

Retired Members Corner



SOLOMON'S WISDOM?

There is no new thing under the sun (Eccl 1v 9). Many are wondering what the end result of the financial meltdown will be. How did it all come about? A year ago everything appeared to be on the crest of a wave. Boom and bust had been abolished.

Well, there appears to have been a monetary disaster in Israel round about 930 BC, at the end of King Solomon's reign. In 1 Kings 3 Solomon had been given the gift of great wisdom by God who had appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon. He also gave him great riches and honour, more than any other King. Solomon undertook all that the Lord commanded of him, building and dedicating a magnificent temple. His fame was widespread, his people were happy and he reigned over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the Egyptian border (1 Kings 4 v 20/21). The land was on the crest of a wave. Prosperity abounded.

Then came the crunch. King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites (1 Kings 11 v 1). All these tribes worshipped false gods and the Lord had commanded Israel to be separate from them.

In some cultures the number of wives a man has is regarded as a status symbol in much the same way as the size of your yacht in the Mediterranean might be regarded in European eyes. I remember, when I was in the Gold Coast, King Prempeh II, King of Ashanti, with a palace in Kumasi, had 99 wives. He refused to allow us to pay African soldiers more than 6d a day in case they amassed a fortune and bought more wives than he had. No-one could surpass the status of King Solomon - 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11 v 3). The heart of the ageing Solomon was turned away from God to the false gods of his wives. He built altars for their gods and worshipped at them. This angered God who told Solomon that his son would lose the kingdom because of his apostasy (1 Kings 11 v 11/12).

From this time on all the nations round about Israel began to rise up against Solomon. Solomon's vanity and desire for status led to his fall. Heavy taxes were levied on the people to finance his folly and defend the land. By the time he died and his son Rehoboam took his place Solomon had turned triumph into disaster in so far as his life and country were concerned. What followed was even worse.

All the people of Israel came to Rehoboam and complained about his father's high taxation but he replied that he would tax them even more (1 Kings 12 v 11). This resulted in rebellion (1 Kings 12 v 19) and the ten northern tribes split from Judah and Benjamin and so it is even now, 2900 years later. All the Jews that we see in

the world today belong, ultimately, to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin or Levi - the remaining 10 tribes were eventually conquered by Assyria and are lost in their scattering over the earth. The ten lost tribes will, I believe, finally be identified and saved (Romans 11 v 26; Rev 7 v 4). God has not cast them off (Romans 11 v 2). Their final recognition will be in the New Jerusalem, our eternal abode. The city will have 12 gates and the names of the 12 tribes of Israel will be written on them (Rev 21 v 12).

So what will be the outcome of our great depression? Some think that the European Union will disintegrate because the rich western countries will not be prepared to bail out the poor eastern ones. We have seen the people of the Republic marching against higher levies imposed by their government. No-one can tell where it will end. Our taxes are forecast to increase and employment to decrease.

Should we be worried? Nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. That must include credit crunches. Just read of the trials and tribulations of the faithful in Hebrews 11 and you'll realise we are living in the lap of luxury, whatever our circumstances. The world may be at its wits end but our trust is not in governments, or banks, or material possessions, but in the Lord our God, the maker of Heaven and Earth, the omniscient, the omnipotent, great I Am. He has every hair of our head numbered, He knows the thoughts and intents of our mind, we are the apple of His eye and our very names are imprinted in the palm of His hand. Let not your heart be troubled; one day we shall be with Him. Your Father in heaven knows your every need. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

So, let everything that hath breath praise the Lord (Ps 150 v 6). Are you still breathing? (I have a pacemaker to keep me breathing). Then praise the Lord. Amen.