

**Ecclesiastes 7: 23-25; “All this I have Proved by Wisdom”, A Bible
Study conducted on February 16th, 2011, by Pastor
Paul Rendall at the Rendall Home.**

There are many lessons that a person must learn, in learning to live their life unto God, so that they will not live unto the world and the flesh. There are many things which need to be proved to a Christian by his seeking and finding wisdom. In these verses Solomon is re-capping all that he has said thus far in this book about the importance of learning wisdom. He had been given great wisdom by God, but he was still learning wisdom's ways. He was learning that God's wisdom was not always easy to find. This is the way that it is for all who would find God, and who would know God better. Here in these verses we find that King Solomon has proven three things to himself. First, He has proven to himself that to find wisdom takes more than self-determination. He has proven, secondly, the reason for that; that wisdom has great depths to it. And then thirdly, we find that in his search for greater wisdom, that he proved that it was good to seek out the reason of things. These are the things that he will continue to speak of, and to build upon until the end of the book when he reaches his conclusion. So, this evening I want us to think about the nature of wisdom for a few minutes, so that we will see its importance and seek for it diligently in the days to come.

1st – Solomon had proven to himself that to find wisdom takes more than self-determination. (Verse 23)

“All this I have proved by wisdom.” “I said, ‘I will be wise’; but it was far from me.” You notice that he was a man who was determined to be wise, but the wisdom that he would find was “far from him”. It was hard to find. It was not easy to get to it, or attain to it. He is speaking as a believer in God. Let me say it plainly; there are some people in the world who are foolish, and there are also some who are wise. The foolish are those who say, “There is no God.” The wise are those who know that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11, verse 6) Those who believe in God are those who have found a wisdom outside of themselves; a wisdom which comes from God. They are not those who are wise in their own eyes. They have learned that all true and lasting wisdom comes from God, and from the Scriptures, His revealed written Word, which He uses to make people wise. Solomon received this revelation directly from God. We, as believers receive it mediately through His Word. He builds wisdom into the believer's thoughts and their hearts, which will then hopefully translate into a faithful obedience to Him over time. Turn over to 2 Timothy 3, verse 13. “But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to

make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Notice that the Scriptures are “able to make you wise for salvation”. They are able to do this, but unless someone gives them to us, or preaches to us the way of salvation in Christ, which is by faith; we will continue on to grow up to become one of those evil people who will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. And unless we continue to ask for further wisdom to build upon what we have been given, we may well lose that which we have been given. We will not lose our salvation, if God has done a good work of grace in our heart, but we may dishonor God and ourselves if we do not seek for the wisdom which is from above. If you do not use the wisdom given to you by God, then you will lose it. God is faithful to His promises, but expects us to often ask Him for wisdom. Becoming a wiser person is not simply a matter of self-determination.

True knowledge is a great part of wisdom. If you want to be wise, you must know the truth. And true knowledge comes from the Scriptures. Solomon did have the Scriptures taught to him, but being wise, he knew, was a matter of taking that true knowledge which he had learned, and rightly applying it to the various situations of life that he encountered. He was not only a king, but he grew up to become a prophet of the Lord who wrote 3 books of the Bible. But even he, had to learn that wisdom is the right application of true knowledge. To order to become wise in many things, the truth of what he learned; he needed to be rightly applying and building upon what he already knew. Again; the true Christian is not a person who has simply said in their own self-determination; I will be wise. No, he is one who has been given the grace to be wise unto salvation, and then he actually builds upon that wisdom which he has been given by bringing forth good works to God’s glory. Solomon had wisdom and grace which was given to him when he was very small because he asked for it. In some very good ways, then, he built upon that grace. He knew the great promises and the great wisdom that had been given to his father David. And he acted upon what his father had told him that God had intended; all that he should be and do as a king. But he knew that he needed more than his father’s counsel. He needed God’s wisdom. Look at 2 Chronicles Chapter 1, verse 6. “And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the Lord, which was at the tabernacle of meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.” “On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, ‘Ask!’” “What shall I give you?” “And Solomon said to God: ‘You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place.’” “Now, O Lord God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.” “Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?” “Then God said to Solomon: ‘Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king—wisdom and knowledge are granted

to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like.” So, we see here, that special grace came to Solomon in relation to having the Scriptures read to him when he was little, and as he was growing up. He didn’t simply say, “I will be wise and holy. He prayed about it, and asked God for it. Wisdom was something that he was taught his need of, both by his hearing the Scriptures, and by the good Holy Spirit of God working that truth into his heart.

By way of application: We should see from this that man by nature is not good or wise, and if he doesn’t improve upon the Scriptural knowledge that he has, he will not believe in God at all. Romans Chapter 1, verse 20 – “For since the creation of the world, His (God’s) invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” “Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four footed animals and creeping things.” Why were they not wise? Why did they fall to worshipping the creature rather than the creator? Because they did not improve upon the true knowledge of God which had been told to them by their godly forefathers. They professed to be wise, but they only followed their own thoughts and came to their own conclusions about the meaning of life. They didn’t seek further revelation from God in accordance with His revelation of Himself. They ended up following those futile thoughts in their foolish hearts, to their own sinful conclusions. And as a result they began to worship the works of their own hands. They fell into idolatry. They ceased to be wise. But we want to see that not only is wisdom essential if we are to find salvation; wisdom is also essential if we would be righteous and holy people who are useful to God. Many people who know the Lord need to better consider this principle. Just because we have found the wisdom which leads to salvation, doesn’t mean that we will automatically have wisdom in the way that we work out that salvation in the way that we live our lives. Solomon said, “I will be wise”, but it was far from him. Which leads us to the next truth about wisdom which Solomon proved to himself:

2ndly – Solomon proved to himself that God’s Wisdom has great depths to it.

(Verse 24)

“As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out?” We have seen that when Solomon was young, that he asked God for wisdom and God gave it to him. But we need to see that Solomon was primarily asking for discernment on how to rule God’s people. It would take a greater wisdom than that, in order for him to be able to keep His own heart. In some of the things that he did while he was king, he was wise and holy. Such was the case in his building a

temple for the Lord. This was in accordance with the Lord's revealed will and purpose, and it was confirmed and blessed in many ways. But then there were the decisions to multiply horses and chariots and also to multiply silver and gold. 2 Chronicles 1: 13 – "So Solomon came to Jerusalem (after this wisdom was granted to him in verse 12) from the high place that was at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of meeting, and reigned over Israel." "And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem." Also the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland." "And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price." "They also acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty; thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria." Now Solomon evidently thought that this was wise; to multiply these chariots and horses and silver and gold under his reign. But he must not have consulted the Scriptures, or else he thought that it did not matter. I tend to think that because of the great wisdom that he had been given by God, to rule over the people with; that he took it for granted that his own thoughts on these matters were enough to justify his actions of buying these horses and chariots and multiplying silver and gold. But this is only proof that those who are wise, certainly need more wisdom than they are naturally endowed with. And it is also true that those who are wise certainly need more wisdom than they are initially spiritually have bestowed upon them. In other words, they need to keep reading the Scriptures over and over.

Turn with me to Deuteronomy Chapter 17, verse 14. "When you come into to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me, you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord our God chooses; on e from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.'" "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.'" "Nor shall he multiply silver and gold for himself." Now, it is pretty obvious that these verses pertain to King Solomon directly. It is hard to believe that a man who was as wise as he was did not see them. But there is no doubt that he violated them. Now, let's look over at 1st Kings Chapter 4, verse 29. "And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore." "Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt." "For he was wiser than all men - than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations." "He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one

thousand and five.” “Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish.” “And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom came to the hear the wisdom of Solomon.” Solomon knew by first hand experience, God giving him wisdom and exceeding great understanding, many things about things natural and spiritual. And yet he also came to know that, even with as much as he did know, that there was much that he did not know. This is the application. Will you not see that wisdom is something that you and I ought to study to find and to have and to use, no matter how old we are, and how much we have already done and experienced? We will always have a need to grow in wisdom and understanding in many ways, because of the creative power of God, and his wonders in this world and in the salvation of people’s souls, and all that he would have us to see and do for His glory all these are something which we will always stand in need to grow in. This is because God is infinite in wisdom and understanding. And we are not.

Then thirdly, we find that in Solomon’s search for greater wisdom, that he proved to himself that it was good to seek out the reason of things.

(Verse 25)

“I applied my heart to know, to search and seek out wisdom and the reason of things, to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness.” We will save the full explanation of this until our next study where Solomon will refer to the madness of his having many wives and concubines. But we should understand now, that in the development of Solomon’s becoming wise, that it did involve his coming to understand the reasons why he as a person participated in folly, and foolishness, and madness, even after he came to know the Lord when he was young. The reason is that God had given him wisdom in many things, but he did not give him wisdom in all things, because there was still part of Solomon’s heart that wanted to pursue his own glory, at points, instead of God’s. And the Lord needed to show him the folly and the vanity of this. Solomon should have obeyed the Scriptures which told him not to marry many wives. He should have obeyed the Scriptures which told him not to multiply horses and chariots and gold and silver; but he did all of those things. Solomon thought that he could be wise with God’s wisdom and still do these things, but He could not. And God had to let him prove it to himself. What is wonderful is that God did give Solomon grace to “seek out wisdom and the reason of things”. He did come to see the vanities of these things that he did, which were contrary to the Scriptures.

The application to ourselves is this. Can we expect that God will do any less for us who are trusting in Jesus? He will indeed help us to prove by wisdom, the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness, if we are serious about knowing Him and following Christ. I think of Job. As fine of a man as he was in his integrity, still God had more to teach him, which was part of the reason that the book of Job was written. Job had to be brought to the place where he would lay

his hand on his mouth and say, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer You?" "I lay my hand over my mouth." "Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; yes, twice, but I will proceed no further." (Job 39: 3-5) He was trying to justify himself, and not God in this terrible trial that he was going through. But after God had given and taught him wisdom, He says in Job 42: 2, "I know that you can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You." "You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?'" "Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." There were things which needed to change in Job, which he did not know. And there were things in Solomon, as well, which he needed to see the vanity and folly of. Have you seen, my dear friend that there is no one so wise as God; no one who is such a good teacher as the Lord? "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He teaches sinners in the way." If he had to teach such wise men as Job and Solomon wisdom, then he will have to teach you as well. You make sure that you seek out the reason of things. Ask God to reveal to you if you have any wicked way in you, and to lead you in the way everlasting.