

**Ecclesiastes 7: 29; “This Only have I found”, A Bible Study prepared for the evening of April 13, 2011, conducted at the Rendall home.**

Verse 29 is the conclusion of the verses which went before it; that Solomon had not found a wise and holy woman out of all the 1000 women whom he had married or taken to be his concubines. And he found only one man among a thousand who was wise and holy. I said to you that I believe that this One refers to Christ. It is certainly true that out of all of the men that he knew, perhaps one of a thousand was a man of uprightness of character. But even that one wasn't a righteous man of character apart from the grace of God. He could not be either righteous or holy without faith in the promises of God concerning the Messiah who was coming; our Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon's friend Agur, the son of Jakeh, who added his words to the book of Proverbs in Chapter 30 said this of himself, and he was a very wise man. "Surely I am more stupid than any man, and do not have the understanding of a man." "I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One." But then he goes on to say, "Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?" "Who has gathered the wind in His fists?" "Who has bound the waters in a garment?" "Who has established all the ends of the earth?" "What is His name and what is His Son's name, if you know?" Both Agur and Solomon knew of the Christ who was coming, through the revelation which was given to them from God. And they knew that a man who was truly a man of integrity; a man who was truly wise, was a man who sees himself as "stupid" apart from the revelation of God to him, or her, in Jesus Christ. Solomon knew that Christ, the Messiah would come someday; for God had revealed this to him by appearing to him twice. (1 Kings 11: 9) God revealed this to him in the Song of Solomon in mystical and allegorical word pictures, telling him of the heavenly Bridegroom and His Bride, the Church. God made Solomon himself an eminent type of His Lord who was coming centuries after he lived. Solomon built the temple of God in the Old testament times. Christ is building the Church, the temple of the Lord in New Testament times. Solomon was a great and mighty king of Israel, who was rich in silver and gold and every material thing. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the great and mighty King of not only Israel, but also of all the nations. He is the King of Glory who is rich in grace and abundant in lovingkindness, wisdom, and truth to all who are a part of His spiritual kingdom. Solomon may have failed badly at many points in ruling his kingdom wisely, but our Lord Jesus Christ has never failed in anything that He undertook to do and accomplish, and this, Solomon believed. This promised Messiah was the one of a thousand who he had found to be His Savior, and His Lord. Tonight we want to look at what Solomon found. He says, "This only I have found." What he found was the greatest truth of all concerning man's righteousness. The first aspect of this greatest truth is the fact that God created man upright. The second aspect of this greatest truth is that they have sought out many devices. So tonight we want to look 1<sup>st</sup> for a few minutes, at man's original righteousness. And then 2<sup>nd</sup>ly, we want to look at man's original

and continuing sin. And then to close, we will briefly look at Christ, who is the righteousness of God and man.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Let's look at man's original righteousness.** (verse 29a)

“Truly, this only I have found; that God made man upright.” Now this verse is not simply stating that God created man to walk physically upright. It is true that He did that; man is not like the animals having four legs; a creature to crawl around on the ground. He was created with 2 legs and 2 arms, and God's intent was that he would stand upright. With his hands having opposing fore-fingers he was a creature meant to work and to build things to the glory of God. But the greatest way in which man was created upright was in his soul. He was created in the image and likeness of God. There was no other creature created on this earth, of which this was ever said. Turn with me over to Genesis Chapter 1, verse 26. “Then God said, Let Us make man in our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” So this is where God created man upright; He created him upright at the beginning of the world, in His own image. We will look at other verses in a moment about what this means, but look down at Chapter 9, verse 7. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” “The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.” So what can we conclude about what is given to us here? We can conclude that man's being created in God's image and likeness of God means that both male and female are created in this image. We can conclude that it means, that in our being, as male and female, that we are like God in certain very definable ways which are not entirely spelled out for us here in this passage. However, God did not breath into the animal's nostrils the breath of life. Man; that is, both men and women were created with an eternal soul which is the breath of God placed in their body. The body is that material substance which God originally formed out of the dust of the ground. The word for “the breath of life”, in the Hebrew is plural and it means literally “the breath of lives”. Man is bipartite. He is created body and soul. But in the breath that was given to man there is both soul and spirit. The life of the soul and the spirit is of one more specific life within the other. The soul is the word which is used by the writers of Scripture to describe the over-all immaterial part of man. “What will profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”, Jesus says. But the soul itself is made up of a number of “lives” or aspects. These aspects or spiritual faculties which make up the soul are mind, heart, will, and conscience, broadly speaking. They are the faculties which are directly related to the image of God in man. That which is spiritually related to God directly, and which forms the image of God in man, is that God gave the first man and the first woman spiritual life and ability to think and to reason, and to do what is right so that they might glorify God and

enjoy Him. “God created man upright”, our text in Ecclesiastes says. He also gave to them a free will to choose what they would do in relation to God’s command to them.

This can be verified in our looking at Genesis 2: 16 – “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may feely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’” Now what can we conclude from what is stated here? We can conclude that there was a knowledge which could come to Adam by eating the fruit of this tree, which would not only not be good for him to know, but it would bring about his death. “In dying you shall die” is the way it reads in the original Hebrew. If he transgressed there would be immediately spiritual separation from God in eating of this fruit; spiritual death in transgression and sin. Eventually, physical death would result; the separation of the soul from the body. And without God’s intervention, eternal death; the eternal punishment of God because they as those created by God in His image had sinned against Him, they were deserving this punishment. In this eating of the fruit, all of their spiritual faculties of the soul would be immediately affected by it. The knowledge of good would be desirable to make one wise, but the knowledge of evil which would come in partaking of this fruit would mar and ruin their ability to do all the good that their eyes had been opened to. This was a test that God was giving to Adam and Eve to see if they would stand in their own original righteousness, or whether they would fail to hold to God’s word of what they should do, and fall into sin. They had been created upright. But could they stand in their own righteousness? They had the spiritual life, faculties, reasoning power, and enough revelation given to them by God to live by faith in His word to them, but they failed when Satan came and seduced Eve with false reasonings about what God has said, and then Adam heeded the voice of his wife and ate as well. Eve’s sin was based upon deception. Adam’s sin was disobedience to God’s word and heeding his wife instead of God. He was created upright, but he sought out the device of heeding his wife instead of his God.

**This leads us to our 2<sup>nd</sup> point of tonight’s study: Let’s look at man’s original and continuing sin.** (verse 29b)

“God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.” I take it that by the words, “many schemes”, Solomon means that people since the Fall have sought out and developed many other ways of looking at the whole subject of righteousness, than the way in which God has laid out in His Word and commandments. These are called in our text, “schemes”, or “devices”, or “inventions”. This is what Adam’s sin has done to all of mankind. And this is what is confirmed by them every day if they do not have God’s grace given to them in Christ. They will seek out some other way of doing things which is not God’s commanded way of duty. The soul of man, by nature, does not seek for truth and righteousness as God has defined it. It wants to define the meaning of life, and what is important, on its own, apart from the Bible; everything related to what is

right and what is wrong; what is true and what is false. It wants to question the plain statements of God like the Devil with Eve. Look at Genesis 3: 1. “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made, and he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” The began the whole conversation with Eve by questioning God’s word. He suggests that he has a better scheme. He couples his questioning of God’s word with a lie. “You will not surely die.” He follows that up with a truth so that Eve will take the bait. “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” This scheme convinced her. But it was deceitful scheming. And thus the Fall of all men in Adam who was our representative head. This is the doctrine of original sin – Man lost his original righteousness through the sin of Adam.

But you and I need to understand that all unbelievers will confirm this, their original sin, by their building upon it with their own sin. This is their seeking out many devices. Usually this is done by their pursuing what is right in their own eyes and not having an eye to God’s truth. What is right in our own eyes is not what is right in God’s eyes, whether we are an unbeliever or a believer. Turn with me to Proverbs Chapter 12, verse 15 and you will see this. Here we find the difference between the schemes of unbelieving people, and those who deal truthfully according to God’s word. “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.” “A fool’s wrath is known at once, but a prudent man covers shame.” “He who speaks truth declares righteousness, but a false witness, deceit.” “There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.” “The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” “Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have joy.” “No grave trouble will overtake the righteous, but the wicked shall be filled with evil.” “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.” You can see in these verses that the fool, the person who does not believe in God or acknowledge or take heed to God’s word, thinks that he is right in the way that he thinks about all the different issues in life under consideration, in respect of righteousness. But the truth is; that it is only the one who will heed counsel that is wise. What is the counsel? It is those words spoken by people who faithfully represent God’s truth which is found written in the Bible. He who speaks truth, verse 17 declares, declares righteousness; that is, that person who declares what is right and wrong in accordance with the truth of the Scriptures, and also how a person can come to practice righteousness. They can only come to do it by God’s grace. Then, the truthful lip will be established, and those who deal faithfully with God and with others become a delight to God. Whereas, those who pursue many schemes are often angry with those who tell them the truth of God which is found in the Bible. They will speak cruel and piercing words against those who attempt to tell them the truth. They will speak lies about them and they will devise evil against them. All this because there is deceit in their hearts; that is why they seeking out many

schemes. But thanks be to God there is a way to come out of this mindset of seeking many schemes. It is found through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**3rdly - Let's look in closing at the righteousness of God found in our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Whereas wicked and unbelieving men have sought out many schemes; God has made His own plans to deal with them in mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ, or in judgment if they will not have Him. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15, verse 45. "And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." He was made upright but sought out many schemes. "The last Adam (our Lord Jesus Christ) became a life giving spirit." Thank God that His plan was to send His son. God made a man who was upright, and One who would remain upright all the way to the cross to die for sinners.

Turn with me to Romans Chapter 5 as we close. Look what verse 15 says. "But the free gift is not like the offense." "For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the Man, Jesus Christ abounded to many." "And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned." "For the judgment which came from the one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification." "For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." You can see from these verses that Jesus has purchased by His righteous life and sacrificial death, the gift of righteousness which is given to every believer in the gospel. He purchased not only a righteous legal standing in the justification of every sinner trusting in Him; but He also purchased an abundance of grace so that we who believe in Him will overcome sin in this life and not keep seeking out many schemes. We who believe do not live to ourselves or lean to our own understanding. We do not have to live any more as people who are "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful scheming (plotting), but speaking the truth in love, we may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head - Christ." (Ephesians 4: 14-16) Instead we are being increasingly conformed to the image of God; even in being conformed to Christ. Praise be to His holy name!