



OHBC MEMORY VERSE – WEEK #20

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE: PROVERBS 31:28

“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”

Why Proverbs 31:28?

Not just because the verse is so fitting for ladies, coming off of the heels of Mother's Day, but because it is such a reminder to every child of God, man or woman, of what really matters and of what's really important!

First, we must set the context. Proverbs 31 is infamous for its teaching on the “Virtuous Woman” (31:10). It is filled with significant and admirable qualities that God wants every woman to aspire to possess. But biblically, there's more going on here than that. Much more! Though Proverbs 31 presents God's description of the Virtuous Woman (through the counsel provided to King Lemuel from his mother), there is only one woman in all of Scripture that is specifically referred to as a Virtuous Woman. Do you know who it is?

It just “happens” to be Ruth! (Ruth 2:3; 3:11) And as we've already seen in our 365 Days of Pursuit, Ruth is that member of a cursed race, who in a time of famine hears the good news that there was bread in the city of Bethlehem. She leaves all to partake of this Bread, and in Bethlehem, her one and only Jewish Kinsman Redeemer calls her up out of his harvest field to be his bride. Obviously, she is the greatest picture of the church (the Gentile Bride of the Jewish Kinsman Redeemer from Bethlehem who is the Bread of life!) in the entire Old Testament. From a prophetic standpoint, the Virtuous Woman of Proverbs 31 finds her fulfillment in us, the Bride of Christ!

Once you see that, this chapter takes on a whole new significance, not just for ladies, but for every person who is espoused to Jesus Christ as their one husband (II Cor. 11:2)!

In terms of this week's verse, Prov. 31:28 looks to a time when all of God's children will “arise up.” It's spelled out in I Thess. 4:11-17, an event we call the Rapture. Once we are raptured, the Bible teaches that we will all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

At that event, all of the people God has graciously permitted us to win to Christ (i.e. our spiritual “children”) will call us “blessed.” What a joyful and humbling experience that will be. But not to compare, however, with the joy and humility for those to whom our “husband,” the Lord Jesus Christ, will “praise” because He has regarded us a Virtuous Woman. What greater joy than, on that day, to hear our husband say, “Well, done!” (Matt. 25:21)

DAY 96

TODAY'S READING: II CHRONICLES 1-4

OVERVIEW:

Solomon's sacrifices; God's appearance to Solomon in a dream; Solomon's choice of wisdom & knowledge; Solomon's accumulation of chariots, horses, horsemen, silver and gold; Solomon builds the Temple; the Temple furnishings.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we begin the Book of II Chronicles today, keep in mind that this Book spans 427 years. To help us get that in perspective, it would be the equivalent of chronicling the high points of history from the year 1578 to 2005! Quite a long period of time! The period covers 19 kings – 10 of which were bad, 7 of which were good, and 2 that were good but became bad (i.e. Solomon and Joash). As is always the case, as go the leaders, so go the people, until finally the nation has so apostacized that they are carried off into captivity. The Book does end, however, with a ray of hope.

As chapter one begins, the reign of Solomon is established, and he sets a priority on worship (1:6). God appears to Solomon in a dream (1:7 c.f. I Kings 3:5), and says, “Ask what I shall give thee.” In other words, “Ask me for anything you want, and it's as good as yours!” Solomon asks for something that

brought great pleasure to the Lord. Understanding the enormity of the task of leading the people, he asks for the wisdom and knowledge to rule them properly. Because he wasn't selfish in asking for "riches, wealth, or honour," God said, "I will give thee riches, and wealth and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like" (1:12). We might call this, however, the curse of God's blessing. Because God had already made clear that the kings of Israel were not to multiply to themselves silver and gold; not to do business with Egypt to multiply horses, or for any other reason, and not to multiply wives (Deut. 17:16-17). Verses 14-17 of II Chronicles 1 reveals that he violated those first three commands, and I Kings 3:1 reveals that he violated the fourth by going down to make an "affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter," and made her his wife. All of those things were tragic (as we will soon see), but don't fail to see why it happened. He violated all four of those commands, because he violated a fifth command concerning Israel's kings in Deuteronomy 17. He was to write a copy of the law for himself! He was to make his own handwritten copy of the entire Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Had he not neglected the Word of God, he would have known that God had forbidden him to involve himself in the very things he was doing at the outset of his reign! May we learn a lesson from the life of Solomon: never neglect the Word of God! As the old saying goes, "This Book will keep you from sin; and sin will keep you from this Book!"

As chapter 2 begins, Solomon determines to build the Lord's house. He also determines that he is going to build for himself a house. There is certainly nothing wrong with that, but in light of David's strong words to Solomon about how "MAGNIFICANT" (I'm still totally taken by that word!) the Lord's house was to be in comparison to anything else in existence (I Chron. 22:5), it seems quite unusual that it took almost twice as long to build Solomon's house as it did the Lord's house (7 years compared to 13 years – See I Kings 6:38 and I Kings 7:1); and if you compare the size of Solomon's house (I Kings 7:1-12), with the size of the Lord's house (I Chron. 3), Solomon's house is almost exactly twice as big as God's "MAGNIFICANT" house. Wouldn't you love to have heard Solomon's rationalization and justification on that one?! Never underestimate the tremendous ability we have as humans to justify and rationalize just about anything and everything WE want to do. God help us!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

By the THOUSAND BURNT OFFERINGS OF SOLOMON – II Chron. 1:6 (Through Christ's one offering of sin, He removed the need for the many and continual individual offerings required in the Law – Heb. 10:10-12, 14; Rom. 6:10)

DAY 97

TODAY'S READING: II CHRONICLES 5-8

OVERVIEW:

The Ark is brought into the Temple; the glory of the Lord fills the temple; Solomon's prayer of dedication; Solomon's sacrifices; the glory of the Lord fills the Temple again; God appears to warn Solomon.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

It had taken 153,000 skilled workers seven years to complete, (just imagine!) but the Temple was now ready to receive all of the furnishings David had accumulated and dedicated to be housed in this magnificent (magnificent) structure he so longed to build. Once they were put in their place, along with the Ark, Solomon led the people in offering sacrifices and heart felt praise to God. The music must have been incredible! The passage doesn't say how many singers there were, but it says there were 120 priests playing the trumpet (5:12), and that when they played with the singers, the mix was absolutely perfect ("as one" – 5:13)! Quite the worship experience! Even God got a little carried away. The glory of God so filled the Temple that the priests had to run for the exits! (5:14)

As you read about the Temple in the Old Testament, don't ever lose sight of the fact that it is a picture of YOU! God no longer dwells in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48), but says very specifically, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20). The glory that we just read about in II Chron. 5:14 is the glory God wants to receive and manifest through our lives!

In chapter six, Solomon leads the people in Israel in dedicating the Temple. He addresses the people in 6:1-11, and in verses 12-42, he ascends onto a scaffold made of brass, and made for this specific purpose, and addresses the Lord Himself! It is the longest prayer recorded in the Bible, and is perhaps

the most majestic, and moving! It is so powerful, and wonderful, and when spoken, so incredibly sincere, that you hate to bring into it any negativity. However, though Solomon asks God in verses 24 and 25, that if His people sin against Him, but return to Him and confess His name, to please hear them, and forgive them, the pitiful thing is, there is never any biblical record of Solomon ever repenting of any of his own sins! It really makes you wonder how it is that so many who start so strong, can end up so overthrown (I Cor. 10:5-6,11!). Once again, God help us!

When Solomon finishes his prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for His unequalled attributes and unfailing promises, the glory of the Lord was, once again, so overpowering that the priests couldn't even make their way into the Temple! When the people saw it, "...they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever" (7:3).

But even in the midst of all of this incredible worship, God comes to Solomon in the night warning him that if the nation didn't remain true to Him, He would uproot them out of their wonderful homeland and would destroy their magnificent Temple (7:20).

Chapter 8 moves the timeline along 20 years, and records various accomplishments and successes in Solomon's reign. Of particular note is verse 11. It says that Solomon wouldn't allow his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, to live in the royal palace. The reason he gave (which was a legitimate one!), was that the palace was holy! It is a great illustration of how prone we are to be blinded to think that there are somehow areas of our personal lives that can remain disconnected from our spiritual lives. Call it a "double-life," or a "double-standard," hypocrisy, or just plain stupidity, it never ultimately remains separate! Though Solomon restricted her to a separate residence, it did not restrict her from leading him into idolatry! (See I Kings 11:1-8)

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through SOLOMON'S PRAYER – II Chron. 6:14 (Jesus is that God! I Tim. 2:5 – "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.")

DAY 98

TODAY'S READING: II CHRONICLES 9-12

OVERVIEW:

The Queen of Sheba visits Solomon; the extent of Solomon's riches and fame; Solomon's death; Rehoboam succeeds Solomon as Israel's king; Jeroboam leads a revolt of 10 of the tribes; Rehoboam forsakes the law of God; God brings judgment against Rehoboam through Shishak, king of Egypt.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

In II Chronicles 9, there is perhaps no more glorious Old Testament picture of the Lord Jesus Christ ruling and reigning in wisdom in His millennial kingdom from His throne in Jerusalem, when every knee is bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father, hallelujah! (Phil 2:9-11) The parallel passage is found in I Kings 10, where it likewise presents this most glorious picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. I Kings 11, however, continues with details of the remainder of Solomon's life, and strangely enough, there is perhaps no greater Old Testament picture of the Antichrist! I Chronicles 9, in the midst of all of the splendor of the record of Solomon's kingdom, does drop a few subtle hints, however. Notice in verse 13, the amount of gold that came to Solomon in one year: "Six hundred and threescore and six." I believe you spell that 6 – 6 – 6! And notice also, the three-sided configuration upon which his throne was set, with six steps leading up from the front and the two sides. Again, I think you might call that 6 – 6 – 6! (Check out Rev. 13:18 if you're new to all this. By the way, 18 is 6 + 6 + 6, but who's counting!) :)

Chapter 9 ends with the death and burial of Solomon, and chapter 10 begins with the reign of his son, Rehoboam. You can bring his reign to the bottom line by two little phrases in chapter 12. Chapter 12 and verse 1 says that when he "had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him." Chapter 12 and verse 14 says, "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD." We get ourselves into spiritual trouble when we do the same things. We must remember that our strength is not in ourselves, but in the Lord, and the power of His might and His Word. As soon as we forsake the Word of God, thinking we're strong, we're on a collision course with disaster! And notice, Rehoboam did all the evil, idiotic, sinful things he did because he "did not prepare his heart to SEEK the Lord." Once again, we're reminded of the purpose of the 365 Days of Pursuit (Deut. 4:29).

Rehoboam's first decision as king was a major fiasco, as he heeded the wrong counsel. (Be careful about whose counsel you seek and/or take!) His harshness caused 10 of the tribes to secede from the "union" to go form what we refer to as the Southern Kingdom.

This is where the Kingdom of Israel is divided. The 10 Southern Tribes are referred to as Israel and the two Northern Tribes as Judah. Jeroboam is installed as the King of Israel (See I Kings 11:28-31). When you compare I Kings 11:28-31 with II Chron. 10:15, don't miss how God somehow takes even poor, heartless, and even flat-out wrong decisions of earthly rulers, and uses those very decisions to perform His will and fulfill His Word! God is big, y'all! Really big!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In the GLORY OF SOLOMON'S KINGDOM – II Chron. 9:1-28 (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 20:5)

DAY 99

TODAY'S READING: II CHRONICLES 13-16

OVERVIEW:

Abijah's battle and victory over Jeroboam, King of Israel; King Asa's reforms in Judah; his covenant with God; his pact with Benhadad, King of Syria; Asa's rebuke by Hanani; Asa's diseased feet and death.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As chapter 13 opens, God uses Abijah, the newly appointed King of Judah to discipline Jeroboam, King of Israel. The battle involves 1.2 million soldiers, and by the time it is finished, Israel lost exactly one half million men (13:17). An extremely high price to pay for simply refusing to obey God! The defeat was so devastating, Jeroboam never fully recovered. Note Abijah's appeal to Jeroboam in 13:4-12 to consider his ways and walk with God.

Chapter 14 begins with the death of Abijah, and the beginning of his son's reign. What Abijah accomplished in Judah militarily, Asa, his son, sought to do spiritually. He removed all of the foreign influence of worship and "commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and commandment" (14:4). As a result, God blessed the kingdom with 10 years of "quiet" (14:1, 5) and "rest" (14:6-7), while he fortified an army full of "mighty men of valour" (14:8). Judah's peace ended, however, when an Ethiopian army of one million men came against them. Asa's prayer of faith and dependence upon God in verse 11 is well worth noting, since we all face situations almost weekly where the odds are stacked against us. "Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee" (II Chron. 14:11). Judah's smaller army was victorious because of their dependence and trust in the Lord (14:12-15).

In chapter 15, Azariah the prophet challenges Asa to keep up the good work of spiritual reformation in the nation, and Asa responds with great enthusiasm, destroying even more idols (15:8), and decreeing that you either seek the Lord with all of your heart and soul, or die (15:12-13)! His grandmother, the queen made an obscene idol and he even removed her from being queen, and crushed and burned the despicable idol. It's a sad reality, but sometimes following the Lord requires tough decisions concerning members of our own families!

Chapter 16 is just sad. As Asa's wealth and power increased, his dependence and trust in God decreased. When toward the end of his reign, Baasha, King of Israel, came up to battle against Asa, rather than cry out to God in faith as he had done previously (14:11), he takes God's money to pay Benhadad, the King of Syria, to help him. Baasha was unsuccessful in coming against Asa, but Asa had displeased the Lord in the process. Note the rebuke of God's prophet in 16:7-8, and the great statement of verse 9, "Don't you realize that the Lord is just constantly on the lookout for those He can bless by showing Himself strong on their behalf?" (obvious paraphrase) Rather than acknowledge his wrongdoing and repent, Asa has the prophet thrown into jail. (People who receive God's message are still getting upset with His messengers in the 21st century, too!) This attitude became a pattern as Asa's life comes to a close. Even when disease had struck his feet, he looks to man for help rather than God. Keep in mind last week's memory verse, "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man" (Ps. 118:8).

Many 21st century believers are much like Asa. They start off so wonderfully, but before it's all said and done, their spiritual feet have become diseased, and they are no longer able to "WALK in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16), nor "WALK worthy of the vocation wherewith [they have been] called"! Be very careful as you grow older in the Lord, of diseased feet!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through the REST God gave JUDAH – II Chron. 14:7 (Matt. 11:29; Heb. 4:1, 8-11).

DAY 100

TODAY'S READING: II CHRONICLES 17-21

OVERVIEW: Jehoshaphat succeeds Asa; Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, king of Israel; the death of Ahab; Jehoshaphat's rebuke by Jehu the seer (prophet); Jehoshaphat's national reform; Jehoshaphat's victory over the children of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir; the death of Jehoshaphat; the reign of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram; Jehoram's bitter death.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

What a breath of fresh air Jehoshaphat is! As we will see, he's not perfect (oh, surprise, surprise!), but despite some stupid alliances he made with the wrong people, he was a good man and a good king. Verse 3 of chapter 17 says, "And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David." It's interesting to note that David is constantly used as the standard by which the kings were measured. If they followed David's example, they were blessed. If they didn't, their lives and their kingdoms ran amuck. David had his share of problems, but God was pretty "taken" with this heart! Don't ever forget, "The heart of the matter, is the matter of the heart!" So, "keep (guard) your heart!" (Prov. 4:23)

Verses 4-7 of chapter 17 give at least five reasons the Lord was "WITH"(17:3) Jehoshaphat:

1. He sought the Lord (17:4a). (Don't forget that that's the goal of the 365 Days of Pursuit (Deut. 4:29)!)
2. He walked in the commandments of the Lord (17:4b).
3. His HEART was lifted up in the ways of the Lord (17:6a). (As opposed to his heart being lifted up, like Lucifer, toward himself!)
4. He removed all of the sick ways people were worshipping Baal and Ashteroth (17:6b), along with removing all of the homosexuals (I Kings 22:46).
5. Recognizing that the key to spiritual renewal and revival in the lives of the people was the power of the Word of God in their lives, he establishes a nation wide "Bible study program," being taught by princes, Levites, and priests. Who knows, maybe they even called it "365 Days of Pursuit"!

Because of these incredible reforms in the kingdom, "the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war with against Jehoshaphat" (17:10). As Proverbs 16:7 says, "even his enemies [were] at peace with him."

Having your enemies at peace with you is a good thing. Making alliances with them because of it is not! In chapter 18, verse 1, it says that Jehoshaphat "joined affinity with Ahab." Ahab was the wicked, Baal-worshipping king of Israel. This "affinity" with Ahab causes Jehoshaphat to join him in a battle to help him regain the city of Ramothgilead, which was very displeasing to the Lord, and almost cost him his life! Ultimately, this "affinity" will even lead to the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, to Ahab's (and Jezebel's!!!!) daughter (21:1, 6).

Because of Jehoshaphat's unholy alliance with Ahab, God sent the prophet Jehu to rebuke him, "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord" (19:2). Jehoshaphat responded well to the Lord's rebuke through Jehu, and moved immediately to restore justice (19:5-7), and priestly order in Jerusalem (19:8-11). Do note, however, that even though Jehoshaphat responded correctly and was forgiven, there were still consequences to his sin. The marriage of his son to Ahab and Jezebel's daughter will open the door to Baal worship in Judah, and will result in the murder of every single one of Jehoshaphat's sons and grandsons except for one-year-old Joash, who was hidden by Jehoida the high priest(22:10-12). If it hadn't been said 100 times already in the 365 Days of Pursuit (slight exaggeration), this might be a place to say once again, "There is always a pricetag for sin." Since it has been said so often, I'll refrain from saying it here! :->

Chapter 20 is one of the most practical and significant chapters we have come to thus far in our reading. There is more to talk about here than we have space in simply trying to “highlight” things in each chapter. Read it slowly and carefully, noting a few key phrases along the way as God describes this very strange battle that takes place in this chapter. As the combined forces of Moab, Ammon and Mount Seir plan to converge upon Jehoshaphat and the armies of Judah note:

1. “The battle is not yours, but God’s” (20:15)
2. “Ye shall not need to fight in this battle” (20:17a)
3. “Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you” (20:17b)
4. “Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established”(20:20).
5. “When they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against... Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir” (20:22).
6. “The LORD... made them to rejoice over their enemies” (20:27).
7. “And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against [their] enemies.” (20:29).

The reason these statements are so significant is that they coincide so perfectly with the New Testament teaching concerning spiritual warfare! The battle we face is not ours, but God’s! Therefore, we must “be strong in the Lord and the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10). The battle plan in this battle is not for us to “fight,” but to “STAND” in the victory Christ has already won on our behalf! (Note in Eph. 6:11-14 the repetition of the word “STAND”!) Our battle, (as the battle in II Chronicles 20(verse 20) is a battle whereby the Lord causes us to rejoice over our enemies (verse 27) by faith (Eph. 6:16), as we stand against the enemy singing the praises of our God (Eph. 5:19).

After Jehoshaphat’s death (20:35-21:1), his son Jehoram takes the throne. In his first public act, he kills all of his brothers, and everyone else he thought might have the potential for usurping his authority (21:4). God judges him in many ways in chapter 21, not the least of which was afflicting him with an excruciating disease where ultimately his intestines exploded out of his body (21:18-19). Couldn’t have happened to a nicer guy!

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through MICAIAH, who spoke the words that God told him to speak – I Chron. 18:13 (John 8:26-28; 3:34; 8:40).