

# How Many Judge By Appearances?

## International Bible Lessons

Ecclesiastes 9:13-18

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*“Now there was found in it [the city] a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man”* (Ecclesiastes 9:15—NRSV).

*“But there was found in it a poor, wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that poor man”* (Ecclesiastes 9:15—ESV).

*“Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man”* (Ecclesiastes 9:15—KJV).

How can a poor man be wise? How can a wise man be poor? Do people assume wisdom brings wealth and wealth indicates wisdom? How often do people judge others by their appearance?

The writer of Ecclesiastes gave this example. A great king besieged a small city with few people in it. The situation looked hopeless and the city leaders had no idea what to do; but a poor wise man came forward and saved the city. The Bible does not tell us how he did it, but their salvation came from a disregarded and unexpected source of wisdom. After the poor wise man surprised them with his plan and they successfully applied his ideas, apparently they did not thank him, reward him, or remember that he saved them. The writer also applauded this example, “it seemed great to me” (Ecclesiastes 9:13).

Greater still is this example. Jesus, only a poor carpenter’s son (as some supposed), came from Nazareth in Galilee. Without a formal rabbinic education, He had no place to call His home (whereas foxes have holes). Therefore, people wondered where Jesus got His authority, wisdom and power (see Matthew 13:54). In spite of being a poor wise man, Jesus claimed to be greater than Israel’s wealthiest and wisest king, King Solomon, who probably wrote Ecclesiastes. Jesus declared of himself, “Something greater than Solomon is here!” (Luke 11:31). Certainly, Jesus did more than save a city, because “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). — © Copyright 2011 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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# Thinking Further

1. What does it mean to besiege a city? How might someone be spiritually besieged by someone, by temptations, and by evil powers?

2. How can Bible study, prayer, and trusting Jesus help a person defeat any spiritual siege-works against them?

3. Why do you think some people refuse to heed what the Bible teaches? What are some of the things that can happen to those around them and to those who turn away from God and His teachings in the Bible?

4. What type of people are many people today inclined to follow? Compare and contrast the qualities many look for in a leader today with the leadership qualities of Jesus Christ prior to His death on the cross.

5. If sinners destroy much good, what can those who trust in and follow Jesus do?

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