

The Heart of the Wise Inclines to the Right

Ecclesiastes 9:13 I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me.

¹⁴ There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it.

¹⁵ But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

¹⁶ But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are not heard.

¹⁷ The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.

¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.

10:1 Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

² A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.

³ Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool.

⁴ If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest.

⁵ There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler:

⁶ folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place.

⁷ I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on the ground like slaves.

⁸ He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall.

⁹ He who quarries stones is hurt by them, and he who splits logs is endangered by them.

¹⁰ If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed.

¹¹ If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer.

¹² The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him.

¹³ The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness.

¹⁴ A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him?

¹⁵ The toil of a fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city.

¹⁶ Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning!

¹⁷ Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility, and your princes feast at the proper time, for strength, and not for drunkenness!

¹⁸ Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks.

¹⁹ Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything.

²⁰ Even in your thoughts, do not curse the king, nor in your bedroom curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter.

(Ecclesiastes 9:13-10-20)

Life Verse

Right after I got married, I took a position as a youth pastor in a north Denver church. Early on at my time there, one evening, as we were seeking to develop some comradery and group identity, we decided to let the kids **write Bible verses** all over the walls. “**Pick your favorite verse,**” I said. There were a ton of them, most that you would expect. Some that you would not.

Later that night, for the study, I picked the topic of **life verses and context**. Life verses are almost always easy to remember, feel personally important, and/or are sentimental. We went around the room and read some. “**The LORD will keep you from all harm, he will watch over your life**” (**Psalm 121:7**). “**‘I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’**” (**Jer 29:31**). “**Be strong and courageous**” (**Josh 1:9**). “**Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me’**” (**John 14:6**). My grandparents wrote in the Bible they gave me several years earlier, “**Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight**” (**Prov 3:5-6**).

In our discussion, we talked about many of those verses and why they were so important to each person. Then I decided to dig a little. “Is the whole Bible God’s word,” I asked?

“Yes.”

“Do you think he has any meaningless verses?”

“No.” Good Sunday School answers so far.

“How come none of you picked Psalm 137:9?” They were curious, so we all looked it up. It was a Psalm, so it had to be a good verse. “Happy is he who dashes your infants against the rocks.” They were speechless.

“How about 1 Chronicles 26:16-18?” I asked. “That’s three verses,” a clever kid retorted. “Humor me.” I threw him the KJV and had him read, “To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came forth westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up, ward against ward. Eastward were six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward Asuppim two and two. At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar” (1Chr 26:16-18 KJV). Everyone looked at each other—Huh?

“Now, look over there on the wall.” I pointed to a small spot where I had written down my verse. Years before, just after my grandparents had given me that Bible, I

read Ecclesiastes for a high school English class. The teacher didn't assign it, but she let me read it as one of my books. When I came to **Ecclesiastes 10:2**, I underlined it and wrote in the margin, "**my verse.**" That night in the youth group, I wrote out this verse in fairly small font, so that it was readable, but not particularly noticeable. "**The heart of the wise inclines to the right, the heart of the fool to the left.**" My life verse!

Many laughed. A couple were kind of angry. It had to mean what we all thought it meant, what I'm guessing most of you are thinking right now, right? From there, we proceeded to talk about the whole idea of life verses, about context, about sentimentality, about all of God's word, and so on and so forth. Every time they came back into that room, they were reminded of that interesting, and I hope, memorable discussion.

Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:20

Let's talk about **the context of Ecclesiastes 10:2**. Could it even be close that this verse is a proof-text for how being a Republican is wise and a Democrat is foolish? **Let me rephrase that**, since both parties and the politicians with them are often

very foolish. Could it be that **Ecclesiastes 10:2** speaks to the modern political spectrum of Right and Left in any sense?

Greidanus says of our text, “Of all the passages in Ecclesiastes, this one is probably the most difficult to interpret and preach ... Commentators are not at all agree on what constitutes the literary unit and what are the subunits within it.”¹ The best case I saw for the unit of thought was **Ecc 9:13-10:20**. At least one scholar (Brown) sees these verses as *thematically* chiastic, with **the center** being **10:2-3** (one is our verse):

A Introduction (9:13)

B Wisdom is better than much folly (9:14–16)

C Wisdom is vulnerable to a little folly (9:17–10:1)

D The contrast of wise and foolish men (10:2–3)

C' Wisdom is vulnerable to a little folly (10:4–9)

B' Wisdom is better than much folly (10:10–15)

A' Conclusion (10:16–20)²

This may be **a bit strained** (Griedanus says), since it leaves out some important units in the detailed discussion (especially the

¹ **Sidney Greidanus**, *Preaching Christ from Ecclesiastes: Foundations for Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 239. He cites the survey in **Graham S. Ogden**, “Qoheleth IX 17 –X 20: Variations on the Theme of Wisdom’s Strength and Vulnerability,” *VT* 30 (1980) 27–29. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1517699?read-now=1&refreqid=excel-sior%3A897fcfb9137f4250ea26ae151714aa00&seq=11#page_scan_tab_contents.

² **Stephen G. Brown**, “The Structure of Ecclesiastes,” *ERT* 14.3 (July 1990): 204, <https://theology.worldidea.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ERT-14-3.pdf>.

serpent inclusio; 10:8-11, but see below). But it does have the advantage of showing us that perhaps the parts are in some way related.

Brown's main theme for the structure is wisdom and the words that appear most are wise/wisdom (9:13, 15, 16, 17, 18; 10:1, 12) and fool/folly (10:1, 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15), so this is a major theme. This theme also helps us see that the Preacher is still returning to the wisdom theme that he brought up earlier in 1:12-2:26):

- A (1:2–11) Poem about the brevity and insignificance of life
- B (1:12–2:26) Wisdom's failure to discover life's meaning**
- C (3:1–15) Poem about time
- D (3:16–6:12) Fear God!
- C' (7:1–14) Poem about time revisited
- B' (7:15–10:19) Wisdom's failure revisited**
- A' (10:20–12:8) Poem about life's brevity revisited³

He is also returning in some ways to how we live in the midst of tyrants (esp. 8:1-9). This brings us to politics, something common to all men under the sun. In fact, Greidanus has an outline format, but his outline begins and ends with politics:

³ A. Boyd Luter, *Song of Songs: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*, ed. H. Wayne House and William Barrick (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), So 1:1b. Original in Dorsey, *Literary Structure*.

- I. Reflection on wisdom's strength in **politics** and its vulnerability to a little folly (9:13–10:1)
- II. Opposite inclinations of the wise and fools with a command to use wisdom in **politics** (10:2–4)
- III. Reflection on the **political** order being overturned by the ruler's error (10:5–7)
- IV. Use wisdom in your daily work to avoid getting hurt (10:8–11)
- V. Proverbs contrasting the words of the wise with the babble of fools (10:12–15)
- VI. Opposite **political** orders with a final command to use wisdom in speaking (10:16–20)⁴

Again, that shows us that **somehow the beginning and ending are related**, which we can easily see by noticing how “**king**” is found in the first (9:13) and last (10:20) verse. The larger passages containing the king (9:13-18; 10:15-20) also both begin with a “**city**” (9:14; 10:15). In between, we also have words like ‘**strength**’ (9:16; 10:10, 17), ‘**words**’ and ‘**wisdom**’ (9:15–18; 10:10–14), ‘**quietness/abandon/allay**’ (Heb. *nuah*; 9:17; 10:4), ‘**ruler**’ (9:17; 10:4), ‘**fool/folly**’ (9:17; 10:6), ‘**sinner/offence**’ (Heb. *hata*’; 9:18; 10:4), ‘**weapons/axe**’ (9:18; 10:10) all being repeated.⁵

Furthermore, as Greidanus’ outline demonstrates, while there seems to be an entire section (10:8-14) that **appears**

⁴ Greidanus, 243–245. As I see the entire passage as politically driven, I will change IV and V to something like this:

IV. Daily work under a ruler (10:8-11)

V. Contrasting words of the wise with the babble of fools, especially rulers (10:12-15)

⁵ Brown, 204-05.

totally unrelated to politics, a case can be made that at least in a round about way, even it may be. This hangs on the meaning of vs. 11, “If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer.” Doesn’t sound very political, so let’s look at it a bit more. This verse itself is a hinge between two smaller units. It ends the unit vv. 8-11, which also begins with a serpent (vs. 8). This unit gives a list of several potentially dangerous tasks, the end of which is charming the serpent. After this, it seems to change subjects to the words of the wise vs. the words of the foolish (vv. 12-14). And yet, when we compare other biblical uses of serpents and their forked tongues, we find that the Psalmists use this as a metaphor for very foolish people and their words, which is exactly what vv. 12-14 are all about. Thus, as someone has noticed, (vs. 11) the snake is a kind of middle—the last of the potentially dangerous tasks and the first of the fool’s venomous tongue.⁶ And what is even more interesting, is that sometimes, those serpentine vipers are political rulers (Psalm 58:5). In other words, even this section that seems totally unrelated

⁶ Tova Forti, “Of Snakes and Sinners: An Intertextual Reading of Ba” ‘al ha-lashon in Ecclesiastes 10:11 in Light of ‘Ish lashon in Psalm 140:12[11],” *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 587, ed. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 89. https://www.academia.edu/10804817/Of_Snakes_and_Sinners_An_Intertextual_Reading_of_Ba_al_ha_lashon_in_Qoh_10_11_in_Light_of_Ish_lashon_in_Ps_140_12_11_.

to the rest, might very well have political overtones. We will see more of that as we get into the verses.

For now, if Brown is onto something, and 10:2-3 is the center of the passage, then this puts my seemingly silly “life verse” at the heart of what we are to learn today. This heart is surrounded on all sides by politics. Therefore, it is perhaps wise to return to my original question about right and left politics at this point. The first thing to say here is that no commentator I found suggested that Solomon has in mind modern Right and Left wing politics. It should be self-evident as to why. He lived 3000 years before our modern politics came into being. But this does not mean that the origin of our Right vs. Left did not have Solomon in mind. Perhaps it did.

What all commentators observe is that “right” and “left” here refer to power vs. weakness,⁷ good vs. evil,⁸ sacred and pure vs. profane and impure,⁹ success vs. misfortune.¹⁰

⁷ “In ancient Israel the right hand connoted power and deliverance [see, e.g., Ps 89:13]; the right side, moral goodness and favor. Hence the place of honor was on the right side. The left hand usually symbolized ineptness and perversity.”⁷ James L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes: A Commentary*, ed. Peter Ackroyd et al., First edition, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1987), 169.

⁸ “‘Right’ and ‘left’ are symbols of good and evil. The understanding of an educated person either leads to the good, and of an ignorant person to evil, or it leads the educated to success and the ignorant to failure.” Norbert Lohfink, *A Continental Commentary: Qoheleth* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003), 125.

⁹ Geoffrey Lloyd, “Right and Left in Greek Philosophy,” in *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification* ed. Rodney Needham (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 167–86.

¹⁰ John Jarick, *Gregory Thaumaturgos’ Paraphrase of Ecclesiastes* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 251.

These symbols were “universally-understood” by virtually every ancient culture, not just in the Middle East, but everywhere.¹¹ Philip Ryken summarizes, “With apologies to left-handers, the Bible generally treats the right side as the good side: The right hand was associated with a strength which saves, supports and protects ... was used to convey blessing ... (Genesis 48:13–20; cf. Proverbs 3:16) ... was also associated with authority ... (e.g., Colossians 3:1). [And] Given this background, it is not surprising that at the final judgment, the sheep will be on the right, but the goats will be on the left (Matthew 25:31–33).¹²

Now, the whole idea of Right and Left politics has taken up entire books, but the most important thing to know is that it that is originates in the French Revolution. As one historian puts it,

In the National Constituent Assembly of 1789, those deputies most critical of the monarchy began to congregate on the seats to the left of the President’s chair. Conservative supporters of the aristocracy and the monarchy would congregate on the right side of the Assembly. The Baron de

¹¹ Jarick, *ibid.* Also Lloyd, *ibid.* <https://archive.org/details/gregorythaumat0000jari/page/250/mode/2up>. See also the Appendix at the end of the sermon.

¹² Philip Graham Ryken, *Ecclesiastes: Why Everything Matters*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2010), 233. See also the entry “Hand,” Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 361–362.

Gauville explained: “We began to recognize each other: those who were loyal to religion and the king took up positions to the right of the chair so as to avoid the shouts, oaths, and indecencies that enjoyed free rein in the opposing camp.”¹³

While it is far too much here for me to argue here that those critical of the monarchy may have chosen the left side knowing full well the larger meaning of right vs. left throughout history (I do have an Appendix that will give a brief demonstration for how this perhaps did happen), and that they may have done this **deliberately and subversively** to overthrow the universally understood meaning, because of the larger context of politics, it is possible that modern political spectrum may have had *him* in mind in its origins.

As such, I would argue that **the whole point of our text** deals with the harm inflicted in this world because of folly, with a specific examples focusing on *political harm* from *political fools*. Therefore, the wise person who sees this must learn how to react in wisdom according to the central tenant of **10:2**, “A wise man’s heart inclines him to the right, but a fool’s heart to the left. Even when the fool walks on the

¹³ **Geoffrey M. Hodgson**, *Wrong Turnings: How the Left God Lost* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 32.

road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool.” How does it specifically teach us these things? Let’s turn to the passage.

Ecclesiastes 9:13-10:1 – A Poor Man in a Besieged City

We begin with a familiar sight. “I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun…” When he speaks about under the sun, he usually has some kind of evil in mind. This is something he observes rather than believes (“sees” as opposed to “knows”). He calls his observation “great” (9:13). We might translate the verse, “I have also seen this example of wisdom under the sun, and it is great in my eyes” (italics from Alter’s translation).

What does he see? “There was a little city with few men in it, and a great king came against it and besieged it, building great siegeworks against it” (14). In order to besiege a city, it must have walls. We are used to thinking of cities as unwalled. The exact opposite was the case in the ancient world. We are also used to thinking of only ancient huge cities as having walls. But every city needed walls to keep enemies out.

Imagine a small village long ago wherein someone started arguing in the city council about how they didn’t

need a wall anymore. “The cities borders were safe and secure without them.” Everyone in that city would think him a fool, because in those days weak cities were ruthlessly attack and destroyed, their men slaughtered, their women and children taken captive through terrible acts of human trafficking, their animals and possessions looted. That kind of a person might not just be thought of as a fool, but perhaps as even a traitor.

Returning to the passage, we have a walled village and a king who wants to sack it. So, he goes out of his way to put up elaborate siegeworks so that he can get inside. Notice how we have opposites: “little” city, “few” men vs. “great” king and “great” siegeworks. This is the classic bully vs. the nerd. There’s no way the nerd can win. This is tiny David vs. the giant Goliath.

However, inside this little city there is a poor man (15). That fits. It’s a tiny city, what kind of wealth could he possibly have? But this poor man is also “wise.” He is the opposite of a fool. In fact, he is so wise that “by his wisdom [he] delivered the city.” As it makes clear, but we should still say out loud, it was not his wealth that delivered them. He didn’t have anything to bribe the king. It wasn’t his power

that delivered them. He didn't have an army at his command. **He simply used his wisdom.**

How did he do it? That's the mystery. We don't know. You are left to **your imagination.** Maybe he was able to smuggle them out in a tunnel under the wall. Maybe he found a way to sabotage the siegeworks. Maybe he prayed to God and the LORD struck down all the enemy in the middle of the night. However he did it, he used wisdom. And he gained a mighty, great victory!

“Yet no one remembered that poor man” (15b). Now he is no longer called wise. **Just poor.** People are fickle and prejudiced. They only look at the outside, not the inside. The “no one” here must certainly refer to *the people whom he saved.* Maybe they didn't even know he did it, or, if they did, they thought it such a trivial thing (because they did not actually understand), that they forgot, as if he did it with such ease that, like the flawless golf swing of Tiger, because he makes it look so easy, people who have never tried think they could do the same thing. Anyway, he's poor, so there's no way *he* saved them. The poor can't do that.

The Preacher turns the tables. I think this is why he believes his observation is so “great.” **“But I say that wisdom is better than might, though the poor man's wisdom is**

despised and his words are not heard” (16). Note his *words* and his *wisdom* here, it will come up again. This is his central observation, and we’ll come back to it in a moment. But he gives us more information to think about before coming to a conclusion.

“The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools” (17). Now we know why he was forgotten. He gave his wisdom to someone else in the middle of the night while everyone else was sound asleep. He told it to someone, probably a man of power, in one of the small dark rooms inside the city where no one could see or hear. His words were then used by someone else to save the city. The people never knew the poor man was even involved.

The poor, wise man only cared about saving the people. He didn’t care about fame or his reputation. Jesus’ words about the Pharisees and prayer remind me of this passage, but in the spiritual realm. “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, *that they may be seen by others*. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the

door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt 6:5-6).

When a city or Empire is poised for destruction and good men want to save it, **what matters?** That everyone sees what they are doing? That those trying to save it are honored and congratulated by all the people before anything even happens? Or is what matters that they find a way to make sure the most people will be saved, even if they never know that he is involved? Can you imagine if the political fool who had a plan went to the top of the besieged wall and started to yell it out to everyone inside while the enemy was sitting there in seize tower right next to him? In the same way, Jesus is saying that the only one that matters if you know or are known by God is God himself. It makes me think of this whole **celebrity pastor** thing going on these days. People, especially pastors, need to get over themselves, lest they become fools. And the people need to stop treating them like they are celebrities, feeding the monster. They are supposed to be servants and shepherds, nothing more.

This **celebrity vs. plebe, important vs. irrelevant, super-spiritual vs. second-tier Christian** idea going on in our churches are but microcosms of the **big vs. little** going on in Solomon’s example. Wisdom is better than might. Wise

words are better than the shouting of fools. That done in secret to help is better than that done in public for recognition. The poor wise man is better than a loud bombastic ruler. “Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinners destroys much good” (Ecc 9:18).

This last verse of the chapter builds on the fact that the wise man brought great help and salvation to people. The fool inflicts harm on the world. One sinner destroys much that is good. Like a giant house of cards, though a dozen may build it over the course of hours, it only takes an instant for it to topple. In this case, it is very obviously a “ruler” (Heb: *mashal*) who is the fool (17). Keep your eye out for this word, it will also return again.

Many commentators put 10:1 with these verses. “Dead flies make the perfumer’s ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.” The conclusion is very similar to “one sinner destroys much good.” The point is it only takes a tiny bit to ruin that which is good.

But is there any possible connection of dead flies to what came before, or is he totally changing subjects to some new random example that gets us to the same conclusion? It seems to me that 9:16-10:1 may all have the same idea in

mind, but in a progression. They are four proverbs, that each come to a related conclusion:

1. (vs. 16) I say that **wisdom is better** than might ...
...though the poor man's **wisdom is despised** and his words are not heard
2. (vs. 17) The words of the wise heard in quiet are better ...
... than the **shouting of a ruler** among **fools**
3. (vs. 18) **Wisdom is better** than weapons of war ...
... but **one sinner destroys** much good
4. (10:1) Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench ...
... so a **little folly outweighs** wisdom and honor

The four can be paired as an AB|AB where **vs. 16** parallels **vs. 18** and **vs. 17** parallels **10:1**. The progression is that **wisdom is better than might**, because it saved a city, but **fools despised him and didn't hear** his words (**9:16**). His words were said in **secret**, but a foolish ruler wanted to shout his solution from the **rooftops**, which would have destroyed everyone (**17**). The **poor wise man saved the people** from the weapons of war. But, the **fool would have been destroyed** by those same weapons (**18**). This is how I think 10:1 fits in: **Dead flies would result from dead bodies** if the city were taken. The survivors would have tried to anoint those bodies with perfume, as they anointed Jesus' body after he died. But the flies were so many that they got into the perfume and

gave off a stench and ruined even that gesture. In the same way, all it takes is a little folly for the wise man to not be heard and all the people to die.

It is curious to me that the church Fathers saw in these flies, a proof-text of Satan. Augustine said, “Indeed, it is said that Beelzebub means prince of flies; and it has been written of them, ‘Dying flies spoil the sweetness of the oil.’” (Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 1.14.3). Didymus the Blind apparently did not understand what Augustine did, but nevertheless said, “These flies bring death as well as life. For example there is a divinized fly about which Elijah has said, ‘Is there no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of the fly, the God of Ekron?’ I would be astonished if they really did divinize a fly [He did not seem to understand the idea of Beelzebub.]. Rather he hereby has described the worthlessness of their enterprise.” (Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 291.3).¹⁴ I’m bringing this up here as a kind of foreshadowing of the same satanic-king connection that we will talk about in a moment with the serpents.

¹⁴ J. Robert Wright, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 268.

Ecclesiastes 10:4-7 – A Ruler Rises Against You

We've just seen how wisdom can save or destroy a city and how this is related to a foolish ruler vs. a poor wise man. Let's skip 10:2-3 for a moment and go to the next section which is vv. 4-7. It begins, "If the anger of a ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest" (4).¹⁵ Here we have the ruler returning again. This verse is very similar to what we saw in ch. 8. "I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him. Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases" (8:2-3).¹⁶ Do not be hasty to go from his presence parallels do not leave your place. Previously, the admonition was that leaving his presence most likely meant you were super angry at him and thus might just get yourself involved in a

¹⁵ Greidanus puts vs. 4 with 2-3. Brown puts it with 5ff.

¹⁶ **Going Deeper.** Gregory Thaumaturgos (213-270), who wrote a paraphrase of Ecclesiastes, a kind of Christian targum or a work even more paraphrastic than The Message Bible, interprets this and the next four verses as all referring to evil spirits (rulers), the chief of whom is Satan. Here is his text: "Friend, even if a hostile spirit should come upon you, continue to be of good cheer, knowing how God can forgive even a great multitude of sins. But the works of a tyrant, and of the father of all wickedness are these: the fool is exalted on high, while the one rich in good sense is humbled; and one sees slaves to sin riding horseback, but priestly men walking in lowliness, to the gratification of the wicked." (Gregory Thaumaturgos, *Metaphrase on the Ecclesiastes of Solomon* 50). In Gregory Thaumaturgos, *Life and Works*, ed. Thomas P. Halton, trans. Michael Slusser, vol. 98, The Fathers of the Church (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 143. See also the commentary in Jarick, 253-58. Along with the flies (Augustine) and the serpent (see below), this makes a third connection to the satanic realm that some have seen in this text.

conspiracy to harm him. This time, the command is positive rather than negative. If you stay, your calmness can lay great offenses to rest. Those offenses could be what he did to you or what you might do to him. But the context here is using wisdom to first be calm and then either control your own thoughts or through words sooth his. Did not **David** do this with Saul when he played for him the harp? Many times he was tempted with harming Saul, but his calmness in the midst of his extreme anger kept him from harming the Lord's anointed.

The thoughts about **the ruler** continue. “There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler” (5). This is obviously the ruler of the previous verse who rises against you, who are being taught wisdom (it has the definite article: “the”). What does the ruler do? “Folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on the ground like slaves.” (6-7). These are fascinating verses.

Essentially, he is saying that **the ruler** “turns the world upside down by placing the wrong people in the wrong positions. The *fool*, who should be given no responsibility and avoided at all costs, is given positions of authority and responsibility. The *rich* are placed in subordinate positions. It

is interesting to note the contrast between the *fool* and the *rich* in this verse, the latter standing in a place where we normally find the wise.”¹⁷ The fool would rather surround himself with other fools than with those with power and money. Never in American history has this verse been so easy to spot made as it is right now in the present Administration, which has deliberately hired a lesbian for a press secretary, a transgendered man-woman for health secretary, an avowed gay satanist for a “Monkey Pox” tzar, and so on. In England, their health secretary is a morbidly obese woman. It’s clown world. It’s Ecclesiastes 10:6.



Vs. 7 continues the thought, but now we see the results of the foolish leader’s choice. Governmental pandemonium has led to slaves riding horses and princes walking on the ground like slaves. This is societal chaos on a systemic level.

¹⁷ Tremper Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 242.

Black is white. Up is down. As Bill Murray says in *Ghostbusters*, “Human sacrifice. Cats and dogs living together. Mass hysteria.” Once upon a time, that line was meant to be funny. It’s interesting that its context is the hordes of the demonic world entering into Manhattan.

Ecclesiastes 10:8-14 – The Biting Serpents

Vv. 8-11 introduce us to a series of jobs that can be especially dangerous. First, “He who digs a pit will fall into it” (8a). Second, “... and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall” (8b). Third, “He who quarries stones is hurt by them” (9a). Fourth, “... and he who splits logs is endangered by them” (9b). Fifth, “If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but *wisdom* helps one to succeed” (10). (This one helps us see that wisdom is still driving his thinking here). Sixth, “If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer” (11).

Many see these as nothing “people who are simply doing their jobs and who fall prey to the dangers that are inherent in their occupations.”¹⁸ In other words it is a complete change of subject, save for the wisdom needed to make sure

¹⁸ Longman, 244.

you are careful. Some see as least some of them as a continuation to one degree or another or what was just said about the foolish ruler, as if a kind of karma is in view. You could in fact see most if not all of these jobs as public works tasks appointed by the ruler. Someone writes, “The individual bent on destructive behavior will become the victim of such actions. (Similar convictions underlie the story of Haman’s death on his own gallows in the book of Esther.) Here Qohelet endorses the view that misconduct bears its own fruit.¹⁹ In this, it is read much like the Psalm where the Psalmist says of his enemy, “He makes a pit, digging it out, and falls into the hole that he has made” (Ps 7:15).

The Targum is fascinating in that it sees all of these verses as continuing to relate directly to evil kings. Specifically, it sees here a kind of prophecy of Babylon and the coming exile.

8. The Attribute of Justice answered and thus said: “They caused all this themselves just as a man who digs a pit at the crossroads is liable to fall in it so a people who transgressed the decree of the Memra of the Lord and breached the fence of the world falls into the hand of the wicked king who bites them like a serpent. 9. King Solomon the prophet said, “It was revealed to me that Manasseh the son of

¹⁹ Crenshaw, 172.

Hezekiah will sin and worship images of stone. Therefore he will be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria who will bind him with fetters because he made light of the words of Torah which were originally written on tablets of stone. Therefore, he will suffer for them. And Rabshakeh his brother will worship images of wood and forsake the words of the Torah which were put in the ark of acacia wood. Therefore he will be burned with fire by the angel of the Lord.”

10. *And when the people of Israel sin, the heavens become hard as iron so that the rain does not fall and that generation does not pray before the Lord. Therefore, the whole world is wasted by famine. But when they repent and are assembled in troops and they prevail over their inclination and appoint prayer leaders to seek mercy from the God of Heaven, there is pleasure in them on account of the abundance of the excellence of their wisdom.*

11. *When fiery serpents are stirred up to bite and to cause harm in the world, it is on account of the sins of Israel who do not occupy themselves with the words of Torah quietly. And also there is no advantage for a slanderer who speaks with a third tongue for he will be burned in the fire of Gehenna.²⁰*

I think it is very interesting that the Jewish interpreter sees a continuation throughout this entire section of **what wicked kings do** and how wise people should respond to them.

²⁰ Céline Mangan, John F. Healey, and Peter S. Knobel, *The Aramaic Bible: The Targum of Job and The Targum of Proverbs and The Targum of Qohelet*, ed. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara, vol. 15 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), Ec 10:8–11.

Vv. 12-14 seem to again change the subject. Now it goes to the words of the wise man's mouth compared to that of the fool. "The words of a wise man's mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness. A fool multiplies words, though no man knows what is to be, and who can tell him what will be after him?" Here we have the greatest concentration of "wise" and "fool" language in the passage. The focus is clearly on the fool. His foolish mouth that he cannot control leads eventually to evil madness. That madness may very well be related to what it was previously, regarding the madness of trying to find out your own future. Whatever he is talking about though, it is clear that he doesn't have a clue what he is saying.

But is it actually changing subjects? As we saw earlier, the serpent verse seems to act as a hinge, ending the previous section, but also beginning this one. "If the *serpent bites* before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the *charmer*." This is very similar to Psalm 58:4-5. "They have venom like the venom of a serpent, like the deaf adder that stops its ear, so that it *does not hear* the voice of *charm*ers or of the cunning enchanter." In this Psalm, the serpent is not literal, but

figurative. It is the evil rulers who are under the control of the gods (**vs. 1**).²¹ **What if we haven't changed subjects at all?** Notice that we have returned to the words of the wise man's mouth vs. those of the fool. We saw exactly this language at the beginning of the passage in **9:17**. So what if there is more going on here than just some snake charmer entering into a dangerous job. I mean, that seems like a rather strange idea for the Preacher to be promoting, or at least not condemning. But if this verse acts as a kind of **metaphor** for evil, serpentine leaders and their magical charming words of foolishness that lead to madness and destruction in society, it makes quite a bit more sense.

Ecclesiastes 10:15-20 – The King Returns

Indeed, it is into this thought that we turn to the last section, **vv. 15-20**. It returns us to **the city** again. **Is it the same city** as before with the poor wise man and the foolish ruler? It seems so. If so, then he may have not left his subject even a single time. **“The toil of a fool wearies him, for he does not know the way to the city” (15)**. Knowing the way to the city is something we have not yet talked about, because we

²¹ This is the verse that directly ties our serpent in with the supernatural, making for the third link in this passage. See n. 16 *Going Deeper*.

skipped vv. 2-3. So I'll save this for a moment longer. Simply notice here that we have fool and the city back in view. But now, rather than his words, which were the focus of in the previous sections, it is his "toil." His foolish words and foolish madness have left him in never-ending toil. And he is lost.

"Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast in the morning!" (16) While it is possible that this verse has in mind totally different people than the previous, it is also possible that they are the same people, at least some of them. Ecclesiastes sees a land. In that land, a new king has arisen. But that king is just an infant, incapable of ruling at all. In contrast, the princes of the city are feasting. Princes and rulers are different words (in Greek and Hebrew). Nevertheless, they are certainly overlapping ideas. Both are political heavyweights. But we've seen princes before. They were walking on the ground instead of riding their horses (vs. 7). So what are we to make of their feasting here?

Vs. 17 explains it. "Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of the nobility, and your princes feast at the proper time, for strength, and not for drunkenness!" They are feasting in vs. 16 to get drunk, to party, to not do their jobs.

They are worthless princes. They are fools. Perhaps they are the very fools who can't find their way back to the city in vs. 15?

Again, it is tempting to see the last three verses as **unrelated**, as changing the subject. But **are they**? We have here three proverbs. 1. “Through sloth the roof sinks in, and through indolence the house leaks” (18). 2. “Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money answers everything” (19). 3. “Even in your thoughts, do not curse the king, nor in your bedroom curse the rich, for a bird of the air will carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter” (20).

The first deals **with negligence of duty**. The roof is leaking but those inside are slothful and full of indolence (laziness). Isn't that precisely what the princes are doing in their feasting?

Bread is giving for laughter and wine gladdens life and money answers everything. There is a time to eat and enjoy. But **while the roof is leaking**? Though they have all the money in the world to fix the problems, the princes are too busy eating it up to care about their own leaking houses, how much more those of in the rest of the town? Their money has gone to throw a party *for themselves*.

Congress is living it up on the tax-payers dime. Everyone else is stuck soaking wet, forgotten by the rulers like [spit in the rain](#).²²

Finally, these are the very men who would normally [stand in the presence of the king](#) who would then have the opportunity to stay or leave (see [vs. 4](#)). Like Joseph, the prince-governor-ruler of Egypt ([Gen 42:6](#)). Prior to a 24-7 surveillance state of the modern world, a normal person in a village far away from the king's castle could probably say something about the king and never have it be heard. But those working in the royal palace? Not on your life. Some little birdie would surely carry the voice back to the crown.

What would [little bird say](#)? Back in the post-war world of 1948, Evelyn Knight & The Stardusters sang a cheery little jazz song, “[A little bird told me that you loved me ... A little bird told me we'd be happy ... A little bird told me we'd be married ... a little bird said she'd have a family ... and now I know that it's true.](#)”²³ The bird in [Ecc 10:20](#) is saying pretty much the opposite.

²² Not of the hat to [Del Amitri](#), “Spit in the Rain,” *Hatful of Rain: The Best of Del Amitri*, A&M (1990).

²³ [Evelyn Knight & The Stardusters](#), “[A Little Bird Told Me.](#)” (1948). Written by Harvey Oliver Brooks, 1947. Also sung by Paula Wilson (1948).

Ecclesiastes 10:2-3 – The Heart of the Wise

In light of these things, we return to those two verses that truly are the center of the passage. They give you wisdom, but only if you will listen. “A wise man’s heart inclines him to the right, but a fool’s heart to the left. Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool” (2-3). You can hear in vs. 3 that this is the previous place where the fool is outside the city. He was in the city. Now he’s on the road. At the end, he is lost and can’t find his way back. It’s a progression. He lacks sense. We’ve seen his lack of sense. He shouts his plans from the rooftops, wanting to be the center of attention. His advice brings ruin and destruction to a city. He attacks servants for no good reason. He creates cultural upheaval and systemic chaos. He gets what is coming to him even as he causes others to do dangerous jobs with potentially fatal consequences. He is consumed by his own madness. He speaks of things he does not know. He lives it up while the sky is literally falling. He speaks ill of powerful men who can have his head on a platter and feed it to the birds that told them. It all seems to be attached to some kind of satanically inspired supernatural source. We’ve seen them hinted at several times by

commentators: lord of the flies, spiritual rulers, serpent biters. He is the governor, emulating his dark invisible lord.

The wisdom is that **the heart of a wise man inclines him to the right**. Because the heart of the fool is inclined to the left. These are **two roads**. The road to the right is the road of the good, of true power, of the sacred and holy, of fortune and blessing, of authority. The road to the left is evil, true weakness, impure and profane, misfortune and curse, and servitude and slavery. **He isn't saying become a Republican**. As I said, we have an utter political crisis of our own with deeply corrupted parties on both sides.

The modern political debate of Right vs. Left aside, one road is the road that leads to **the celestial city** whose **king came as an infant**, grew into **a wise servant**, who **saved the people** of that city though many never heard of him, who **struck the serpent** with a death blow, and who is **exalted as King of kings**. There is only one Ruler you bow to here. This is Jesus. There is only one kingdom that matters here. The Kingdom of God. The other is the road that leads to destruction, whose king is the Lord of Flies, whose city is rust and ruin, chaos and calamity, even at its best, it is always tending towards chaos, and it's ruler bites the hand that tries to feed and charm it.

The Preacher tells you the path. May the King of kings leads you down the right road by his word. In fact, he is the road. “I am *the way* ... no one comes to the Father but by me” (John 14:6). Politics is not the solution. Only King Jesus is.

But this King then gives you wisdom related to our passage, wisdom to be heard in light of his Kingly good reign and rule.²⁴ *Of your words and actions* he says, “Out of the abundance of the heart *the mouth speaks*. The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure” (Matt 12:34–35). “I will *give you words* and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict” (Luke 21:15). To the Ephesians he says, “Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as *wise*, making the most of the time, because the days are evil” (Eph 5:15–16). To the Colossians, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; *teach and admonish* one another in all wisdom” (Col 3:16).

Of the *use wisdom* in a dangerous world he says, “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be *wise as serpents and innocent as doves*” (Matt 10:16). Of speaking ill towards others he says, “Nothing is covered up

²⁴ The following are inspired from Greidanus, 247-48.

that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have *whispered behind closed doors* will be proclaimed from the housetops” (Luke 12:2–3).

And one day, he says, “Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the *sheep on his right*, but the *goats on the left*. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’ (Matt 25:32-34).

Appendix: Ecclesiastes 10:2 and Modern Political Theory

*A wise man's heart inclines him to the right,
but a fool's heart to the left.*

Introduction

Ecclesiastes 10:2 is a passage that often comes up in a modern political context. It has always been interesting to me when showing different friends this verse, that the more conservative laugh about it, while the more liberal tend to get angry and deny any possible connection to politics. Could this verse have any sort of relation to the modern political Right-Left divide? Might these reactions of my friends expose something true at the core of the theological statement of the verse?

It is anachronistic to say that Solomon has in mind something like voting for Republicans instead of Democrats. Besides, today's Republicans are often far more to the left than most blue-collar Democrats were after WWII. Frankly, I think the current situation is much more like a current meme: *Why are people so interested in having a three-party system? I'd settle for just two!* In many ways, the two-party system of modern America is an illusion at best. And a Uniparty that simply disguises itself as Right vs. Left has no real spectrum. Nevertheless, Right and Left political thinking does exist. So, could Ecclesiastes 10:2 actually speak to this matter?

To try to answer this question, we will look at the four things. 1. The context of the passage. 2. The ubiquity of the idea that right is *good* and left is *bad*. 3. The origins of the way we today divide one side of the political spectrum as "left" and the other as "right." 4. The occult background that sits squarely in the middle of this origin. From there, we can draw a tentative hypothesis.

The Context of Ecclesiastes 10:2

First, a brief look at the context of this verse is in order. It appears to form the center of a chiasmic structure that goes from 9:13-10:20 (Brown, 204):

A Introduction (9:13)

B Wisdom is better than much folly (9:14–16)

C Wisdom is vulnerable to a little folly (9:17–10:1)

D **The contrast of wise and foolish men (10:2–3)**

C' Wisdom is vulnerable to a little folly (10:4–9)

B' Wisdom is better than much folly (10:10–15)

A' Conclusion (10:16–20)

This means that each element of the passage is parallel in some meaningful way and that the center, our verse, is the driving thought of the text.

Furthermore, each element of the passage contains some kind of reference to a political situation. For example, Greidanus (242-45) outlines most of these units with the word “politics.”

- I. Reflection on wisdom’s strength in *politics* and its vulnerability to a little folly (9:13–10:1)
- II. Opposite inclinations of the wise and fools with a command to use wisdom in *politics* (10:2–4)
- III. Reflection on the *political* order being overturned by the ruler’s error (10:5–7)
- IV. Use wisdom in your daily work to avoid getting hurt (10:8–11)
- V. Proverbs contrasting the words of the wise with the babble of fools (10:12–15)
- VI. Opposite *political* orders with a final command to use wisdom in speaking (10:16–20)

His sections include references “a great king” (9:14) and a “ruler” (17), a “ruler” and “princes” (10:5-7), and a “king” (16, 17, 20), “nobility” and “princes” (17). And, he includes our section under the term of “politics” because of vs. 4’s “ruler.” This leaves 10:8-15 that seem to be lacking a political idea.

Of this last unit, two things should be noticed. The first is that the Targum interprets the first of these verses as a kind of prophetic statement of the Babylonian exile, specifically calling out “the wicked king who bites like a serpent” (8), “king Solomon,” king “Manasseh,” and “the king of Assyria” (9), the king of Assyria’s brother “Rabshakeh” (10), and the “fiery serpents” of Babylon (11). Moreover, reading the biting serpents of vs. 11 with Psalm 58:5 and other texts reveals that they can be a metaphor not only of evil men with foolish mouths, which happens to be the subject of the only remaining verses (12-14), but of evil rulers in particular (Forti, 89). Therefore, the entire text in which Ecc 10:2 finds itself at the center, is political in nature.

The Cultural Ubiquity of “Right” as “Good” and “Left” as “Bad”

Second, it is important to understand that right as *good* and left as *bad* and various associated concepts is not relegated to the Bible, although this is clearly the overwhelming usage of the metaphor in the Bible (Ryken, 361-62). A few examples will suffice. As chronicled in the book *Right and Left*, the Nuer people of southern Sudan would “put their left arm out of action for long periods by binding it with metal rings” because “the right side is the good side and the left side the evil side” (Lloyd, *Right and Left*, 168). The Bantu tribes scattered over thousands of miles throughout central and southern Africa refer to the right hand as “male,” “strong,” “great,” while the left is “female,” “inferior,” and other related ideas (Werner, *Right and Left*, 427). The Māori people of New Zealand identify the right as sacred, the seat of good creative powers, and the side of the gods, while the left is profane, possessing no virtue, and is the side of the devil (Hertz, *Right and Left*, 12). For certain North American Indians, the right signifies bravery, power, and virility, while the left is death, destruction, and burial. In fact, they don’t even need to use words, just the respective hands with gestures to convey those very ideas (Hertz, 14). For the Greeks, the right was lucky and auspicious, the left was unlucky and inauspicious (Lloyd, 170). We could go on and on. But all this is what leads scholars to say things like “‘Right’ and ‘left’ are ... universally-understood

symbols for right and wrong, good and bad, success and misfortune” (Jarick, 251). Because they are universally understood, *everyone understands them*.

The Origins of the Modern “Right” and “Left” Spectrum

It is into this notion that everyone already understands what right and left symbolize that we need to now deal with the question of the origin of the modern political spectrum that we call left and right. Of course, everyone knows that as we talk about it, “conservatives” are on the right, and the spectrum goes farther right to reactionaries. It is important to mention here a common and dangerous misconception, though it is not within the scope of this essay to examine it in any great detail. Fascism is often taught in our schools as being the farthest right end of the spectrum. This is most likely due to the fascist’s hatred of communism. Fascists were anti-communists. However, as the Nazi Party’s official designation clearly tells you, fascism is socialism. They were the National *Socialist* German Worker’s Party. They were every bit as much a revolutionary group as the communists ever were, and revolutionaries/radicals and socialists are what we always think of as the far left of the spectrum. Socialism is itself much farther left than, say, the classical Democrat party, which everyone labels as being on the left, even though they also opposed communism for decades. Fascism and communism, while hating one another, nevertheless share the common socialist agenda of all leftists. In these ways, we understand that the political spectrum is made up of radicals, communists and fascists (socialists), and modern “liberals” on the left, and conservatives and reactionaries on the right. So where did this political idea of a right and left originate?

The answer is, the French Revolution. It is important to understand up front that the French Revolution was a kind of Bizarro-Superman imposter, an opposite of the American Revolution but pretending to be the same thing. Like our own Revolution which sought freedom from a tyrannical dictator, so the French sought freedom from their king. But our revolution wanted freedom to serve God, while the French Revolution wanted freedom *from* God. Ours used violence

as a last resort when the king of England left the colonists with no choice. Theirs used violence as a first resort, and continued it until the nation, and indeed western civilization as the French had understood it for centuries, was in shambles. The two movements could not have been more different, even as they both said with their words that they wanted freedom and equality for all. We will return to this double-speak later.

It was at the beginning of the French Revolution, in 1789, that a radical militant group known as the Jacobins rose to power. As Hodgson puts it, the Jacobins “as a whole were the *Left*” (Hodgson, 33). Why? It was the Jacobins who quite literally and physically stood up in a political chamber and were the first to move to the *left side* of the President’s chair in the National Constituent Assembly of 1789. As Baron de Gauville explained: “We began to recognize each other: those who were loyal to religion and the king took up positions to the right of the chair so as to avoid the shouts, oaths, and indecencies that enjoyed free rein in the opposing camp” (cited in Hodgson, 32).

Those on the Right were the “conservatives,” those who wanted “to maintain the authority of the crown by means of a royal veto, to preserve some rights of the aristocracy, to have an unelected upper house, to maintain major property and tax qualifications for voting. By contrast, the Left demanded an end to aristocratic privileges, limitations to the power and privileges of the church, [and] a single-chamber legislature in which all power rested with democratically elected representatives” (Hodgson, 33). Sounds like America? It wasn’t.

The Jacobins, the leftists, were radical agitators and activists who put Antifa and BLM to shame (at least, thus far), and those two organizations were responsible for billions of dollars’ worth of damage of small, minority businesses, and the murders of dozens of people in 2020. In a short history of the Jacobins, Ossebaard and Koeter (episode 2), using Barruel’s *History of Jacobinism* as a main source, say it was the Jesuit order that was behind the formation the Jacobins, who became their tool to create instability and chaos throughout France to get their revolution. The Jesuit order itself had a dark and unholy birth, in the secret societies of the occult medieval world. We are living in curious times, and as compelling as their retelling

of this history such a perspective is, it is also gaining enough traction to have entire articles, like the one written by Doyle (which begs the whole question throughout his piece), calling out the so-called “conspiracy theories” of the dialectic.

The Hegelian Dialectic and the Occult

This takes us to the fourth point we must understand. This is the Hegelian Dialectic that sprouted from the soul of the French Revolution. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in 1770 and died in 1831. He lived through the most revolutionary epoch that Europe had yet seen—the overthrow of the regime of France, the wars of Napoleon, his defeat, and the restorations. When revolution broke out, Hegel was a student at Tübingen, and apparently, he planted a tree in its honor. Hegel would have gladly welcomed Napoleon’s revolution to make its entry into Germany, and never ceased to celebrate the fall of Bastille during his remaining years on this earth (Arthur, 18).

It has been argued that Hegel criticized neither the French Revolution nor its revolutionaries (Wildt in Kline, n.p.), and that even his criticism of the Jacobian Terror was severely blunted saying it they did it due to a lack of understanding and a false view of “absolute freedom” (Higonnet, 120). Indeed, Hegel “celebrates revolutions from above,” “is far more progressive ... than the liberal political press” and “never demonizes [the French Revolution].” He said that Robespierre “carried out universally admired *facta* [facts],” and the violent nature of the revolution was forced by the fact that “the court, the clergy, the nobility, the parliament would not yield their privileges” and who caused the whole thing by their “greed” and “wealth” and insistence to “plunder government funds and the people’s hard work.” In short, Hegel is “generally positive [of] the global revolutionary process that marks the end of the *ancien régime*” (Losurdo, 104-107).

It is out of this spirit that he developed his famous “dialectic” which has been called *the algebra of revolution* (Arthur, 18; Rees). The Hegelian Dialectic is a difficult concept, but the short of it is that it pits together two contradictions out of which necessity creates a solution. These are called *thesis*, *antithesis* (the

contradiction), and *synthesis* (resolution). This Dialectic has been interpreted in very different ways, by both the Right and the Left, ironically, by two sides holding basically contradictory positions! However, it was the Left, particularly those called the *Young Hegelians*, that for the sake of history, won the day.

Karl Marx is a case in point. Marx was himself a Young Hegelian (and a Jesuit!). Beginning with him, all forms of communism down to the present woke ideology that has infiltrated the West, have used it. Part of the way this developed in the Left, was to deliberately take words and empty them of their historical meaning, importing literally the opposite meaning into them and then using them in almost militaristic ways. Sounds like that Bizarro-Superman we called the French Revolution. In a fascinating lecture, James Lindsay gives examples such as “science,” “tolerance,” “racism,” “diversity,” “de-colonialism,” and more, where each word is a kind of Orwellian double-speak, a literal opposite of the original meaning (Lindsey, 1:49:00ff).

He calls this double-speak *sophistry*, a kind of *gnostic* abuse of words that only the initiated truly understand. They do this for subversive reasons, taking over the language of any culture they seek to overthrow. This causes the people’s language to become contradictory and they don’t even recognize it. They think that in supporting these revolutionaries causes, they support tolerance, for example. But the tolerance they support is double-speak, an inherently intolerant racism of its own. This kind of linguist alchemy belies a badly misunderstood truth. Those who decry and wish to overthrow religion and god—Hegel, Marx, the communists, the new communists, the wokists, and other Leftists in this tradition, have replaced traditional religion with a kind of materialistic version of the occult where the dialectic creates a kind of hermetic alchemy in culture, a culture that will become magically void of all the basic elements known to Western Civilization for the last 1,500 years through the Dialectic.

The Hypothesis: Solomon Didn’t Know Modern Politics, Modern Politics Knew Solomon

To go into more detail about this magic at this point would take too much space. I recommend the lecture by Lindsey. But we now have enough information and groundwork for me to lay down my theory on the relationship of Ecclesiastes 10:2 to the modern political paradigm of right vs. left. Solomon did not have the modern political spectrum in mind, but those who originated the modern spectrum may very well have had Solomon in mind. How so?

Given the antichrist mentality of the French Revolution and the communism that arose out of Hegel's thought—who himself was rather a fan of all but the most violent actions of the Revolution, is it too much to suggest that the reason the Jacobins went to the left of the chair at the start of all this was precisely because they were subverting the meaning of good and bad in their creation of a new Right and Left? Clearly, they didn't think of *themselves* as the bad. But they took the left side anyway. And from the words of de Gauville, they made the first move. Those conservatives who went right, were reacting.

Am I suggesting this was done consciously? Not necessarily. However, it is clearly a fact that ever since the Young Hegelians, they are all their descendants have taken great pride on being “Left.” Who would do that given the universal knowledge of “right” and “left?” Curiously, many of those who espouse their same views among the laity, often unwittingly, but sometimes quite knowingly, are like so many of my liberal friends when it comes to Ecc 10:2. They do not wish to be labelled as “Left.” They always want to be labeled as “Centrists.” Goodness, even Bernie Sanders is now a “Centrist” to these people. Meanwhile, those of us on the right are and have always been quite proud of being Right. The way that word in that sentence has an obvious double entendre (position and morality) is case in point. Right has always meant good. We don't need or want to be labelled as Centrists, because we know the transcendent meaning known to all cultures that right is good and left is bad.

I'm suggesting that the Jacobins, the Young Hegelians, the Marxists, and the Wokists all know it too. And they intentionally subverted the universal meaning. Like the French Revolution itself, which used all the same words as the American Revolution, but was a Leftist Revolution in contrast to a truly Right Revolution

in America, this initial movement that took place in a political building in France in 1789 to the Left of the president's chair and from whence we get today's spectrum, was a bastardizing of transcendent right and left, a kind of double-speak of motion from people who from the beginning have been hell-bent on destroying everything that is "traditional." Perhaps this was a deliberate overthrow of transcendent right and left with a revolution of words, a revolution that makes left right, and right wrong.

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