

I. Introduction:

- A. Let's entitle this message: "*Lemuel and His Mom.*"
1. This is very different from the usual devotions we have been pulling from **Proverbs** thus far.
 2. In fact, there are no proverbs at all in these verses.
 3. And like the last chapter, these are not from the lips of Solomon – they originate with someone's mother.
 4. "*The words of king LEMUEL, the prophecy that his mother taught him.*"
 5. Once again, we see that the word "*prophecy*" must not be confined to foretelling future events.
 - a. The word often refers to the forth-telling of God's Word through the ministry of His servants.
 - b. Sometimes that means looking into the future and sometimes it simply means looking at the Lord.

II. Our first job tonight is to reach some conclusion about these people – Lemuel and his mother.

- A. This is the only place in God's Word where "*Lemuel*" is mentioned, so we have no help in identifying him.
1. But we are clearly told that he was a king, so that limits the number of possibilities.
 2. Some commentators think that it was good **King Hezekiah**, with the only explanation being that his mother was the daughter of **Zechariah – II Chronicles 29:1**.
 - a. Was this **that** Zechariah – the prophet?
 - b. If so then that might explain where Hezekiah got some of his good genes.
 3. But there is no Biblical reason to make those jumps – Hezekiah, Lemuel, Abijah & Zechariah the prophet.
- B. Some people say that Lemuel was a heathen king – perhaps a Chaldean.
1. Their argument is that some of the words in this "*prophecy*" have a Chaldean background.
 2. That is hardly conclusive evidence of anything, as words often move from language to language.
 3. And then you'll notice that "*Lemuel*" contains the name of the Hebrew God – "*El.*"
 4. It means something like "*Belonging to God.*"
- C. "*Lemuel*" seems to be a Hebrew.
1. I agree with the majority of the Jewish and Christian scholars thinking that "*Lemuel*" is the pet name his mother used when speaking to Solomon.
 2. And with those two we might have some insight into the background of this particular "*prophecy.*"

III. So who was Solomon's mother?

- A. After the death of her first born, **II Samuel 12:24** says that "*David comforted BATHSHEBA his wife*" and nine months later "*she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.*"
1. The name "*Bathsheba*" takes us back into some of the lurid history of David.
 2. If you will remember, Israel at the time was at war with their neighbors the Ammonites.
 3. David, as commander and chief, should have been at the battle front with his men, but he chose to remain in Jerusalem.
 4. And one night, while walking on the roof of his house, trying to catch the cool breezes of the evening, he saw beautiful Bathsheba privately bathing.
 5. He sent orders for her to come to him, and a baby was conceived.
 6. David then arranged for Bathsheba's husband to be killed, and the king made her his wife, covering up the sin of adultery. Then shortly after his birth that baby died.
 7. After the death of her first, Bathsheba's second child was Solomon, the eventual successor to King David.
- B. The sin involving that first baby was ultimately David's; the related sins were all David's.
1. Perhaps Bathsheba was indiscreet and unwise in permitting herself to be seen, but if I have ever accused her of deliberate sin, I don't do it now.
 2. Other than losing her first born son, there was no punishment from God upon her.
 3. The sins belonged to David, and he was eventually tormented and broken by them.
 4. I believe that his sorrowful repentance before God was genuine, and the whole incident may have redirected David's life to some degree.

- C. Now, let's go back to the prophecy which Lemuel received from his mom.
1. It contained one thing in two parts: avoid addiction – addiction to women and the addiction to alcohol.
 2. What is the likelihood that David had been under the influence of alcohol, when he first lusted after Bathsheba?
 3. I admit that there isn't the slightest evidence of drunkenness in the Biblical account of David's sin.
 4. But how often have otherwise sane and self-controlled men given themselves up to sinful passion because they were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?
 5. David was a married man – oft married – overly married – before Bathsheba.
 - a. ***II Samuel 3*** speaks of Ahinoam, Abigail; Maacha, Haggith, Abital and Eglah – not to mention Michal.
 - b. Could it be said that David had an evil addiction up to this point in his life?
 - c. Where he should have been more than satisfied, was he stirred towards more sin – aided by wine?
 6. Later, as Bathsheba is raising her little boy, Lemuel, she points out some of the problems that there were – there may have been – or there had been in their own family.

IV. She says, "Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings."

- A. Moving from something small to something greater, most of us know how pets can put chains on our lives.
1. When we need to visit friends in Nampa, we have to get someone to look after the cats, or the dogs, or the gecko and piranhas.
 2. Having pets means the expense of food, vet bills, and we have to take the lizard out for walks twice a day.
 3. Having dependents gives us responsibilities – many of which are joyful – but some are not.
- B. I don't think mother was thinking of anything physical when she said, ***"Give not thy strength unto women."***
1. But with every wife or concubine David added to his household, more restrictions were placed on his ability to do the work to which God called him – to be king of a nation.
 2. As more and more children were added to the family, there were more and more taxes laid upon the nation to feed, clothe and house them all.
 3. Prior to his first marriage, he often risked his life in battle, and he may not have given it a second thought.
 4. But after his third wife and his twelfth child, he may have been a little more cautious and less quick to trust the Lord to protect him in dangerous situations.
 5. And when family decisions were to be made, how often did he hear conflicting opinions from his wives?
 6. And when he preferred a certain wife over the others, life became more and more complicated.
 7. Had there been a family squabble which kept him in Jerusalem, when he should have been fighting the Ammonites? Was he somewhat depressed that evening and this encouraged his wandering eye?
 8. ***"Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth (your ability to rule well)."***
- C. Sadly, Solomon did not listen to this wise counsel from his mom.
1. ***"He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines" – I Kings 11:3.***
 2. And that verse goes on to say ***"and his wives turned away his heart."***
 3. He gave his strength unto a thousand women, and they hindered his ability to rule well.
 4. ***"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his Father."***
 5. Scripture details the amount of food necessary to feed all this family and the others in his court.
- D. I suppose that no man will have the same degree of problems that David & Solomon had with so many wives.
1. But that doesn't mean the problem will be much less severe with even one extramarital affair.
 2. Women have destroyed men's ministries; I know where pornography has destroyed families.
 3. ***"Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings."***

V. After that this good mother warned her son about alcohol.

- A. ***"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:***
1. ***Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."***
 2. Elsewhere the Bible commands that **priests** abstain from alcohol while serving the Lord.

- B. Why do our state laws say that drunk drivers should be taken off the streets?
1. The reasoning is that they are dangerous to society when their ability to think and to react is inhibited.
 2. Why is it that when police are called to domestic problems, most of the time there is drinking involved?
 3. It's because one or both of those people are not thinking straight.
 4. The same can be said about most crime – alcohol is involved.
 5. And when kings, congressmen, senators and presidents drink too much judgment is perverted.
 6. The same applies to everyone else – no matter what position we hold or power we wield.
 7. Wine, beer, hard liquor, opioids, and marijuana tend to make people forget – responsibilities and problems.
 8. This is why this mother in Israel, talks about giving strong drink to the dying, and giving wine to the heavy hearted.
- C. But despite modern Christianity's relaxation when it comes to these drugs, I'm not going to join them.
1. When it comes to the dying, there are medicines which if given in controlled amounts can help.
 2. A bottle of vodka or bourbon is not the answer.
 3. That was my father's solution to a serious car accident, and it killed him.
 4. *"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink."*
- D. Another reason for my resolve against drugs and alcohol is found in this woman's concluding advice.
1. Lemuel, *"open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy."*
 2. Solomon, as king, you can intervene when it comes to many of your subjects' problems.
 3. Judge righteously and plead the cause of the poor and needy.
 4. If these people are in pain because they are being victimized, then step in and punish the evil-doers.
 5. Legalizing marijuana and giving encouragement to the liquor industry is not the answer.
 6. If the economy is bad, use whatever powers you have to properly stimulate that economy.
- E. But another important, potential solution is to give the gospel to those who are in need.
1. There is no greater comfort to people who are suffering than He who is the God of all Comfort.
 2. Those in need don't need more lotteries, more sports, more bars and freer access to depressants.
 3. The solution to all the great problems of our society is to be found in Christ Jesus, and therefore the world needs the gospel.
 4. What our society needs is more Christian people living the way that Christians ought to live.
 5. *"Be a king, Lemuel, be a godly king."*
- F. Bathsheba's advice is good for kings, for priests and for more common citizens.
1. But it's not enough to say: *"Hey, don't do these things."*
 2. We need to move into the New Testament and add – *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"* from the problems which cause this kind of behavior.