

## **A Guide To The Reader**

*Pastor recommends that to obtain maximum benefit from his comments you read in full from the Bible every reference whenever one appears. Otherwise the reading of the comments is simply a skimming over the surface. They are rather designed to make you stop and meditate and even look up further references as the Holy Spirit guides you. Do pray before you read that the Holy Spirit will be your Tutor and that the time you spend will be time spent with Him.*

## **Proverbs 7**

There are two routes to eternal salvation. One of them is never at any time to fail to keep any commandment of the Lord. “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 18.5). By the time we even become aware of this requirement, it is already too late. Just one sin, and it’s already too late to come to eternal salvation this way. The other is to be horrified at the sin within and at how the holy God views our condition. “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psalm 7.11). When the state in which we appear before the holy God has thoroughly permeated our being, the next step is to repent before God and plead mercy. That mercy comes, should the Lord be graciously pleased to reveal it, only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary. He went to the cross willingly. He said, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matthew 26. 53-54). Behind the outward events, the hidden, real purpose was that the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1.15) by making Himself a substitute for every guilty sinner that cries out to Him for mercy repenting of sin. Do read Psalm 32. 1-6 which begins, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven...”

So, “God is angry with the wicked every day.” Solomon knew about this anger. Maybe David had taught Solomon his Psalm (7.11) or recounted his own experience to instruct him. But Solomon soon knew the force of it on his own account. “And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice” (one of which was to say “Ask what I shall give thee” (1 Kings 3.5)) “and had commanded him this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded” (1 Kings 11. 9-10).

The consequence was significant, for himself and, more importantly, for the nation of which he was the king. You may read the sequel in 1 Kings 11. However, he was personally saved and restored. Consequences may still dog us and we may sin again, to our grief, but the Lord never removes that status into which we enter by faith as children of God upon repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and

they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John 10. 27-30).

"Keep my commandments and live" (verse 2). It is one thing to try to keep the commandments of God to earn salvation which, as we have seen, is doomed to fail miserably. It is quite another to seek to please our heavenly Father and our Saviour by our obedience when we have been saved as an act of loving devotion. The Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples before parting from them, "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14.15). He also said "This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you" (John 15.12). Another of His commandments concerns eating the bread and drinking the wine at communion of which He said, "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22.19). He commanded His disciples to baptize those who were converted by their preaching, which is tantamount to commanding those who are converted to be baptized, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you (Matthew 28. 19-20). He also said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16.15). "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5.3).

"The apple of thine eye" (verse 2). It is elegant picture language referring to the pupil of the eye. Spurgeon writes, "The all-wise Creator has placed the eye in a well-protected position; it stands surrounded by projecting bones like Jerusalem encircled by mountains. Moreover, its great Author has surrounded it with many tunics of inward covering, besides the hedge of the eyebrows, the curtain of the eyelids, and the fence of the eyelashes". Speaking of our heavenly Father's relationship to His believing people, Zechariah writes (2.8), "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." Moses, moved by the Holy Spirit, declares, "The Lord's portion is his people...he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deuteronomy 32.10). So we see that the pupil of the eye is most intricate and to be guarded as something irreplaceable; irreplaceable, at least in those days. It is something most precious. Solomon might have been taught by his father, David, the words of his prayer in Psalm 17, "Keep me as the apple of the eye" – it might even have been a tender expression that was often upon his lips in Solomon's hearing. We are bidden to keep all the Lord's commands with tender regard, in all practical matters (fingers are mentioned) and to keep them as close as the intimate relationships of sister and relatives.

The picture language that has been painted for us now turns into a cameo in verses 6-23. Of course, they didn't have such a thing in those days, but it is like the commencement of a video. The effect is to show us, step by step, the downward path, the beguiling path into sin. The Holy Spirit reminds us in a similar way in the latter stages of the Bible, in James 1. 14-16, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of

his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.” The general principle of the downward spiral of lapsing into sin is made very clear that, whatever the sin, someone succumbs when drawn away by his/her own particular inward lust.

In Proverbs 7. 6-23, however, is a specific example. We see the motion picture of a young man looking to gratify his lusts. It is a foolish thing to do. He goes where he knows he will find opportunity. It is dark; he hopes to be hidden but, of course, he is seen. Just as the Lord sees all our doings. The temptress now appears, loud-mouthed, alluring passers by in her red-light district. She makes the poor boy feel wanted with a kiss. She makes a show of her religion, claiming that there’s nothing to be afraid of from God or from her husband who is away for a long time. Clearly she is deceitful and cunning; she makes the boy feel that he is the very one she has been looking forward to meeting. As if there had never been another like him; not even, by implication, her husband within the proper relationship of marriage. He is referred to as “the goodman of the house” not as husband. The “fill of love” which she proposes is but a solace; is never seen by her as being more than a one-night stand. But he yields, as an ox to the slaughter. And, in the memorable words of the scripture itself, “till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life” (verse 23). Everything about this night speaks of destruction, ruin, deceit and death. “Her house is the way to hell” (verse 27).

Regrettably, it is not only youths who yield to this temptation. Older ones, who should know better, in some mid-life crisis, succumb in a similar way and with a similar result except that it has to be added that it is a monumental folly for a family man to put his family at risk by such action.

“Let not thine heart decline to her ways” (verse 25). Rather, “keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (4.23). All sin is to be resisted; all flesh to be mortified in the life of a believer.

“She hath cast down many wounded” (verse 26). Wounded in conscience; ruined in character; destroyed as to reputation and sickened, perhaps, in body; this is the deceitful reward.