

RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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W. Arcel e-mail, gen315@charter.net **Grace and Sanity Ministries July, 2008**

When reading from the book of Proverbs one comes away with a great deal of very practical advice. The admonitions that appear in the Proverbs are profitable because they are true. It's the same with Ecclesiastes. But how well did Solomon do with all the good advice he gave? Did he follow his own advice? Was he saved? One would think so, judging by some key things he wrote. Proverbs 9:10, reads, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." Of course, his father David had written those same words before in Psalm 111:10. But when did Solomon write "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom?" Was it at the beginning of his knowledge of God? Was it in the middle? Was it at the end? The end of his life, that is. It matters, because at the beginning of his reign, he asked God for wisdom, instead of personal gain of riches or power. Solomon recognized that the task of governing all the people of the nation, Israel, and judging between good and bad, was beyond his capacity. So, he asked God for an understanding and wise heart. God was pleased that Solomon had asked this thing. At that point in his life, Solomon appears genuinely humble, seeking the wisdom that only God can give. When Solomon was finished building the Temple, that David wanted to build but which God would not allow him to, he offered this prayer in chapter 8:verse 23 of First Kings: "And he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart." This was a prayer by Solomon thanking God for allowing him to complete what David had purposed in his heart, to build a house for God.

Did Solomon know what he was saying when he said "there is no God like thee in heaven above or earth beneath?" Did he really believe that? Because if he had believed that, he would have never gone into idolatry. It is said of Solomon that he was the wisest man who ever lived. Yet, at another point in his life, he went completely contrary to the Law of God. Specially so, particularly so, extremely so, inadmissibly so, disgracefully so, scandalously so, intolerably so. Solomon's rebellion and treachery against God, is one of those examples who gives me pause as to the "once saved, always saved," cliché. Solomon seemed to know everything he needed to know, and yet he turned his back on God. If I had known Solomon when he wrote Proverbs (at least, the portions attributed to him) I would say, without a doubt, this man is saved. It puzzles me and frightens me. Oh, I don't fear for myself, I'm going to cling to God no matter what, I'm going to

hang onto him come what may. Nobody is going to pry my fingers off his coat. I'm not going anywhere. Where would I go? I have been out there, outside of Christ, away from his love and ultimate comfort, away from his incomprehensible mercy. What else is there in the world other than Jesus Christ? My concern is toward those who think they are saved but are careless in their relationship with God.

Whatever it is, Solomon, judging by his writings, appears to be saved. God looks with favour on him for asking for wisdom instead of riches. But how is it, then, that he went into all kinds of idolatry? How can a man who knew so much go so far astray? He built temples for every god of the heathen, false gods to which his wives belonged. He voluntarily went exactly against the Law of God, against the very first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Once you set that commandment aside all the others are much easier to violate. Where was Solomon's wisdom? He could discern who was the mother of a child, but he could not discern that if he went against God's commandments things would be disastrous? What happened, then? Did God give him only an earthly type of wisdom and not a spiritual wisdom? Did God not warn him enough about the consequences of idolatry? Was he not afraid of God enough? At the very least, he had the Scriptures, the Law God gave to Moses, and the Psalms which his own father, David, had written. Solomon had plenty of warning and admonition, yet, he worshiped other gods.

First Kings, 11:4, "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father."

First Kings, 11:9, "And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice."

God appeared to Solomon twice, and that was not enough for Solomon? I just hope that he wrote what he wrote before his death, otherwise, it looks like he might have died unsaved. But his heart was turned away from the Lord his God when he was old, and there is no indication that he repented, that is, turned back to God, before he died.

After many, many, transgressions, the final thing is that God became angry with Solomon. How could it be otherwise? Solomon's heart was never perfect with God, he hedged his bets, he figured that maybe the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was not the only version of God that was true. Perhaps what the heathen believed was just as valid. Maybe these other gods had just as much influence in the invisible world. So, he hedged his bets. Oh, God so hates that! It is a terrible thing to fall in the hands of an angry God. But, maybe everyone has to know first hand that there is nothing out there. Can a person who is chosen to be saved rebel against God to the point of losing his salvation? I tell you, the best

policy would be to be very vigilant, and brook no other choice but Christ.