty to be angry, the former days were NOT BETTER than these days, an inheritance is better when it comes with wisdom, and wisdom is the best defense.

As we read the Word of God, we must always read it as the Word of God and not the words of men. We must read it, asking ourselves, what is God teaching me, what is God revealing to me in this Book of books?

Last and most of all, we must understand the necessity of having the Spirit of God in our Devotions/Bible readings/Bible Studies; the Person of the Holy Spirit must be our "Interpreter and Guide" if His Word would be rightly known/understood by us.

**(7:7): "Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart"**

This is not the first time Solomon wrote about oppression. *(4:1, 5:8 Read)*

Oppression may be defined as bullying; it could be one person toward another; or when rulers/governments exercise power over their people by cruelty, fear, and by threatening them with punishment. Oppressive rulers/people are tyrants.

This happens in the world more than we would like to think, and it begins at a very young age in those that eventually grow up to be tyrants/oppressors.

*All of us have the potential to be oppressors/bullies! The main ingredient is pride.*

Here in (7:7), the word oppression means to gain by extortion. Extortion is to threaten someone and force them to do something morally wrong, which they would otherwise not do.

*If you don't do this, I will ruin your reputation, you will lose your job, you will wish you didn't work here, I will fire you, you will always be looking over your shoulder, etc. This is forcing someone to do something against their will.*

Example: Threats/Oppression of Pharaoh so that they did not trust God: The sons of Eli, threatened the people concerning their offerings: *Exodus 5:15-23, Samuel 2:12-17*

As for the children of Israel: They were God's people, they prayed for deliverance from Egypt, *(Exodus 3:9-10)*. But when God answered their cries and sent Moses to deliver them, they would not trust God, but instead, they feared Pharaoh their oppressor (more than their God).

*Proverbs 29:25: "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe". Luke 12:4-5*

"Oppression will make a wise man mad" (if we allow it to affect us) it could force us to make (mad) or as it means unwise and spiritually wrong decisions, or even to be "turned aside" to wickedness. We must not allow the wicked to force us (by threats or by any means) into forsaking our trust in God!

**Psalm 125:1-3: "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest (or as it means, the oppression of the wicked will not settle or remain) upon the lot of the righteous; (God will not abandon His people under their oppressors) lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity".**

This doesn't mean that we will never live under an oppressive government or extortionists who will threaten our lives and liberties; but beloved, we must never distrust our God, and we must never forget that earthly oppressors CANNOT hurt our souls, and they cannot threaten what we have in Christ! *Romans 8:35-39*

We must consistently be aware of Satan's influence; we must not be ignorant of his

devices who is the great oppressor of the saints! He will tempt us to forsake our faith in Christ and to give up under the world's oppression and its many forms of bribery; he will tell you (give up) God has abandoned you! 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 13:5

Never FORGET: "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest (forever) upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity". Matthew 24:22, 1 John 4:4

But then there is also this warning to us all: Psalm 62:10, Jeremiah 17:11

**"Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift (or bribe or blackmail) destroyeth the heart"**

A gift or bribe will destroy your heart in such a way that you will stray and wander from what is right in the sight of God.

The god of this world will do his worst to bribe you and lure you away from Christ with his worldly dainties. He wants you to lose your way from following Christ; his sole mission for you Christian, is that you will curse God in your hearts. Beware of this aspect of oppression, bullying, and extortion.

Exodus 23:6-8, 1 Samuel 8:1-3, Proverbs 15:27, 17:23

A bribe destroys (or corrupts) the heart and will cause you to pervert judgment or do the wrong thing!