

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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When The Wicked Are Not Bold

(Jerry Fite)

The wicked often appear bold in their unrighteousness. They curse God in public fearing no reprisals. They break down doors in broad daylight robbing and killing anyone who appears in the way. “Timid” is not the adjective describing the wicked woman in Proverbs who, with an impudent look, boldly kisses the inexperienced young man, leading him down the path to ruin (*Proverbs 7:13*) Yet, a proverb of Solomon worth considering and preserved in the days of Hezekiah reads: *“The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion” (Proverbs 28:1).*

As this proverb speaks of the wicked in terms that often is not the case, are we to also think that the righteous are the only ones who are bold? Surely not, for Solomon also says, *“A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil; but the fool beareth himself insolently and is confident” (Proverbs 14:16).* Even a fool appears bold and confident at times. So to properly understand what Solomon is saying about the wicked in contrast to the right-

eous, we need to ask ourselves the question, when are the wicked not bold? When is it that they run when no one is yet pursuing them? And in those occasions, can we say the righteous, in contrast, are bold as a lion?

The wicked are not so bold when they have a guilty conscience. No one is pursuing them yet, but they know they have done wrong, and often want to run away. Why did Adam all of a sudden want to hide from God when he heard God’s voice in the Garden? Was he hiding from God when His faithful Creator presented him with the newly created Eve? He did not shrink from God’s voice then. But this time it was different. He knew he was naked, because he had partaken of the fruit God commanded him not to eat. He was fleeing and hiding from God before He even asked him where he was. The moment of the guilty conscience is when even the wicked are timid.

All human beings are blessed with a conscience within. It functions on the basis of what a person understands to be right.

And when one does what he or she knows is wrong, it painfully reacts with self-condemnation. With a guilty conscience, one tends to avoid the person he or she has blasphemed even though that person is unaware of the spoken lies spoken behind the back. No one is pursuing the wicked at this moment, but their guilty conscience creates a pursuing enemy in their mind.

This does not mean that the wicked will always feel this way. One can harden their conscience and therefore become emboldened in their wickedness (*I Timothy 4:1-2*). When we no longer feel guilty in our wrong doing, what but the eternal judgment can change our disposition?

On the other hand, when the righteous trust in the Lord and live with a good conscience, he or she lives with boldness as a lion with no fear of any adversary (*I Timothy 3:13, Philippians 1:27-28*). The wicked may appear at times far from timid, but Solomon reminds us of those moments when they are timid, being pursued by their own conscience!