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Proverbs 26

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Proverbs 26.

Topics.

- This chapter is full of a variety of various Proverbs.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs is a collection of Israelite wisdom literature, that has multiple authors, but most of it is attributed to King Solomon. Chapter one to nine gives readers a framework for understanding the rest of the book. The central concern of the book of Proverbs is practical wisdom for living. We are told that the beginning and essence of wisdom is the fear of the LORD (Prov. 1:7) (Prov. 9:10). It contrasts the benefits of seeking wisdom and the pitfalls of living a foolish life. While the wicked stumble in deep darkness (Prov. 4:19), the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day ((Prov. 4:18). Individual proverbs date from between the tenth and sixth centuries B.C.

KINGS AND ANGELS

The title king is often used throughout the book of Proverbs, it comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) which can refer to the following four things:

1

1. A royal king ascending to the throne of royalty and reigning from it.
2. A male sovereign (i.e., a man or boy who rules as a monarch over an independent state.
3. The chief, or the principal leader or ruler of a group (secular or religious).
4. A messenger or ambassador, especially of God, (i.e. an angel, a king, a prophet, a priest or a teacher).
5. The best, the strongest and the wisest of all.

It is interesting to notice in the first verse of proverbs (Prov. 1:1) the word king comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) and the first mention of an angel in the Bible also comes from the Hebrew word (*malak*) (Gen. 16:7). This means when the title king is used in the book of Proverbs it carries the idea of a wise king that does good unless the context implies otherwise.

For further information concerning angels see the title: "Angels," (ON WEBSITE MENU).

PROVERBS 26:1

- **Proverbs 26:1:** Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool.

Snow and rain are not fitting at harvest time (it ruins the harvest), likewise great respect and admiration is not suitable or fitting for a person considered to lack good sense and good judgment.

PROVERBS 26:2

- **Proverbs 26:2:** Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, a curse that is causeless does not alight.

The King James Bible says:

- **Proverbs 26:2:** As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

Bird: (or sparrow): comes from the Hebrew word (*tsippowr*) and embraces a little bird that hops about, (i.e., a fowl or sparrow) it carries the idea of skipping or hopping about as a little bird.

Swallow: comes from the Hebrew word (*d^erowr*) and means to move rapidly, swiftly, freely and spontaneously it carries the idea of freedom and purity. It can refer to the swift (a kind of swallow).

Curse: comes from the Hebrew word (*q^elalah*) and means vilification, to accurse, despise and make malicious and abusive statements about person and bring them into contempt, whereby others have an attitude of utter disgust, dislike or hatred toward the person and consider them to be worthless, inferior and undeserving of respect. The expression, "A curse that is causeless does not alight," carries the idea that as a sparrow moves rapidly on the ground or a swallow swift in its flight do not come to rest on anything, neither will the words of a person wanting to inflict harm on someone else have any effect when there is no basis or truth in what they are saying (Proverbs 26:2).

PROVERBS 26:3

- **Proverbs 26:3:** A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools.

The whip is used to train a horse into the right behaviour, not to wound it or beat it to death, and a bridle for a donkey guides it in the way it should go. Likewise, a rod for the back of fools in this the context is not about punishing the wicked or criminals who cruelly harm others, but upon those who lack good sense, act foolishly and make bad choices and decisions. The expression, "a rod for the back of fools," does not mean everyone who acts foolishly should be beaten with a rod of some kind, the principal is that they should be either disciplined or punished which could take many forms, (i.e., withdrawing privileges, community service, fines and prison etc.), whichever is appropriate to the seriousness of the foolishness.

PROVERBS 26:4-5

- **Proverbs 26:4-5:** ⁴Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself.
⁵Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

The King James Bible says:

- **Proverbs 26:4-5:** Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. ⁵Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

This proverb carries the following two ideas:

1. Those who agree with a person who lacks good sense make themselves as one that is also foolish.
2. It is foolishness to praise a person who lacks good sense because it will make them think they are wise in what they say and do.

PROVERBS 26:6

- **Proverbs 26:6:** Whoever sends a message by the hand of a fool cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.

To trust a foolish person who lacks good sense with an important message or with an important job to be done is the same as bringing your life to ruin yourself.

PROVERBS 26:7

- **Proverbs 26:7:** Like a lame man's legs, which hang useless, is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

A word of wisdom is worthless to a person who lacks good sense, because no matter how good it maybe they will not heed it even if it carries good counsel and good advice and enhance their life and save them from trouble in the future.

PROVERBS 26:8

- **Proverbs 26:8:** Like one who binds the stone in the sling is one who gives honor to a fool.

Those who put a stone in a slingshot could be likened to a person today putting a bullet in a gun, such people are intending to cause hurt, harm and damage of some kind. Likewise, those who give honour to a person who lacks good sense are doing harm them harm, because they are confirming to the foolish that their wrong choices, behaviour and speech is right and good. It could be said they are empowering the foolish to continue in their wrongdoing, wrong thinking, wrong choices and wrong behaviour.

PROVERBS 26:9

- **Proverbs 26:9:** Like a thorn that goes up into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

A person who is drunk does not feel the pain of a thorn in their hand. This proverb can carry the following two ideas:

1. When a person who lacks good sense speaks a word of wisdom, like the thorn in the drunken person's hand, it has no effect on their lives, because they do not apply its wisdom to their lives.
2. When a wise person feeds a man or woman who lacks good sense with words of wisdom it has no effect because they do not consider it or apply it.

PROVERBS 26:10

- **Proverbs 26:10:** Like an archer who wounds everyone is one who hires a passing fool or drunkard.

The expression, "an archer who wounds everyone," carries the idea that he is so lacking in skill for what he is doing that his arrows completely miss the target and instead wound those in the watching crowd. The

teaching of this proverb is that whoever hires a drunkard or someone who lacks good sense as their employee is going to bring trouble to their business.

PROVERBS 26:11

- **Proverbs 26:11:** Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.

People who lack good sense continually repeat the same mistakes. This is foolishness to the extreme, even the wise makes mistakes, but the difference between the wise and the foolish is that the wise learn from their mistakes and make the necessary correction whereas the foolish learn nothing and continually repeat the same mistakes.

PROVERBS 26:12

- **Proverbs 26:12:** Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

A person who lacks good sense has more hope than a person who credits themselves with being wise. This is because there is hope that a foolish person may see their foolishness and listen to the wisdom and the counsel of others, but a prideful self-appointed so called wise person will never listen to anyone, because they believe they are right in everything they do and say and are only interested in telling others what to do and in boasting of themselves.

PROVERBS 26:13

- **Proverbs 26:13:** The sluggard (a slothful man) says, "There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!"

This does not mean that there is an actual lion on the road, it is an expression that carries the idea that a lazy person will always find an excuse not to work. In the book of Proverbs, it is written, slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger. (Proverbs 19:15). The apostle Paul in his letter to the Thessalonians wrote, we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness (2 Thess. 3:6) for we give you this command: "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat." (2 Thess. 3:10). These words of Paul clearly show that God does not expect brothers and sisters in Christ to burden their own families by giving financial aid or food to a brother who is lazy and for no good reason is unwilling to work. Upon saying that it should be mentioned that this command does not apply to a person who is out of work, but is willing to work, nor does this principal apply to a person who for whatever reason is going through a period of overwhelming sorrow, deep depression or some other crisis in their life and because of these does not want to work. Those in Christ suffering in any of these ways, is in desperate need of encouragement, comfort and compassion. This is because laziness is about attitude and choosing not to work when one is fully able to work and not about being unable to work. Though it is true that those who help the poor are storing up treasure in heaven God does not expect anyone to help a person who is unwilling to help themselves for the following three reasons:

1. The monies most brothers and sisters can afford to give is very limited so it is better that their giving goes to those who desire to work, but for whatever reason cannot and are therefore poor and struggling through no fault of their own rather than to those who are choosing to be lazy and unwilling to work when they are fully able.

2. Those who are lazy and chose not to work for no-good reason will forever be a drain on the budget of others and the church.
3. When those who do desire to work, but for some reason are unable to work do overcome their troubles they in turn will work and give to others who lack.

In the book of Proverbs, it is written:

- Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. (Prov. 6:6).
- A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. (Prov. 10:4).
- The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labour.” (Prov. 21:25).

PROVERBS 26:14

- **Proverbs 26:14:** As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.

A door swings easily and effortlessly on its hinges, a lazy person does the same on their bed. (For more concerning a lazy person see the notes following the previous verse above and verse fifteen below).

PROVERBS 26:15

- **Proverbs 26:15:** The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.

The King James Bible says:

- **Proverbs 26:15:** The slothful hideth his hand in *his* bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.

The English Standard Bible says, “The sluggard buries his hand in the dish,” while the King James Bible says, “A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom,” because of the differences let’s look at the two translations separately.

- 1 **The English Standard Bible translation:** the scene brought before us is that of an Eastern Oriental feast in which there were no knives, forks, or spoons. Every guest had to help themselves, by dipping their hands into very wide dishes set on the table to take out the food for themselves or the host would take it from the dish and pass it to them, the following shows that this was a normal custom. When the table had been set for the Passover meal Jesus said to his twelve disciples while they were eating:

- He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. (Matt. 26:23).
- It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. (John 13:26).

During the early generations it was common practice to eat with the fingers.

- 2 **The King James Bible translation:** a slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, either to keep it warm in cold weather, or to give it rest, as if he expected that the meat should drop into his mouth being unwilling to fatigue himself with the labour of any action. It would be foolishness to debate which of these two translations is the correct one since both carry the same idea and both are a sarcaistical hyperboles (extreme exaggerations) in that the slothful and lazy person expects that the food should drop into their mouth symbolising that they have given

themselves up to sloth and laziness and refuse to do even the most easiest of tasks. This principal though speaking of natural food and the laziness of a person also applies to spiritual food and spiritual laziness in that those who are spiritually slothful and lazy should not expect to find the hidden treasures that are to be found in the message of the bloodstained cross and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ or discover the depth, breath and heights of the love and grace of God and the wonder and glory of His word and the prophecies it contains. Though they may have the Bible on their bookshelf full of spiritual and life-giving food for the heart and mind, they will not feed themselves with even the smallest portion of it, but instead expect God to pour out His Spirit of wisdom, love and grace into their hearts and minds without them having to lift up His word from the shelf it sits on collecting dust. For further information concerning a slothful and lazy person, see the notes following verse thirteen above.

PROVERBS 26:16-0

- **Proverbs 26:16:** The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

It is near impossible to give a lazy person good advice, because they mistakenly believe what they are doing makes good sense and the way they perceive things and the world is smarter than those who do have wisdom. (For more concerning a lazy person see the notes following the previous three verses).

PROVERBS 26:17-0

- **Proverbs 26:17:** Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.

Whoever pulls the ears of a strange dog is going to get bitten likewise anyone who gets themselves involved in another person's quarrel is bringing trouble on themselves.

PROVERBS 26:18-20

- **Proverbs 26:18-19:** Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death ¹⁹is the man who deceives his neighbour and says, "I am only joking!"

The expression, "like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows and death," carries the idea of spreading malicious gossip about a neighbour that brings them great hurt and harm. To say, "I was only joking," is not going to heal the hurt of a friend or neighbour when they find out that who has lied and spread exaggerated and deceptive rumours and stories about them (especially when it is someone they thought was their friend or someone they know).

PROVERBS 26:20

- **Proverbs 26:20:** For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer (talebearer in KJV), quarreling ceases.

Talebearer: comes from the Hebrew word (*nirgan*) it literally means to roll to pieces, figuratively it carries the idea of slandering and whispering lies about others. This proverb is teaching: when people stop gossiping about each other and telling malicious lies and spreading deceitful rumours that degrade and demean others quarrelling ceases.

PROVERBS 26:21

- **Proverbs 26:21:** As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.

Those who quarrel keep strife going just as charcoal and wood keeps a fire burning.

PROVERBS 26:22

- **Proverbs 26:22:** The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.

The King James Bible says:

- The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Following are two ways to interpret this verse:

- The lower nature of the human heart loves gossip and demeaning and degrading others.
- Gossip and malicious words deeply wound the heart of those being spoken about.

PROVERBS 26:23

- **Proverbs 26:23:** Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel are fervent lips with an evil heart.

A glazed finish enhances a piece of pottery and covers what it is really made of, such is a person with a wicked heart their flattery, charm and smooth words conceal who they really are on the inside.

PROVERBS 26:24-26

- **Proverbs 26:24:** Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart; ²⁵when he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart; ²⁶though his hatred be covered with deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

A person who has an intense dislike for somebody in a way that evokes feelings of anger and hostility in their heart are also harbouring deceit if they conceal their hatred by smooth and deceptive words. Such a person cannot be trusted because what they are saying is not in accordance with their true feelings. Even though they might hide their hatred behind words they will be exposed by their bad actions or by their lack of good ones.

Seven abominations hidden in their heart refers to things like:

1. Self-importance and an egotistic spirit.
2. Pride and arrogance. (i.e., conceit, self-importance and a sense of superiority).
3. Lies.
4. Deception.

5. Wickedness (i.e., all forms of wrong-doing).
6. Lying flattery and deceitful compliments and words of charm.
7. Contempt (i.e., looking down upon others as lessor).

PROVERBS 26:27

- **Proverbs 26:27:** Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling.

A person who starts trouble and strife or begins a quarrel will be trapped by them.

PROVERBS 26:28

- **Proverbs 26:28:** A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

If a person has an intense dislike for somebody in a way that evokes feelings of anger and hostility in their heart, they will naturally tell malicious lies about them. This truth is often seen in a married couple divorcing, the husband will exaggerate stories about his wife to make himself appear the innocent victim while she will exaggerate stories about him to make herself appear the victim.

There are always two sides to a story is a common saying amongst the global world, but it is not always true, in most cases there are three sides to a story, his, hers and the truth.

A flattering mouth works ruin: when a deceptive person uses compliments without sincerity to appeal to somebody's vanity and ego in order to gain an advantage, the person they are flattering is often deceived into making wrong decisions and in this way a flattering mouth brings ruin.

WISDOM EMBRACES THE FOLLOWING NINE ASPECTS

1. Having a clear thoughtful, rational, discerning, discriminating, sharp, and discreet mind.
2. Being cautious in character as opposed to being impulsive.
3. Being sensible and practical with the skills and talents that a person has.
4. Making choices that considers others and that will be fair and just.
5. Studying, reading and learning to acquire mental knowledge that helps in making right decisions for the present moment and for the future.
6. Being able to see the future danger of a decision, choice or action.
7. Having the ability to make good choices and decisions in the present moment that will end in the best result and a good outcome in the future.
8. Being able to perceive the end result or ramifications (good or bad) of the underlying message a speaker is teaching.
9. Wisdom will protect a person from making decisions and choices in the present moment that will lead to hurt or calamity in the future for themselves and for others.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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