



1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. 2 For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged. 3 A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food. 4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them. 5 Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things. 6 Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich. 7 Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father. 8 He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. 9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. 10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession. 11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out. 12 When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden. 13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. 14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. (Proverbs 28:1-14)

Several years ago, I stopped at a gasoline station in Daleville, Alabama near the large Cairns Army Airfield where my office was located. Another pilot friend was filling up his car. He was laughing a bit so I asked him what was so funny. He said that when he pulled into the station, a policeman came running out yelling something at a lady who was pulling out in an old Ford Mustang. The lady gave the car the gas and sped out toward Enterprise (about 8 miles away). The policeman jumped in his car and tried to catch her, but the terms were now changed. She was speeding and driving recklessly. The policeman called ahead to Enterprise police who were waiting for her. When she arrived at the circle in Enterprise, several police cars pursued. She went all the way around the circle and headed back to Daleville. Just as she was passing the gas station where the chase began, she blew the engine on the Mustang. A subsequent search of the car revealed several packages of illegal drugs. Oh, and by the way: the reason the officer had run out of the station yelling at the lady was because she had not waited for her \$10 change from the cashier and the policeman was trying to return it. So the proverb holds very true: 1 "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion." If we have nothing to hide, we have no reason to run.

Guilt is the parent of fear.

*"It is a sad calamity to see a kingdom spoiled, and a Church afflicted; priests slain with the sword, and the blood of nobles mingled with the cheaper and; religion made the cause of trouble, and the best of men most cruelly persecuted; government turned, and laws ashamed; judges decreeing in fear and covetousness, and the ministers of holy things setting themselves against all that is sacred. And what shall make recompense for this heap of sorrows, when God shall send such swords of fire? Even the mercies of God, that shall then be made public when the people shall have suffered for their sins. For I have known a luxuriant rule swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but little clusters to the wine-press. But when the Lord of the vine has caused the dressers to cut the wilder part, and make it bleed; it grew temperate in its vain expence of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy branches, and made account of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. It is thus of an afflicted kingdom, cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins. It bleeds for its long riot, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastised for its wantonness. And when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire hath purged the rest, then it enters into the double joys of restitution, and gives God thanks for his rod, and confesses the mercies of God in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and his anger into mercy."-- **Jeremy Taylor** (Works, vi, 182)*

**2 "For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged."** When men are unworthy of the liberty God has granted, they will lose it to a succession of rulers, each worse than the first. Strife and civil war follow hard on the heels of social immorality. Oppression takes the place of freedom, and tyranny fills the role of justice. The citizen may be shocked at the sudden collapse of order and propriety, and blame it upon unprincipled men; but unprincipled men come to power only when permitted by the citizenry. God sends us that which we deserve. If we claim that "character doesn't matter," God will send us someone to PROVE that character DOES matter!

**3 "A poor man that oppreseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food."** There is something unnatural and exceedingly repugnant about a man arising from a poor background to wealth and honor who forgets the geography of his raising and puts on imperious airs. If we forget our points of origin, we will likely not know our destination. False pride is greater in one who has become suddenly rich. He has not well adapted to the new reality and thinks himself better than those from whom he arose. We might even suggest that there are Christians, newly coming into the covenant of grace, who now consider themselves more knowledgeable of the things of God than ministers whose studies have been diligent over many years.

**4 "They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them."** In our day, we are considered radical and labeled with all sorts of insulting labels if we stand against the leading sins of our day. Even our own government has forsaken the law of righteousness and, contrary to Scripture, called that which is good, bad; and that which is bad, good. If an athlete or some Hollywood figure "comes out of the closet" as homosexual, observe the commendation and praise they receive from the media and politicians. They are praised for evil. But we of faith are clearly told that we must not vacate the field of battle, but must CONTEND against them. We place our reputations on the line, our well-being, and our sacred honor in contending with the emerging evil that has become the enemy of God and of our own souls.

**5 "Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all things."** Do you believe that the wicked who are promoting abortion and homosexuality are doing so out of an innocent understanding? You would be wrong.

They KNOW the law and judgment of God, but prefer to reject it - even if they argue otherwise. I am presently in a debate with a Canadian group that argue for homosexual marriage (there is nothing GAY about homosexuality). I offer Bible verse upon Bible verse, yet they argue back about social trends and the tastes of modern youth. They will not address the matter from a biblical perspective for they know they will lose that argument. If we "*seek first the kingdom of God, all these things shall be added unto us.*" That includes all needed for life, and it means wisdom and justice as well.

6 "*Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.*" There is no dishonor in being poor unless we are lazy as well. But many are poor because of oppression and treachery in high places. Heaven will likely have a larger population of the poor than of the rich. First of all, there are a lot more poor people than rich; and secondly, riches often drive our minds and heart from the straight and narrow path onto the broad way that leads DOWN to destruction. Wealth is a tempter.

7 "*Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he that is a companion of riotous men shameth his father.*" How familiar of Solomon's writings are these words. When we keep the law, the books are forever balanced; but when we carouse with the wicked, we exempt ourselves from the observance of righteousness and find, at last, that we are lost and sinful - helpless to get out of the ditch our wicked habits have dug.

8 "*He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.*" Greed and envy will provide its own judgment and reward in the dark abscesses of Hell. Many years ago, I had a neighbor who was a Major in the Army. He was also a pilot drawing additional flight pay. His wife came to visit my wife and when she left, she damaged another young woman's Mo-ped that was parked in the driveway behind her car. She said nothing, but picked the Mo-ped up and moved it to the side. Later, the young woman to whom the Mo-ped belonged (a beautiful Japanese girl) discovered that the engine case on her Mo-ped was cracked. She was married to a lower ranking enlisted man. She asked me what she should do. I advised her to speak with my neighbors wife and explain her situation. (My son had witnessed the accident) The major's wife denied any culpability. I advised the young woman to carry the matter to small claims court which she did. The physical evidence was convincing against the major's wife, and my son's testimony sealed the case. The major had to pay for all damages and hardships. One week later, a speeding car struck the major's antique MGB sports car, parked in front of his house, which he had worked tirelessly at restoring with all original parts like new. The MGB was totaled and the driver who struck it did not stop. The insurance company did not cover the MGB because it was an antique car. They never found out who destroyed the major's car, but in a roundabout way, I believe God did it. That is consistent with this verse of Proverbs.

9 "*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*" This reminds me of the many prayer requests we get from people whose presence never darkens the doors of the church. In a combat unit, the religious nut is ridiculed and demeaned, that is, until the unit is under heavy fire and the position about to be overrun by the enemy. It is then that the worm turns. The former hecklers turn to the "religious nut" to pray for them. Truly, there are no foxhole atheists. Those who care so little for the Word of God as not to read and study it have no right to the claims made by God in His Book of Life. So the prayers offered by such men go unheralded and unheard. "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*" (Psalms 66:18)

**10 "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession."** That is one who deceives or swindles a righteous man and tries to ruin him in his finances will face the same fate and worse. In a moral sense, the wicked who lead a righteous man into sin through temptations and allurements will sink far deeper than he was at the beginning; but the righteous man shall recover his character and be restored.

**11 "The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out."** Have you noticed the disproportionate number of children from wealthy families turn out to be rotten to the core? The rich class believe that they are actually a higher breed of mankind and not subject to the same common sense logic that poorer families observe. They give their children every toy they want, and leave them too often to their own imaginations. The rich have an unreasonably high regard for themselves. They believe their wealth gives them expertise in fields they have never travelled. But the understanding man among the poor can detect dandy fraud every time. He may even laugh at the foolish suppositions of the wealthy man who puts on airs.

**12 "When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden."** True and lasting joy comes at the triumph of righteousness. The land itself will be blessed by the works of righteous men and women and will be a land of rejoicing instead of a land of mourning. When, however, the wicked gain power, there is nothing but fear and sorrow. We see the beginnings of this in our own fair country. Organs of government are being mobilized to spy on every private aspect of the lives of the people. Looking ahead to chapter 29, we see this clarified: "***When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.***" (Prov 29:2)

**13 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."** When we are busy covering our tracks of sins, we are overburdened with guilt and stress. Even though there may be moments of success, yet the old record is still there waiting to be discovered of our sins. Sooner or later, those sins will be revealed and our castle of sand will crumble. Confession is the best heart medicine the Great Physician can prescribe. Without it, there can be no salvation; with it, all guilt evaporates and peace of mind is the result.

**14 "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."** When I most feared my next physics test, those were the times that I performed best; because I prepared well for the inevitable. When we have wandered away from our Lord, a gnawing fear should possess our hearts. Suppose we should die in our unrepented sins. So we are drawn back to the Table of Grace and confess our careless sins of commission and omission....to what result? We shall then have a happy, relieved, and contented heart. If we deny the reign of the Holy ghost in our hearts for too long, we shall discover that our wickedness grows more and more acute. If we allow our hearts to be calloused to the voice of the Holy Ghost, we will cease to hear His beckoning appeals though He continues to speak them. Have you ever fallen from grace so far that it took much prayer and searching to return?