

WHO ARE THE FOOLS?

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Table of Contents

Introduction	page 2
Fools are men without knowledge of God	page 4
Fools make a mock at sin	page 7
Fools are corrupt and abominable	page 10
Fools are given to meddling	page 12
Angry people are fools	page 13
Fools are a grief to their parents	page 14
Fools bring shame to themselves	page 18
Company with a fool brings destruction	page 20
A fool worships idols	page 21
Fools depend on their wealth	page 24
Honor is unbecoming to a fool	page 25
Fools are encouraged to seek wisdom	page 27
Fools will not escape punishment	page 29
Conclusion	page 31

Introduction

When I was a teenager I was guilty of doing many foolish deeds and not a few since. I have made foolish mistakes in choosing jobs and quitting jobs; I recall working for one man thirteen different times. Yes, I would get mad and quit, he would call me up that night and I would go back to work for him in the morning. My foolish acts were never dishonest; neither have I ever worked for a dishonest business. I have known many in my lifetime who also has been guilty of doing foolish deeds. Just because I and others [perhaps even you] have committed foolish deeds does not mean that we are fools. Far be it from me to name anyone as a “fool”. Jesus gave strict instruction about calling anyone a “fool”; he said they were in grave danger: (Matthew 5:22) *“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, RacaRaca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”*

Perhaps you may disagree with me when I say I have committed foolish deeds; perhaps you would classify these acts as mistakes. Call them whatever you might I still have regrets.

Even though you and I must not say to anyone “Thou fool” we must admit that God in His word has a lot to say about fools. In the Bible you will find those who are fools described and you will even learn about the eternal fate of the fools. Although I am afraid to call anyone a fool I am not afraid to repeat what God’s inspired word says about fools. Please understand that this is only an effort to help myself and others to avoid the same mistake that others have made. You may be surprised at some of the things people have done to be classified as a fool. Therefore, I encourage you to read on!

Fools Are Men Without Knowledge of God

Don't allow this heading to fool, I do not believe that men are the only people that God's word refers to as "fools"; in fact I believe that women too can be placed in this classification. Let us begin by looking at what the apostle Paul wrote to Titus: (Titus 3:3) *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."* The first thing that I want to draw your attention to is the tense of this verse; Paul wrote we "WERE sometimes foolish". This is past tense; Paul is not admitting to still being foolish. He said that in times past we have been "disobedient". Of course he means disobedience to God. What was it that caused this disobedience; for one thing Paul said they had been "deceived". Who do you suppose it was that deceived them? If you answered false teachers you were exactly right: (2 Peter 2:1) *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."* These false teachers were teaching but they were not teaching the truth. So even if those whom they taught did have some knowledge of God they were still without knowledge of God. Jesus warned that this very thing would happen: (Matthew 24:11) *"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many."*

It is bad enough to have no knowledge of God but there are some who even hate knowledge: (Proverbs 1:22) *"How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?"* The writer of Proverbs identifies himself in verse one: (Proverbs 1:1) *"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;"* Solomon refers to those whom he was writing as "simple ones" as this term perfectly describes their character as they were weak simple men. There is no wonder they were "simple men" and that reason Solomon states in the closing words of this verse; they "hate knowledge". As bad as we hate to admit it we still have those today who Solomon would call "simple men" because they "hate knowledge". There are many in the world today "hate" any "knowledge" of God, Jesus and the gospel. I am sure that you have known those who love darkness and hate the light: (John 1:5) *"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."* The light is shining [I.e. the truth, the gospel] but because some hate knowledge the light never penetrates through the darkness and they remain the "simple one". The fool walks in darkness: (Ecclesiastes 2:14) *"The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them"*

all.” Someone who “walks in darkness” is one who is walking aimlessly; he doesn’t know where he is or where he is going. He needs to hear the gospel and then he would know where he was headed; in all likelihood he would not like his eternal destiny.

Solomon also wrote that “A fool has no delight in understanding”: (Proverbs 18:2) *“A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.”* According to this inspired writing the “fool has no delight” in the improvement of his mind. He has no delight in books [especially the Bible]; he has no desire to obtain spiritual understanding. He takes no delight in reading the Bible nor will he allow anyone to explain it to him. If he ever enters through the doors of a church building it will be of no benefit to him. In all probability his greatest delight is talking about himself.

Since the fool has no knowledge of God he is led to deny the existence of God: (Psalms 14:1) *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”* These words were certainly written with wisdom and are very truthful; because no one but a fool would say “there is no God”! In the mind of the fool there is no such being as God. Even though they may not express this belief with their mouths that belief is still in their hearts. In reality they don’t have to vocally state the words “there is no God” their actions and the lives they live will express it. Believing they are not accountable to a higher power they will continue to live in sin. There is no wonder the Psalmist calls them “fools” This same phrase is repeated in Psalms 53:1 *“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.”* Again the thought is “there is no God to revenge or punish evil”.

Along this same line the fool will blasphemy the name of the Lord: (Psalms 74:18) *“Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.”* To blasphemy is to speak evil of; what a shame it is for anyone to speak evil of the Lord after all that God has done for and given to mankind. Such people are not dumb idiots; they are mean wicked and cruel men. Today there are blasphemers of Christ, his truths and ordinances and generally speaking they are such as walk after their own ungodly lusts.

Fools Make A Mock At Sin

(Proverbs 14:9) *“Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.”* To those who are Christians and are trying to live a righteous life this seems ridiculous. The fool laughs and mocks at their sins and the sins committed by others. They take pleasure in their own sins and laugh and encourage others to

do likewise. Furthermore, they will scoff at those who attempt to instruct and rebuke them for their sinful ways. They might say; “Where is the promise of his coming”. They feel as though they are getting away with their sinful ways; but it will not be so with them on the Day of Judgment. The truth is they have been deceived by sin, it promises them pleasure, or profit, or honor but gives them none of these. To such fools I say; “Your enjoyment and mocking may soon come to an end”. Only fools would even dare to “mock” sin. The verb in the Hebrew is singular, the noun is plural. The fool mocks and make a sport of sin; but they will not find a sport of sinning while they are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Sinful men often “mock” those who are trying to be Christians; this is nothing new, if you think I am wrong I would encourage you to read the book of Job. Even those who were supposed to be friends of Job mocked him. Young people are also guilty of mocking; again I encourage you to read the book of Job. Here is what Job said to those who mocked him: (Job 21:3) *“Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.”* Why would Job tell his mockers to “mock on”? Could it be that he expected them to continue to mock him. Brethren, we too can expect to be mocked by the worldly; but let us be like Job, I.e. let us speak out and never stop proclaiming the truth.

Even Jesus knew he would be “mocked”: (Matthew 20:19) *“And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.”* But Jesus overcame their mockery when he rose from the grave the third day. We too must not let the mockery of others to overcome us. Let us learn from Job and Jesus!

Fools Despise Instruction

(Proverbs 1:7) *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”* When we are teaching or speaking about “knowledge” this verse is often quoted. But as you will notice this verse also contains some valuable information; it tells us that some are not only without knowledge; they actually “despise wisdom and instruction”! As I have stated earlier the “fool has no desire to obtain any knowledge of God; furthermore, Solomon in this verse states that the fool despises wisdom and instruction. In most cases fools will actually treat instruction with contempt. The fool is one who despises and instruction in the scriptures. They despise the very thing that is able to make them wise unto salvation: (2 Timothy 3:15) *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* Fools are profane and wicked men [and I do include women] and in most cases we can correctly give them the title of atheists. Since fools de-

spise any instruction of God, Jesus and the scriptures they don't know God or Jesus and they have no hope of "life eternal": (John 17:3) "*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*" Allow me to say this; "Just because the fool despises any instruction does not give us an excuse to not attempt to teach them the word of truth."

Not only do fools "despise instruction" they also "hate to depart from evil": (Proverbs 13:19) "*The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.*" To state it in simple words I would say that the fool cannot stand the thought of departing from their lusts and sinful ways; they find great delight in the way they are living. Within man is a strong desire to be happy; it is indeed sad that some have miss-directed their source of happiness. What is required to overcome this hate to depart from evil? The answer that I would give is self denial; self denial is essential to overcome evil and the fool will not deny themselves from the follies of sin. In fact they will cling to their folly: (Proverbs 26:11) "*As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.*" A dog that returns to his vomit is a sick dog; a fool that returns to his folly is sick; both mentally and spiritually. Solomon even said that his foolishness will not depart from him: (Proverbs 27:22) "*Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.*" The fool will not leave the life he has become accustomed to; Isaiah explains why this is true: (Isaiah 1:5) "*Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.*"

Fools Are Corrupt And Abominable

Referring to the book of Psalms we learn more about the fool: (Psalms 14:1) "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*" When David said "they" he means everyone who would say "there is no God". They are corrupt in their hearts or they would never make such a statement. They can blame no one else as they have corrupted themselves with their wicked thoughts and sinful ways. As Jude wrote they corrupt themselves: (Jude 10) "*But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.*" Are you aware that "corruption" is what brought about the flood in the days of Noah? (Genesis 6:12) "*And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.*" Does this give you an idea of how God feels about corruption? Every sinful action is abominable in the sight of God.

The fool always thinks of himself as being right: (Proverbs 12:15) *“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.”* In other words the fool believes he is self sufficient. Most often you will find those of this mind set to feel as though they are self-righteous. They have a high opinion of themselves and of their own judgment. What makes it even worse they will not listen to counsel. They feel as though they are always right and everybody else is wrong. Paul tells us what happens to those who always think they are right: (Romans 1:22) *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,”* To the Romans he wrote this message: (Romans 1:22) *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,”* This is an end that cannot be avoided; so take heed. Closely related to this thought I add that the fool is self confident: (Proverbs 14:16) *“A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.”* Confidence is a good thing to have; but a misguided confidence is sure to bring destruction in the end. The fool is confident that he is right and that no evil will befall him. A fear of God is essential if one is to depart from evil (Proverbs 14:16). Their situation is indeed a sad one as they have only succeeded in deceiving themselves: (Proverbs 14:8) *“The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.”* I suppose the thing that I detest the most about deceit and those who are deceived is that they are not satisfied; they make every attempt to deceive others.

Fools Are Given To Meddling

Fools will be found meddling and often in matter that is of no concern to him. (Proverbs 20:3) *“It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.”* “This chapter is designed to rectify men's mistakes concerning strife. Men think it is their wisdom to engage in quarrels; whereas it is the greatest folly that can be. He thinks himself a wise man that is quick in resenting affronts, that stands upon every nicety of honour and right, and will not abate an ace of either, a fool is one that prescribes, and imposes, and gives law, to every body; but he that thus meddles is a fool, and creates a great deal of needless vexation to himself.” [Matthew Henry]. Some men are guilty of “meddling” with God. (2 Chronicles 35:21) *“But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.”* Meddlers are those who stick their nose into other people’s business and thusly they are guilty of foolish acts and may properly be called fools.

A meddler may be found lying and slandering those with whom he is meddling: (Proverbs 10:18) *“He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.”* The person who is being described here is one who pretends to be a friend, and outwardly behaves as one, but inwardly nourishes and cherishes hatred in his heart, which he covers and conceals with lies, till he has a proper opportunity of showing it; as Absalom to Amnon, Joab to Amasa, the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, and Judas to Christ: (Proverbs 26:24) *“He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;”*

Angry People Are Fools

If you are like me you have to fight to control your anger. For me it has been a life long problem, I do think I have overcome some of my problem; but I am still not where I want to be. The wise man having shown many of the vanities that man is confronted with now turns to the subject of “anger”: (Ecclesiastes 7:9) *“Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”* When you are confronted with someone who is disagreeable we should not egg them on to anger; neither should we be quick tempered. Here are a couple of scripture references: (Proverbs 16:32) *“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”* And from the New Testament: (James 1:19) *“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:”* We are not to be “swift to hear” everything; such as idle and unprofitable talk, or filthy and corrupt communication; but wholesome advice, good instructions, and the gracious experiences of the saints, and, above all, the word of God. James instructs us to be “slow to wrath”; this is good advice especially when we are face with admonitions and reproofs are given to us. When our sins are exposed we must be slow to be angered. Once while Jesus was teaching in Galilee the people in the synagogue were “filled with wrath” because of what he told them: (Luke 4:28) *“And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,”* Did Jesus tell them anything that was untrue? Certainly not! If people became angry when the master teacher spoke the truth let me say that people have not changed that much and we should not be surprised if people are angered when we speak the word of truth. What kind of people were they who became angry at Jesus’ teachings. I remind you of the words written by Solomon; the preacher, the son of David “anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9). Don’t you want to be like our Lord? He is slow to anger: (Psalms 145:8) *“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.”*

The Bible has a lot to say about “anger”; in fact in the King James Version the word “anger” appears 439 times. In almost every case anger is condemned by the inspired writers. If you are like me it would probably be wise to do in depths study of the subject to help us in overcoming anger.

Fools Are A Grief To Their Parents

Children can certainly be a blessing to their parents because they are a gift from God: (Hebrews 2:13) *“And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”* Every now and then you will find children who will rise up against their parents and cause them grief: (Matthew 10:21) *“And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.”* Even today we read in the paper or hear on the news about children who forget the bonds and obligations they are under to their parents and they rise up against and either with their own hands take the lives of their parents or appear as false witnesses against them in the courts of law and cause them to be put to death. This is not limited to the sons as daughters also may be found guilty of like actions. Such children are certainly a grief to their parents. Nothing else but a dreadful opposition to God and His gospel could induce children to violate this most tender relationship that parents have for their children. How wonderful it is to see a young family where the parents and the children show and demonstrate the love that God intended that they have for one another. When that love does not exist it shows the sad corruption that has crept into our world and the hatred of some toward the gospel.

Is there anyway that this problem can be avoided? The Bible gives us a few guidelines: (Ephesians 6:4) *“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”* This verse is addressed directly to the fathers. Fathers are to be the heads of the family and the government of the family is committed to them. The commands of the father should be easily obeyed and their commands must be reasonable and proper. Paul goes on with his instructions to the fathers by telling how they should bring up their children. The first thought that comes to mind is that children must become acquainted with the Lord. The word that is used here for “nurture” means “training of a child” which implies education, instruction and discipline. It simply means that fathers are to train their children in such a manner that the Lord will approve. To bring children up in the admonition of the Lord means that they are put in mind of the Lord; above all else children need to be taught that God does

exist. To bring up a child without any instruction is sort of like letting a garden to grow without any cultivation.

Women also have obligations concerning the young women: (Titus 2:3-4) *“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; (4) That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,”* The “aged woman” is told that they are to teach the “young women” those whom they are to teach may or may not be their own children; but their own daughters would certainly be included. Paul also wrote to Timothy about the responsibilities of women: (1 Timothy 5:14) *“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”* Do you think that guiding the house would only include sweeping the floor and putting food on the table? I don’t; I feel that the mother should work along the side of the father on bringing the children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

As parents we have the responsibility to “train up” our children in the way they should go: (Proverbs 22:6) *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* Under the gospel dispensation we parents are obligated for the spiritual care of the nature and admonition of the child [Ephesians 6:4]. We do this by praying for and with them, teaching them the word of God, instructing them the principles of religion, their duty to God and man. And above all else we must set the example before them. We must begin this as soon as they are able to speak; or maybe even before. We do this so that when they are old they will not depart from it. Granted, there are exceptions as some will depart from the life of a Christian but if they do so it will not be easy for them to depart. When properly educated the impressions of that education will not easily wear off; men will hesitate before they forsake a good way in which they have been brought up. If they do depart there will always be the training that we have given them in the back of their conscience. To those with children, especially young children I would advise you to begin early in the child’s life and be diligent in training your children in the way they should go.

Let’s look at the words of Solomon again: (Proverbs 17:25) *“A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.”* A “foolish son is a grief” to his parents because of the ruin he is bringing upon himself. A parent’s love for their children’s soul is what motivates this feeling of grief! One more statement from the wise man: (Proverbs 19:13) *“A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.”*

Fools Bring Themselves Shame

If there is one thing that no one wants to do it is to bring “shame to themselves” but this is the end of the fool: (Proverbs 3:35) *“The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.”* Of course we know the wise are those who have received the grace of God and are living according to His statutes. But we must take notice of the contrast that Solomon has pinned; “the wise inherit glory” but the end of the fool is brought to “shame”. While some fools may escape shame in this world that will not be the case in the world to come: (Daniel 12:2) *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”* How tragic it is that the fool is unaware that they are destroying themselves: (Proverbs 10:8) *“The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.”* Solomon again gives us a contrast: (Proverbs 10:14) *“Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.”* Do you suppose the Holy Spirit had this verse in mind when he inspired Paul to write 2 Timothy 2:15 *“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* They certainly carry much of the same message don’t they? The wise men get knowledge by reading, praying, meditation and hearing the word of God. The knowledge that they gain is laid up in their hearts and minds so that they will not forget the knowledge gained. This knowledge is certainly a rich treasure to the wise.

On the other side of the coin is the fool who speaks rashly and readily and openly speaks words that are sure to bring sudden destruction to himself and there is a danger that he may also destroy those who hear the words that come from his mouth. The Vulgate Latin version is, "but the mouth of the foolish is near to confusion"; he boasts of his knowledge, betrays his knowledge, and so brings himself to shame and confusion. David who wrote of the many vanities of life wrote this: (Ecclesiastes 10:12) *“The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.”* From the lips of fools comes words that will bring destruction to self but they are also displeasing words to those whom hear their words. The fool brings trouble to himself and he is swallowed up and destroyed by the very words he utters. May we always remember that the words of the wise men are decent and orderly and they bring credit to himself; furthermore, they are acceptable to those who hear him. But the words of the fool are not only unpleasant but are most often destructive.

Company With A Fool Brings Destruction

Seeing the contrast between a wise man and a fool is of benefit to you and I and Solomon again furnishes us with another contrast: (Proverbs 13:20) *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”* To walk with a person indicates an attachment. In this verse we are shown two different paths of life, or two different associations. We could say; “Show me the company that a man keeps and we’ll tell you about the man”. To put it another way; “Show me the company he keeps and I’ll tell you about his moral character”. Referring to a companion of a fool the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "shall become like them". Let’s face the truth, we want to be like a banana; we want to be “one of the bunch”. This is why it is so very important that we pick and choose our friends. This is a big problem with the teenagers; they don’t like to be different than those of their peers, thus they often fall in with the wrong crowd. When I was a teenager I will have to admit that I did not pick my friends very carefully; we never got into any trouble with the law but we certainly were not very close to God; so you see I know personally what teenagers are up against. However, we should consider the warning of Proverbs 13:20 is for people of all ages.

The apostle Paul gives us much the same message: (1 Corinthians 15:33) *“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.”* The word that the King James translators translated “communications” properly means to be together, companionship, close contact or to converse. According to Barnes Paul quotes these words from Meander, a Greek poet. While that may be true it is the very same thought that Solomon wrote and I even have serious doubts that the Holy Spirit would have inspired Paul to quote a poet. There is a method whereby we can overcome this; we must overcome evil with good: (Romans 12:21) *“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”* You never know you may even lead someone to repentance.

The lips of a fool are a snare to the soul: (Proverbs 18:7) *“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.”* The lips of a fool brings contentions, quarrels, evil speaking that might even end in lawsuits. Resulting in ruin to himself and will even have an effect upon his family. Let us be aware of the words of Jesus: (Matthew 12:35) *“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”* Read the words of James: (James 3:6) *“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”* It is not an easy task to control the tongue:

(James 3:8-9) *“But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (9) Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.”* The first step that I would suggest is to be careful of the people whom you associate. This will eliminate the wrong kind of influence.

A Fool Worships Idols

Chapter ten of the book of Jeremiah shows that there is no comparison that can be made between Jehovah God and the idols of the Gentiles; let us read a few verses: (Jeremiah 10:8-17) *“But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities. (9) Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder: blue and purple is their clothing: they are all the work of cunning men. (10) But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. (11) Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. (12) He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. (13) When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. (14) Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. (15) They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. (16) The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts is his name.”* When compared to the Lord they do not possess the wisdom and knowledge that God possess. Neither do they possess the power that our Creator and Lord possess; therefore as Jeremiah wrote they are “brutish and foolish”. We can say with all certainty that anyone who would even dare to worship an idol is a foolish person.

Paul points out how foolish it is to worship idols and he tells what will happen to idol worshippers: (Romans 1:22-25) *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, (23) And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. (24) Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: (25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served*

the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” The educated men among the Gentiles first called themselves “Sophi” I.e. wise men. Socrates is thought of by most to be a wise man; he even asserted the unity of God and man is to die a martyr for the truth. But here is a little known fact about him; one of the last actions of his life was sacrificing a cock to Aesculapius, or at least he desired his friend Crito to do it. If what I have read about Socrates is true he was one who was considered to be wise but became a fool with the desire to worship an idol. Everyone who has any faith at all in God knows Him to uncorruptible and immortal in His nature. There is no other way to consider changing the glory of God into idols; represented by all kinds of creatures but to be foolish actions, committed by those who have become fools. As Paul so clearly states they have changed the truth about God into a lie; only a fool would even dare to lie about God! What will happen to these fools Paul? (Romans 1:26) *“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:”* God simply will give up on such and let them go their own way of self destruction.

Why would anyone be so foolish? I believe the answer is found in the fact that they trust in their own heart; or like the educated Gentiles they trust in their wisdom. Whenever anyone thinks themselves to be wiser than God they are headed for trouble. As we read in the book of Proverbs anyone who trusts his own heart is a fool: (Proverbs 28:26) *“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.”* But if you want to be delivered from hell’s fire “walk wisely” in the fear of God.

Fools Depend On Their Wealth

Jesus once taught in a parable about a rich man who was a fool: (Luke 12:16-21) *“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: (17) And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? (18) And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. (20) But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? (21) So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”* Here was a man who had been blessed by God with what we would refer to as a bumper crop. His soil had produced so much that his barns would not hold all the grain. He thought within himself that he was set for many years; so he decided to tear down his

barns and build larger barns. I would be compelled to ask this farmer; “why tear down your existing barns, why not just build more barns”. So according to my calculations this man was a fool in many way. But the lesson that Jesus wants us to learn is that anyone who trusts in their riches is a fool. Brethren, God does not look upon you to see how much you possess, His only concern is how you live your life and whether or not you are obeying his commandments.

Honor Is Unbecoming To Fools

Even a huge pile of snow won't last very long in the heat of July or August: (Proverbs 26:1) *“As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.”* This perfectly illustrates how a fool has no place in his heart for honor. A farmer prays that there will be no rain when it is time to harvest. Perhaps you have seen a wheat field ready for harvest laid flat against the ground by a rain storm; if you have seen this you can fully understand this passage. Neither of these is suitable to the time; nor are they welcomed. God will give no glory to the fool while alive or in the hereafter.

To be a person of honor is a good thing; even children are to honor their parents; (Exodus 20:12) *“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”* If a child who is to be a boy or a girl are expected to honor their parents why would we think it to be acceptable for an adult not to desire to and honor God; only a fool would not recognize this need. When reason returned to Nebuchadnezzar he wanted honor to be returned to him: (Daniel 4:36) *“At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.”* It is when we are acting in a foolish manner that we are not concerned about our honor; it is my constant prayer that if I act foolishly I will be able to recognize that I am a fool and have lost my honor; I certainly don't want to stand before God on the Day of Judgment with no honor. If you want to be honored by God you cannot live like a fool. A fool is not deserving of honor and we should not be found giving honor to a fool: (Proverbs 26:8) *“As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool.”* Anyone who is going to shoot a stone from a sling would never dream of tying the stone to the sling so that it could not be propelled from the sling; neither should we even consider of giving “honor to a fool”. God has no pleasure in a fool: (Ecclesiastes 5:4) *“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed.”* Although this passage is referring specifically to paying a debt or vow to God don't you believe

that regardless of why one is a fool God has “no pleasure in fools”. What would make us think that we can have pleasure in that which God has no pleasure? Let us seek to be honorable men and women as long as we are in this fleshly body so that we may be honored eternally.

The fool will not be permitted to stand in the sight of God: (Psalms 5:5) *“The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.”* The term “foolish” is referring to the wicked and ungodly men; meaning all wickedness and sinful acts. God will not as much as look upon them; He cannot stand their looks. This would include those who praises himself, who are elated with their own excellencies, their wisdom, strength, riches, righteousness, those who treat others with contempt, who despises others, the proud, the mockers and the list could go on and on. All of these are fools in the sight of God and will not be permitted to stand before Him. To state their condition in simple words they shall not stand in acceptance before God at the Day of Judgment; they will be driven from the presence of the Lord into everlasting fire.

Fools Are Encouraged To Seek Wisdom

Proverbs chapter eight is devoted to the subject of “wisdom”; and verse five addresses the “simple” and the “fool”: (Proverbs 8:5) *“O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.”* The wisdom of God, the gospel is the wisdom we should seek to understand. Especially we should understand the highest wisdom [spiritually speaking] known to man today and that is the doctrine of salvation by Christ and him crucified. Those who are simple and remain that way are those whom the mysteries of grace remain hidden from them.

The “fools” are exhorted to “be of an understanding heart”. “Fools” need to seek the wisdom that will cause the heart to understand. To accomplish this “fools” should make use of all the means that the word of God offers. Of course it is also necessary that they first are made aware of the folly of their sins; after coming to this knowledge they must be taught of God’s grace and the sacrifice that Jesus made on the behalf of all sinners. This is what the “simple” and “fools” must understand.

Job asked a very interesting question: (Job 26:3) *“How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?”* I ask with Job; “How should we counsel or how should we teach those who have no wisdom”? The suggestion that Job gives is that we should “plentifully declare the thing as it is”. The advice I would give to teachers and preachers is to speak clearly, don’t beat around the bush, that which is sin call it sin and do so often. How else will the unlearned know they are sinning? As Job

says, “tell it like it is”. “Fools” need to hear words of wisdom so they can apply understanding to their hearts: (Proverbs 2:2) *“So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;”* We need to search out those who are untaught and encourage them to study with us: (Proverbs 5:1) *“My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:”* “Fools” need to come to fear the Lord: (Proverbs 9:10) *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”* Since this is where wisdom begins this is where we need to start; show that sin is transgressing God’s commandments and then show what will happen to the sinner so that they may develop a fear of God and you are well on your way in leading them to Christ and obedience to the gospel. With patience you can lead even a fool to this frame of mind: (Ecclesiastes 2:13) *“Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.”* Those who teach do not have to use a lot of big words; neither do they have to use a lot of fancy gadgets, simply follow the example of Paul and you will succeed in converting fools: (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. (2) For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. (4) And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: (5) That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”*

Fools Will Not Escape Punishment

Although I have suggested many times that “fools will be punished” I would like to expound on this subject. I will first look at the book of Psalms: (Psalms 107:17) *“Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.”* The author of this Psalms is unknown; but it was probably like Psalms 105 and 106, made and sung at the dedication of the second temple. This verse is speaking to the way they were living their lives; not to a single transgression. This way of living results in the transgressor bringing affliction upon their self. We have all seen the affliction that the drunkard brings upon himself and even his family; we have seen the affliction the dope addict brings upon himself and others. So we can fully comprehend what this Psalms is telling us.

(Proverbs 19:29) *“Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools.”* “Scorners can expect judgment because it has been “prepared for them”. This judgment may be either by the civil magistrates, or by the Lord and indeed by both. If they miss one they will certainly meet the other. Sure some will

mock at present judgment and even of a future judgment; but be assured that an everlasting fire is prepared for them: (Matthew 25:41) *“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”* And “fools” cannot escape “stripes for the back”. Be assured that they will be afflicted with stripes sooner or later; friends, if they are not stricken with the stripes of men they shall endure the strokes of divine justice and vengeance hereafter.

Jehovah God who created all things has a reward for the fool and the transgressors: (Proverbs 26:10) *“The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.”* I am very sure that the reward that is referred to is not the kind of reward that they will rejoice in. The reward that they will receive will be according to their works: (Lamentations 3:64) *“Render unto them a recompense, O LORD, according to the work of their hands.”* Every transgression will receive a just recompense of reward: (Hebrews 2:1-2) *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (2) For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;”* The sooner a fool comes to realize that he or she cannot escape “punishment” the sooner they will repent of their sins and obey the gospel.

Conclusion

I will close by pointing out some who are classified by the word of God as “fools”. Since the Bible is full of people who made foolish mistakes I will limit my comments to one man, a nation and a group of religious men.

We will begin by looking at a man by the name of Rehoboam: (1 Kings 12:6-8) *“And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? (7) And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. (8) But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:”*

This chapter relates Rehoboam going to Shechem to be made king and Jeroboam’s return from Egypt [Vs. 1]. The people asked Rehoboam to ease their taxes as a condition of making him king [Vs. 3]. He answered them after three days of listening to the advice of the old men and the young men. He chose to follow the advice of the young men. His answer to them caused ten tribes to revolt

against him; with only two tribes being on his side. The final result was idolatrous worship. Rehoboam acted as a fool by not listening to the old men. Now I am not saying that old men are always right; what I am saying is that we must be very careful when taking advice from anyone. We must be sure that the advice we receive is sound advice and that it is not contrary to the word of God.

After God brought the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage and they wandered about for forty years; they finally reached the Promised Land, the land of milk and honey. Thus they became a nation and I will add that they became a foolish nation with whom God was displeased: (Jeremiah 4:19-22) *“My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. (20) Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. (21) How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? (22) For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”* Verse nineteen is the words of the prophet spoken in an effort to get them to repent. In a vision he saw the destruction and declared the “whole land is spoiled”. In verse twenty two the people are bluntly told that they are “foolish”. Verse twenty two is not the voice of the prophet because this is the Lord speaking to the prophet. The Lord said “they have not known me”; people may profess to be people of God and yet not know him so as to glorify Him and not know Him as their God. People today may claim to be Christians; yet they are not recognized as Christians by God. God then adds that “they are wise to do evil” meaning they were cunning and inventors of evil. Those who profess to be religious ought to be wise unto that which is good: (Romans 16:19) *“For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”* Can we not see that both God and Paul would have us to be “wise unto that which is good”? Unless you want God to speak to you on the Day of Judgment as He spoke to the nation of Israel don’t be a fool; rather be “wise unto that which is good”.

Lastly, we will look to a religious group that Jesus himself called them “fools”. Jesus often rebuked the scribes and Pharisees but on one occasion he really came down hard on them: (Matthew 23:13-33) *“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. (14) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. (15) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye*

compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (16) Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! (17) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? (18) And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. (19) Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? (20) Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. (21) And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. (22) And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon. (23) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (24) Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. (25) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. (26) Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. (27) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. (28) Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. (29) Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, (30) And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. (31) Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. (32) Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. (33) Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Jesus had detected them already before the people, in several instances of hypocrisy; so we know that this was not the first time or instance that they had acted foolishly. They could make all the long prayers they desired to but Jesus knew what was in their hearts; and he knows what is in our hearts. Neither they nor we can fool Jesus. In verse sixteen he calls the scribes and Pharisees "blind guides". We know what happens when the blind attempt to lead the blind: (Matthew 15:14) *"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."* Therefore, not only are the blind endangering their souls they are also endangering the souls of others; how much more foolish can one be? We should not be surprised that Jesus repeatedly calls them "fools" that are "blind". They thought that by paying tithes of the

smaller things that they could ignore that which was of greater importance [Vs. 23]. They were like a whited tomb but inside they were just filled with the bones of the dead [Vs. 27]. They could see the mistakes of others but could not recognize their own mistakes [Vs. 3]. Isn't it sad that people who claim to be religious should act in such a manner? But you say "That was then; this is now". You might be right in such a statement but in reality men have not changed that much since the days of Jesus; we have those among us today who still make many foolish mistakes by being hypocrites, can't see their own sin but see the sin of others and we have those who are blind and try to lead others from the straight and narrow way.

After reading this book I hope you have a better understanding about what is foolish and what is wise. I close with a plea; "If you have seen yourself to be a fool while reading this that you will indeed repent of your foolish ways and seek to do the will of God according to His inspired word".

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Published April, 2009
Email: bdduncan01@charter.net