

Proverbs Chapter 21 Continued

Proverbs 21:17 "He that loveth pleasure [shall be] a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich."

Wine and oil are associated with unbridled luxury in feasting.

Wine and oil are expensive.

The cost of a bottle of wine is enough to feed a large family.

Even worse than the cost of the wine is what the wine causes you to do.

Your judgment is not as good after you have drunk wine and you would be a spendthrift with money needed for other things.

Many people in our society today have expensive pleasures like golf, ball games, movies, etc.

Not only are these hobbies very expensive, but they use up a great deal of time as well.

Time we should be working to take care of our needs is many times wasted in worldly pleasures.

We are warned in 2 Timothy 3 about caring about pleasures too much (lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God).

The chapter says it happens in the end times.

Proverbs 21:18 "The wicked [shall be] a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright."

The only thing I see in this is that God has always had a sharp separation between the wicked and the righteous.

It seems that the transgressor has a price to pay for his wickedness and God will not have the upright to pay.

Their debt is paid in full through Jesus.

By suffering the very thing they had devised for the righteous, or brought on them, the wicked became their ransom, in the sense of being a substitute in judgment.

Proverbs 21:19 "[It is] better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman."

No one wants to dwell in a wilderness, but the comparison is made here to show how terrible it is to live with someone who is constantly finding fault.

Moses fled to the wilderness for safety.

Whether that is what this means that there is safety away from this evil woman or not, I do not know.

We read in Proverbs 21:9 that it was better to live on the corner of a roof.

And don't forget the dripping from 19:13.

This is all saying that solitude with little is better than much with a contentious wife.

Proverbs 21:20 "[There is] treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up."

There really are two ways to look at this.

A wise man is careful in what he uses his money for.

He saves for a rainy day and so his needs are taken care of.

This oil in the dwelling place would be symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

But a foolish man spends everything he gets as soon as he gets it and many times even before he gets it.

He borrows money often so he has to pay for what he buys plus the interest, and it keeps him continually broke.

From a spiritual standpoint, there is a treasure to be desired, eternal life.

The spend-thrift (in the spirit), keeps saying wait until a more convenient time and loses his opportunity to be saved.

Proverbs 21:21 "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honor."

Those who pursue "righteousness" and "mercy" receive more than they seek.

We have read over and over that righteousness is being in right standing with God.

We also have read many times that it is Jesus' righteousness that we take on.

We must accept Jesus as our Savior and we have righteousness.

But this speaks of a walk (followeth), in that righteousness and mercy.

We are told to be merciful because Jesus was merciful to us first.

Righteousness, mercy, and honor for us is a by-product of our salvation.

Proverbs 21:22 "A wise [man] scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof."

The first thing that comes to mind as I read this is the story of the Israelites searching out the Promised Land.

The wise thing to do was not to question whether they could take the land or not.

God said they could.

Just do it and stop doubting.

When they followed God's instructions exactly, the walls of Jericho fell down before them.

We see in this that Godly wisdom is greater than body strength.

Proverbs 21:23 "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles."

Talking too much can get you into a great deal of trouble.

Words spoken in haste are many times regretted at leisure.

James tells us:

James 1:19 "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath".

Proverbs 21:24 "Proud [and] haughty scorner [is] his name, who dealeth in proud wrath."

We see in this someone who is un-teachable.

Someone who thinks he knows everything is headed for trouble.

He dishes out harsh statements to those around him, speaking from an evil heart.

Proverbs 21:25 "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor."

We see in this verse, someone who will not work but wants everything he sees.

First of all, he has too much idle time because he refuses to work.

A person who does not stay busy has time to get into a lot of trouble.

Idle time and desires for things you cannot acquire lead to crime, and crime leads to punishment and sometimes death.

Proverbs 21:26 "He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not."

This is a continuation of verse 25.

In contrast to the evil, lazy person who has nothing and wants everything is the righteous who works hard and gives away a great deal of what he earns.

The sin of covetousness marks the lazy man as the virtue of benevolence marks the righteous.

Proverbs 21:27 "The sacrifice of the wicked [is] abomination: how much more, [when] he bringeth it with a wicked mind?"

In 15:8 we found that external acts of worship, though according to biblical prescription, are repulsive to God when the heart of the worshiper is wicked.

We found this to be true in the very first mention in the Bible of Cain and Abel.

Cain's gift was unacceptable unto God.

The worst thing of all was that he gave it knowing it was unacceptable.

He wanted the easy way out.

He gave earthly gifts rather than the offering God required.

His gifts were earthly, not heavenly.

This is also why Churches should not accept racketeer or ill-gotten money.

Proverbs 21:28 "A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly."

To me this is saying that when the false witness is found out, no one will listen to him any longer.

We see in this "man that heareth" (someone who understands), can speak many times and people will listen, because they know it is the truth.

Proverbs 21:29 "A wicked man hardeneth his face: but [as for] the upright, he directeth his way."

This hardened face means you can't change his opinion.

He is not teachable.

The LORD directeth the way of the upright, because the upright is doing it God's way.

He is not so self-willed that you can't tell him anything.

The wicked become obstinate, maintaining what suits them without regard for others or the truth, while good people proceed with integrity.

Proverbs 21:30 "[There is] no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD."

Compared to the LORD's wisdom, we have no wisdom.

We have no power at all when vented against God.

God is the Creator, and we are His created.

The Creator is always far superior to His creation in every way.

We see this most clearly when we read Job.

Beginning in chapter 38 where God is speaking to Job when He asks “where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?”

And the conversation ends in chapter 41:34.

A reading of these 3 chapters tells us we have very little understanding at all (this is what Job admits in 42:1-6).

Proverbs 21:31 "The horse [is] prepared against the day of battle: but safety [is] of the LORD."

"Horse" indicates war or military power.

We cannot depend on military power to save us.

The Lord is the Savior.

He also is our very present help.

Whether saving us from the wrath of God by transporting us to heaven, or protecting us while we are here on the earth, the Lord is our only true protection.

This is not a condemnation of adequate preparation but rather of reliance on it for victory, instead of on the Lord.

Proverbs Chapter 21 Continued Questions

1. In verse 17, what can cause you to be poor?
2. In the same verse, if you like wine and oil, you won't be _____.
3. Name some expensive pleasures of our day.
4. In 2 Timothy 3, we are warned of loving pleasure more than loving _____.
5. What is meant by the "wicked being ransom for the righteous"?
6. Where is it better to live than with a contentious woman?

7. What comparison is intended in the "treasure of the wise" and "foolish man spendeth it"?
8. In verse 21, what is found in following righteousness and mercy?
9. What does followeth indicate?
10. In verse 22, "a wise man scaleth the city of the mighty" reminds the author of what?
11. What can talking too much do?
12. Who is the proud, haughty scorner?
13. Why does the desire of the slothful kill him?
14. Idle time, and desire for things you can't have, lead to what?
15. What contrast to the lazy, greedy person is made in verse 26?
16. The abomination of the sacrifice is worse when it is given how?
17. What happens to a false witness?
18. What does "hardeneth his face" mean?
19. Who can counsel against the Lord?
20. What does the "horse" indicate in verse 31?
21. Who is our only true help?