



1 "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. 2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. 3 Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance. 4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it. 5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet. 6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice. 7 The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it. 8 Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath. 9 If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest. 10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul. 11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards. 12 If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked. 13 The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes. 14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever." (Proverbs 29:1-14)

As we close in on the final chapters of Proverbs, we look back on almost six months of immersion in this book of Wisdom. We are reminded in reflection over the past chapters that these are the proverbs of Solomon. The wisdom he preaches is not a fad or a fashion, but ancient and proven, and also from God. That which is old and has proven itself is much more reliable than that which is being heralded today as politically correct or "based on recent studies from a leading university." Wisdom is immutable - not subject to change. The greater its antiquity, the more sound and trustworthy its truth. It is for this reason that I prefer to read the works of the ancient church fathers and those of the Reformation to the pabulum-filled nonsense posing as theology by modern cuff-linked religious imposters. The present chapter is divided into two separate categories: verses 1-14 are observations on public government while the

remaining verses deal with control in private matters. Never believe that the one does not influence the other for the righteousness of a nation is based on the collective righteousness of her citizens. In America, we cannot blame Caesar, for WE are Caesar. We appoint our leaders and our vote determines national policy - moral or immoral.

The opening verse deals with what our law terms today as "repeat offenders." **1 *"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."*** In executions of beheading in Saudi Arabia, the Headsman (sword-wielding executioner) chants like a muezzin as he approaches the kneeling victim. When his chant nears its fatal ending, he jabs the victim in the side lightly with the sword. The natural response of the victim is to lean forward with a stiffened neck which the skillful headsman energetically decapitates from the body with his second blow. This is not exactly what Solomon is referring to here. But the illustration is applicable. When we become steeped in our crimes, they become a part of our nature. In our earlier sins, we may have felt pangs of guilt at the theft of an old lady's treasure, but with time, that guilty feeling fades and we are calloused in our sins - no longer hearing the whispered words of conscience. We will garner such a long trail of guilt that the remedy can only be our execution by the government once captured. Execution by either decapitation or the electric chair is considered quite final and without remedy by those who comment on such matters...but, of course, that which we considered Christian charity is a crime worthy of death in Islamic countries because of their warped and intractable sense of religion.

2 *"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."* This is the most articulate expression of government that I have ever read. We, in America, have known righteous government. We have known of the decades of our past when America was a beacon light of hope to the entire world - for peace, for medical advances, for technology, for missionary zeal, and for education; but those days have gone a glimmering. We are not a righteous people who have fallen victim to ungodly rulers because we knew the character of those we sent to Congress and the Presidency long before we voted for them. So we have gotten EXACTLY what we deserve - no more, and no less. So today, those who are righteous in America mourn the decisions of the unrighteous majority.

The trend to unabated immorality in Washington has reached a near irreversible limit. Of course, if our nation heeded the counsel of 2 Chronicles 7:14 (*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*) there would be a miraculous reversal to the wickedness in government and society. But that bares the greater problem: the people who are "**called by His Name**" are the very culprits at fault. When prayer and Bible were removed unconstitutionally from our public schools, the big churches held their peace. When wholesale abortion was legalized, the same. Now we see the water is seething hot and we wonder how we may extricate ourselves from the boiling death which becomes apparent as a nation. God does not demand the prayers and repentance of all of the people of the land - only "*those who are called by My Name.*" It is difficult to imagine this happening in the Episcopal church while they ordain and consecrate practicing homosexuals and approve of abortion. Or the Baptist churches that insist on a renunciation of their obligations as Christian men and women via the false notion of "separation of church and state." If we believe our mourning is so tragic now, wait just a few more years when the sword of government is turned on those of true faith and religion. We will then recognize the purpose for the First Amendment protecting religion from government.

3 "Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance." A father is made glad to see his sons and daughters practicing wisdom for he knows their futures are made secure from want and famine. A nation comprised of wise sons and daughters will be a nation of far-sighted wisdom in her domestic and diplomatic decisions. But a nation that honors harlots and pimps, whether movie stars or athletes, will be reduced to grinding poverty - not only of treasures, but also of spirit.

4 "The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it." The great institutions of a nation are made firm by a just and uncompromising ruler. But such a ruler is rejected today for the call is always for compromise with a creeping evil constantly. If totalitarian socialism is bad, then just a LITTLE socialism is bad as well. You may drink a near full glass of pure mountain water with only a tiny drop of strychnine which will kill you though most of the water is good.

Who "receiveth gifts" in America today. You may say, "Corrupt politicians." You would be right as far as you spoke; however, there is a greater number of miscreants than just the politicians. What about all who irresponsibly have babies out of wedlock and demand assistance from the government dole, raising delinquents without known fathers? What of all of the special interests groups vying for advantage at the trough of the public treasury? What of the Congressmen and Senators who respond to lobbying pressures to get grants from the taxpayers money to support special projects in their home state? Unfortunately, this is what the Founding Fathers feared most when they guaranteed us a republican (not party) form of government. They feared that, through unprincipled men, the republic they gave us would degenerate into a full blown democracy in which the loudest minority group wielded power over the larger majority, and laws would not be applied equally to all citizens without exception. Their fears have been presently realized in America. Those who receive gifts in America through the reception of taxpayer dollars for which they have not labored are overthrowing our traditional and beloved America. There is no end to the vicious cycle once it is on track. Now men can feel themselves more beholden to government than to God for their fortunes - the intended result of those who have pressed for socialism as opposed to the liberty guaranteed under our Constitution.

Since flattery, by its very nature, is deceitful, it is a favorite ruse of those who wish to swindle and defraud us. 5 "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet." Flattery is never sincere else it is not flattery but an honest assessment. So when we feel that someone is attempting to ingratiate himself to us through flatteries, best get the guard up and part company. Politicians are the most adept at this process. I doubt an honest man could ever aspire to an office higher than city councilman in our day. I doubt, as well, that an officer of the caliber of a Patton, or a MacArthur, or a Nimitz, could ever get beyond the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in today's military.

6 "In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice." The righteous do not need to be careful of what they say that may incriminate them. They have nothing to hide. But the evil man is like a monkey in a room full of rocking chairs. The greater his lies, the longer his tail, until he gets it caught under one of the rockers. But the righteous are satisfied, content, and happy always. "The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble." (Prov 12:13) Errant national policy can also ruin the reputation of a nation. When we treat our allies treacherously, they will not come to our aid in time of trouble.

7 "*The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.*" The best example of this is given by Christ in His parable of the Good Samaritan. The priest and Levite passed by on the other side without so much as investigating the plight of the wounded man by the wayside. But the Good Samaritan came to him, saw his wounds, bound them up, and cared for the injured man left for dead, not only by his robbers, but the religious workers of the Temple.

8 "*Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath.*" It is always wise to confront an aggressor with a reasoned and logical defense, if circumstances permit, than with bristling spears and sabers. He may be angry for no reason, or falsely perceive his national security at risk. Quite often, a small offense garners a swift and overwhelming response. Cannon balls and artillery have no conscience or reasoning capability. A small offense may even be planned by scornful men to provoke the confrontation they desire most. Fort Sumter, a tax collection point off Charleston Bay comes to mind. Rather than responding to that offense by a barrage from the shore batteries, the Southern Army should have simply waited and forced the hand of the aggressor in a more open field of contention. In that way, there would be no doubt of who the aggressor was and what he intended.

9 "*If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.*" The means of approaching a foolish man is irrelevant to the outcome. The wise man must not be so very wise after all if he engages in serious dialogue with a fool. What has been won if you best the fool with reason and logic? Such considerations carry no weight with the fool (because he is a FOOL). Do not waste precious time in such argument or confrontation. Simply ignore the fool and go around him if need be.

10 "*The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.*" Here is a profound contrast in the outlook of an evil man toward the righteous, and the righteous toward the evil. Those who thirst for blood HATE the righteous; but the righteous are constantly seeking to redeem and save the soul of the bloodthirsty. How many valiant missionaries have died at the hands cannibals and savages in attempting to inform them of the benefits made available to them in Christ?

11 "*A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.*" It is not a wise national policy to proclaim your intended military moves before they are taken. A fool will reveal every detail of his plans to the world while his enemy makes appreciable preparations to counter his moves. We see that very thing happening at the top of our national government as I write. General Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall) never informed even his top staff of the next move of his army. As a result, his maneuvers and engagements were always a shock to an unprepared enemy. Perhaps we need some of that wisdom at the top echelons of government today.

12 "*If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.*" Stupid is as stupid does" was a line from Forrest Gump that has some application here. The ruler who is unscrupulous will surround himself with councilors of the same caliber. The good ruler will verify every claim and not trust important matters to the word alone of subordinates. And a good ruler will never blame a mistake on his subordinates for he is their mentor.

13 "*The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the LORD lighteneth both their eyes.*" We are all cast upon the sea of life in a common vessel. We encounter the same storms and turmoil. But our approach to life differs from the deceitful man to the

simple poor. But it is God who grants the light of life to each. Having a common Maker, why do we deceive and hurt?

14 *"The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever."* Do you know that there is only ONE King who has faithfully judged the poor in ages past, in the present age, and in all future years? It is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! We certainly have lesser examples in kings such as Solomon and Cyrus the Great. Cyrus the Great was the first King of a broad empire that showed mercy and justice to his conquered subjects. But there is only One King who has, without exception, met the criteria of this proverb. He has faithfully (always) judged the poor in righteousness, and His Throne is established forever.