

## **Eccles 10:1-20 WISDOM & FOLLY & RULERS**

Sol has been talking about the **mystery of Providence** and that there is **no guarantee** of success, even although you are a good Xn! *time and chance happens to them all* [9:11] \*Sol **jumps** from one subject to another and then returns to them, particularly in this chapter so...

### **RECOGNISING WISDOM & FOLLY [1-4 +11 + 18-20]**

Have you noticed how children **love** ‘knocking things down’, destroying things! tearing newspapers, pushing over building bricks, smashing sandcastles, breaking windows! That is because it is **EASIER** to destroy than to **build**. You do not need **skill** to destroy - just force - maybe even just brute force! You don’t need to **plan**, or **organise** to destroy! But to **CREATE** something you need special gifts! You will need some thought and some training. But a **little** thing can ruin a **big** thing! One silly move can destroy a whole lifetime of labour, one silly remark by a defense counsel can destroy the whole argument! *Dead flies makes the perfumer’s ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honour* [1]

Every person can say ‘**If only** I didn’t have that extra drink, if I hadn’t decided to go....if I had stayed at home how different things would be tonight?’! etc, etc Even to **say** things in **private** can be folly. Ask President Nixon about bugging at the Watergate Hotel! That is why Sol says *Even in your thought, do not curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice or some winged creature tell the matter* [20]! Look at all the various ‘winged creatures’ nowadays on **microphones** getting **sporting reporters** losing their jobs!!

These two Sports Reporters last week found out that you cannot **withdraw** the spoken word! Once you have said something - you can’t withdraw it. Sometimes it is **TOO LATE** to **apologise** - as they know to their cost! And that is why Sol says *there is no advantage* in calling a charmer **after** *the serpent bites!!*[11]

To be **careless** and **unwatchful** can have a heavy **cost**! Through **laziness**, or **slothfulness** great damage can be done as Sol says *Through sloth the roof sinks in and through indolence the house*

*leaks* [18] and a greater cost will eventually have to be paid.

\*Another indication of a **foolish** man is **pride!** Very often, important people in high positions, **can do very foolish things!** They can go in the **huff** very simply! I have seen intelligent people do very foolish things in order to ‘get their own back’ on someone - to spite someone at a **cost** to themselves! I have known someone to **resign their lucrative post** in order to spite their employer!! I think that is what Sol is saying *If the **anger** of the ruler rises **against** you, **do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest*** [4] Some people just **refuse** to **acknowledge** their **mistakes** and rather than admit it, take steps that are harmful to themselves and their families!

Its when we **counter** accusations a fight begins! It is the **second blow** that starts the fight! *calmness will lay great offenses to rest!!*[4] If you **agree** with your critics, it takes the ‘wind out of their sails’ and they cannot do much more - for its a **fight** they were looking for!

\*Sometimes you can spot a **fool** a mile away. A fool can disguise his true self for a **time** but it won’t be too long before he makes himself known! As Sol says the fool *says to **everyone** that he is a **fool*** [5] - he says it **in all types of ways** - even when walking *on the road, he lacks sense* [3a] There **are** wise fools of course - those who say ‘I am not going to open my mouth and inform people of my stupidity! As Sol wrote *Even a **fool** who keeps **silent** is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent* [Pro 17:28]

In **Hebrew culture** the right hand meant the **correct** hand and the left hand was known as the foolish and wrong hand, thus *A wise man’s heart inclines him to the **right** but a fool’s heart is to the **left***[2] To be **left-handed** was a great problem for the Jews - and some say that is why **Scripture** gives examples of **good deeds** being done by **left-handed** people such as ***Ehud** a **left-handed** man* [Jud 3:15] and fat King Eglon **unsuspectingly** having his sword on the ‘other’ side!!

## **ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN - to the INDUSTRIOUS [8-10]**

Sol now **encourages** people to **continue** doing a **good** thing despite **injuries** and **obstacles!** There are those who hold back from doing

something good, because of the **possibility** of danger or trouble. But Sol reminds us that, If we *dig a pit*, we **will fall into it**, if we are going to break *through a wall* a **serpent** reclining there **will bite us** [8] If we are going to **quarry stones**, we **will hurt by them**, and if we are going to **split logs** remember we could be **endangered by them**[9]

Chain-saws are dangerous, even although you may be doing a great work! Sol is saying ‘Don’t let one mistake, or an injury stop good work from continuing. You see, ‘The man that never got injured or never made a mistake, never made anything’! There is not a **carpenter/plumber/electrician** who cannot tell of some accident or electric shock he got. There **are** some people who are so **afraid** they will make a mistake or get hurt, they do not do anything!!

It is only those who **work** and **take risks** that *helps one to succeed* [10b] You have to **keep on trying** and using your **head** and some **wisdom**. *wisdom helps one to succeed* [10b] If the iron is blunt and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use **more strength** [10] It is hard work and wisdom that makes success, ‘success’!!

If you are going to do something good, you **will have set-backs!** Be assured of it - but do **not stop!** The whole point Sol is making here is to **persevere!** **90%** of failures is due to people **quitting too soon!**

*Wisdom helps one to succeed* [10b] Yes, all agree - but wisdom is **also necessary** to ‘**handle**’ success! Many people have success for ‘seconds’ and do something foolish! Temptation comes and the foolish submit to it! Even among the godly in Scripture, some saints ruined themselves by being unable to handle success - witness **Lot!** Witness **Esau!** Witness **Samson!** Witness **Absalom!** Witness **Sol!!**

### **The FOOLISH BABBLER [12-15]**

We have all met the fellow who speaks **loudly** at the table next to you in a restaurant, making predictions, and showing off his knowledge. He likes to hear his voice and loves when people are listening to **his** ‘wisdom’! But Sol says a **FOOL multiplies words** - and Sol adds **no man knows what is to be** and **no one can tell him what will be after him** [14] The man who **publicly criticises** the

**councillors** and the **government** and the **young** will be found to put his foot in it before long! *The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness and the end of his talk is evil madness* [13]

In my young days there were ‘**tea-breaks**’ when everyone **stopped** and we gathered round and chatted and there were always those who ‘held the floor’ and controlled the topics for discussion! I used to enjoy all the foolish things that were said. There was **Gambling Bob** telling us which horse would win - but next day we found that horse was **last** in the race! Or Wee Jock showing off his knowledge and trying to expose the young apprentices ignorance of history! Each person trying to **make himself look good** amongst others!

But you know, everyone knows who are the **really** humble and **wise** ones! *The words of a wise man’s mouth win him favour but the lips of a fool consume him* [12]

### **RULERS SITTING in JUDGMENT [5-7 + 16,17]**

One of the biggest mistakes politicians can make is to appoint unsuitable **successors!** It is an *error proceeding from the ruler* [5] Sol says *I have seen slaves on horses and princes walking on the ground like slaves* [7] and *Woe to you O land when your king is a child* [16a]! Obviously **not** a child in years but in **experience**, in **ignorance!** Someone is in power who is **untried** and **unknown**.

It has amazed me how many **parents** and **leaders** in other groups and how much ‘the powers that be’, suggest that the young and inexperienced should be allowed to make important decisions. On School Boards, headmasters and rectors wanting the children to lead and make large contributions to important decisions! ‘Let them chose for themselves - they have every right to choose what they want!!

Oh my!! We parents and leaders are here **TO lead** and **TO guide** the young and ignorant! What parent, watching his children grow up, has not been reminded of his and others mistakes they themselves made down through the years? We must prepare and educate and warn the **Jesus Christ is the real/perfect Wisdom and Righteousness! His words and ways, his life and death are the prime example!**