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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Proverbs 21.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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 special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Proverbs 21.

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. 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).
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Proverbs 21

Proverbs 21:1 ----- ¹The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

A king may think he is in control, but ultimately it is God.

Proverbs 21:2 ----- ²Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart.

Following is a simple example that shines further light upon the truth contained in this verse and of a person who believes what they are doing is right when the actual motivation of the heart is not. A zealous and passionate preacher who has thousands in his congregation may believe he is being a great servant of the LORD, but his underlying motivation could be the riches and wealth, the fame and the importance that he gets from his ministry.

The only way for those in his congregation to know the answer to this question would be to take the money, the fame, the importance and the esteem he gets from his ministry away and see if he is still has the same zeal and passion to preach the Gospel. God does not need to do any of this since His eyes pierce the heart and see the motivation of it.

In contrast to this a woman who faithfully cleans the church and sweeps the floors after every service may feel she is not doing very much for the Lord, but her only motivation for doing the work is because she knows it is for the LORD. If God judged according to outward results those who were skilled with oratory and speech making gifts and those who were gifted in leadership and knowledge would be exalted above all, but God does not judge according to outward results, but according the motivation of the heart so everyone noble or lowly, rich or poor, skilled or not are all as it were on a level playing field.

When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ no one has an advantage over another because we are all equally in control of the motivation our heart. If God rewards the preacher above the woman it won't be because of his preaching skill or large congregation, but because the motivation of his heart was right, if it is not and the woman's is naturally she will receive the greater reward and honour.

The apostle Paul wrote: -

- No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, they will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

Proverbs 21:3 ----- ³To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Doing what is good and right and being just to all people and treating them with decency and respect is better to the LORD than sacrificing all the treasures and riches one has, because it blesses and helps others and fulfils Jesus command to all who follow him, "love your neighbour as yourself."

Proverbs 21:4 ----- ⁴Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.

The light that shines in the heart and the mind of the wicked is arrogance (i.e., feeling superior, to others) and pride (i.e., self-exaltation).

Proverbs 21:5 ----- ⁵The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.

The plans of those who are persistent and hard-working and consider carefully the ramifications and long term consequences of every choice, decision and action they make will prosper, but those who make decisions and choices impulsively without considering the consequences and ramifications of their choices and actions will come to ruin.

Proverbs 21:6 ----- ⁶The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death.

Becoming rich and wealthy through deception and lies is fleeting, because it is most likely they will be found out and punished accordingly and loose everything they have gained and even if they don't they will ultimately be judged and condemned to the lake of fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction).

NOTE.

Often when the Bible uses terms such as a fleeting moment or a blink of the eye it has in mind an entire human lifetime, because our mortal life in this world compared to immortal life in eternity, is but a blink of the eyes.

Proverbs 21:7 ----- ⁷The violence robbery of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just.

The King James Bible says: -

- The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment.

This verse most likely carries the following two ideas: -

1. Those who have violence in their heart and refuse to accept judgment will be destroyed, because they do not learn to turn away from their wickedness.
2. The crimes of the criminal will destroy them eternally because they refuse to repent, accept justice and do the right thing.

Proverbs 21:8-9 ----- ⁸The way of the guilty is crooked, but the conduct of the pure is upright. ⁹It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife (brawling wife in KJV).

A quarrelsome wife (brawling wife in KJV) the word quarrelsome comes from the Hebrew word (*m^edan*) and means brawling, quarrelling, discord and strife it carries the idea of one quarrelling as if the discussion is a contest to be won. Such a quarrelsome and brawling wife is a perpetual annoyance that eventually wears out the patience of those who have to suffer it. Likewise a wife's continual quarrelling and contentions will eventually, quarrel by quarrel not only spoil a man's happiness and wear him away, but will also over time drive away all the other inhabitants of the household.

Proverbs 21:10 ----- ¹⁰The soul of the wicked desires evil; his neighbor finds no mercy in his eyes.

The heart of a wicked person has no compassion or empathy they do not consider others and are indifferent to the hurt and pain they may cause another person.

Proverbs 21:11 ----- ¹¹When a scoffer is punished, the simple becomes wise; when a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge.

This verse can carry the following two ideas: -

1. When a person who mocks and scoffs (i.e., they maliciously, gossip about other and degrade and demean them) is punished others who lack wisdom learn that it is wrong to humiliate and treat people in such a demeaning and degrading way.
2. The simple refers to the person who mocks and scoffs and it is only by punishment that they are made wise, meaning that they turn from their wicked ways.

Punishment in this context refers to some form of outward visible action that either inflicts some form of hurt upon them or denies them for something they value. This is because the unwise who scoff and mock others do not listen to good counsel and advice.

When a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge: unlike the unwise the wise do not need to be punished, because they do listen to the good advice and counsel of others.

Proverbs 21:12 ----- ¹²The Righteous One observes the house of the wicked; he throws the wicked down to ruin.

The King James Bible says: -

- The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.

A godly person who does what is good and right is carefully cautious of those that do wrong. This carries the following two ideas: -

1. When a wise person is amongst the wicked they are careful not to stir up their anger.
2. When the wise observe the wicked they lawfully bring them before the law and they are judged accordingly and brought to ruin.
3. God will condemn to the lake of fire a symbol of eternal death (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction) those that deliberately do harm to others physically, financially, sexually, emotionally or spiritually.

Proverbs 21:13 ----- ¹³Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.

This is the principal of sowing and reaping, no-one will offer to help a person who has the means to help, but refuses to help another when they ask for it especially when it is the poor and the helpless who are asking.

Proverbs 21:14 ----- ¹⁴A gift in secret averts (pacifieth in KJV) anger, and a concealed bribe (reward in KJV), strong wrath.

If you have offended someone and they are angry because of the offence a good way of calming them down is to give them a gift, by extension this also carries the idea of doing something kind for them. There are many husbands all around the world that after upsetting their wives have brought them flowers, diamonds and jewels, because they know the truth of this proverb? The reason it is given in secret is because it makes the person feel special and important to you and if it is a work colleague or friend it avoids embarrassing them in front of others and the possibility of others being envious or jealous (especially if the gift has great value).

Proverbs 21:15 ----- ¹⁵When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.

When a king enforces justice in the land those that do what is good and right are happy and live in peace, while the wicked and those who do wrong live in fear. Two of the great pillars of God's throne are love and justice, one of the ways to measure how much we love God is to look into our hearts and see how much we love seeing men and woman treated with the fruits of love (i.e., mercy, compassion, goodness, kindness and such like things) and examine if our heart rejoices when it sees honest justice being administered.

Proverbs 21:16 ----- ¹⁶One who wanders from the way of good sense will rest in the assembly of the dead.

The expression, "the assembly of the dead," refers to those condemned to eternal death (i.e., total destruction and utter extinction). All who turn from doing what is good and right will be condemned to the assembly of the dead.

Proverbs 21:17 ----- ¹⁷Whoever loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

A man or woman who solely lives to gratify the flesh and the senses of the body, through material possessions, sexual gratification, drunkenness, partying, and leisure time will never be wealthy.

Proverbs 21:18 ----- ¹⁸The wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the traitor (transgressor in KJV) for the upright.

The King James Bible says: -

- The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.

This verse carries the idea that the wicked are condemned for the sake of the righteous, meaning they are destroyed to protect those who do what is good and right. Some may not realise that the spirit underpinning God's Ten Commandments is love this is because each law concerning mankind protects the innocent from hurt and harm.

Proverbs 21:19 ----- ¹⁹It is better to live in a desert land than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.

The King James Bible says: -

- It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Quarrelsome: comes from the Hebrew word (*m^edan*) and means brawling, quarrelling, discord and strife it carries the idea of one quarrelling as if the discussion is a contest to be won.

Contentious: comes from the Hebrew word (*madowan*) and means quarrel, brawl, discord, strife it carries the idea of contending in a quarrel as if one was arguing to win a contest and maintain the dominate rule.

Such a quarrelsome and contentious wife is a perpetual annoyance that will eventually not only wear out the patience of her husband and those who have to suffer it, but will also quarrel by quarrel eventually spoil everyone's happiness and wear them away so much so that over time she will drive all the inhabitants of the household away.

Proverbs 21:20 ----- ²⁰Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it.

The King James Bible says: -

- There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

The principal taught in this verse is that a wise person saves and invests their money so that it increases and gives them security in the future in contrast to this a person that lacks good sense spends. Spending for those in the West is especially easy to do today, consumers are bombarded with adverts that are filled with lies, deception and temptations to entice us all to buy, every store has products that look beautiful to our eyes and with unspoken words call out to us to buy things we don't really need.

I remember years ago being in a church that had a visiting Russian minister speaking. After he had given his message the pastor of the church thanked him for his exhort and said, "We are praying for your people suffering under Communism," (this was before the wall came down and Bibles had to be smuggled into Russia and Christians caught teaching it were imprisoned). He thanked the minister of the church and said, "It is interesting that you are praying for us, because we also pray for Christians in the West because we feel that your materialism is far more dangerous to faith than our persecution."

Proverbs 21:21 ----- ²¹Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor.

The faithful who aim to do what is good and right and show kindness to others will in this mortal wold be respected and treated with honour by all who know them and by God and the Lord Jesus Christ and all the angels in heaven when they stand before the judgment seat of the Lord.

Proverbs 21:22 ----- ²²A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust.

The King James Bible says: -

- A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof.

When a man or woman with wisdom wants to conquer someone who is strong or proud they firstly calculate their strength and search out what they are trusting in and then bring down their confidence by destroying those things that they are trusting in. If this principal was applied to witnessing it would mean when sharing the Gospel to someone who has a strong faith in another religion search out the primary doctrine they trust in and then (if possible) through compassionate and gentle reasoning pull it apart. Once it is destroyed they are then forced to doubt everything else they have believed in and will therefore be far more open to listen and hear.

Proverbs 21:23 ----- ²³Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.

A person who is able to control what they say will not get into trouble. There are times when this is a most difficult thing to do, this is why James in his letter wrote:

- The tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! (James 3:5-6).
- No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. (James 3:8-10).

Those who are wise have learned to recognise those moments in a heated circumstance when the temper is rising and the tongue is about to lash out in verbal hostile attack, defence or abuse and calm themselves down before the tongue has its way or back away from the situation that is causing the anger to be inflamed.

Proverbs 21:14 ----- ²⁴"Scoffer" is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.

Arrogant: refers to those who are full of self-importance, so much so they look upon others with contempt (i.e., disdain, disrespect and scorn). It carries the idea of seeing others as worthless and inferior to oneself and undeserving of respect. An arrogant man or woman is so prideful they see themselves as being superior to everyone and look down upon others as being lessor than themselves.

Haughty: means behaving in a superior, arrogant and condescending manner it carries the idea of considering oneself superior and better than others socially and intellectually.

NOTE.

There are two aspects to pride, healthy pride and destructive pride. Not all pride is evil pride the following shows the difference between healthy pride and destructive pride.

Healthy pride embraces the following: -

- That happy satisfied feeling experienced when having or achieved something special that other people admire.
- Taking great pride in one's work is healthy and productive pride.
- That personal sense of satisfaction and pleasure that comes from something accomplished or a quality possessed.
- Having a proper sense of one's own value and the correct level of respect for the importance and value of one's personal character, life, efforts and achievements as opposed to having no confidence and no sense of worth.
- That personal feeling of satisfaction because of an achievement or possession that one is especially pleased to have accomplished and is fully satisfied with (i.e. their grandchildren were their pride and joy or the gold medal I won at the Olympics is my pride and joy etc.).

Unhealthy pride embraces the following: -

- Having a feeling of superiority and a haughty attitude. This type of pride is shown by somebody who believes (often unjustifiably) that he or she is better than others. A person who has this kind of pride will often not mix with those they consider their social inferiors. This pride is arrogant it exalts oneself above others and even God, and will treat those it looks down to and believes are inferior to them with disdain and at its peak with cruelty and destruction. It causes quarrels, strife, arguments, fights and even wars.

- Having the biggest ego of all, a person at this level of pride sees themselves at the top of humanity and views themselves as always being right. They believe they are equal to God or even a god themselves and are so egotistical that they think the whole world revolves around them.

Proverbs 21:25-26 ---- ²⁵The desire of the sluggard kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. ²⁶All day long he craves and craves, but the righteous gives and does not hold back.

A lazy person desires many things, but these desires rob them from joy and their laziness robs them from the excitement of ever obtaining what they desire and of the happiness of actually having what they desire because they refuse to work. In contrast to this righteous (i.e., those who do what is good and right and diligently work) not only obtain their desires but is also able to give to the helpless and the poor.

A slothfulness and lazy person will not be able to provide for themselves because laziness makes a person lethargic, mentally dull, apathetic and tired. It robs those that are lazy of energy, of vitality, of motivation of self-motivation and of the desire to learn anything new and of any interest in doing something new. This is because if something looks as though it may involve effort and work a lazy person will do all they can to avoid it and by doing so will not only become more lethargic and apathetic, but also lazier.

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 as is the monies of most churches 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 21:27 ----- 27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with evil intent.

When a person who confesses to believe in God lives a lifestyle of wrong doing and gives God no thought as to how their corrupt lifestyle reflects on the honour of God and the Good name of the Lord Jesus Christ bring an offering (no matter how grand) to the LORD it is an extreme offence to Him and even more so when they have a wicked motive. This most likely carries the idea that they are verbally praying for mercy and forgiveness, but in their hearts and minds they have no intention of changing their wicked ways and corrupt lifestyle.

The expression, "they bring it with evil intent," most likely means that rather than coming to God in humble repentance and with the intention of turning from their wicked ways they are bringing Him a grand offering with the intention of buying His favour and forgiveness, because they have no repentance in their heart and no intention of changing their lifestyle.

A similar example of such a person would be those who strictly attend church every Sunday and worship God and says all the right things while at church, but during every other day of the week live as the please taking no thought as to how their life reflects on God's honour and the good name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. They like the wicked who bring an offering to God with evil intent will not win the Lord's favour by their worship and church attendance.

Proverbs 21:28 ----- 28 A false witness will perish, but the word of a man who hears will endure.

The King James Bible says: -

- A false witness shall perish: but the man that heareth speaketh constantly.

This verse carries the idea that God will condemn to eternal death all who lie and deceive to protect the guilty. A simple example of this scenario would be family or friend lying in a court of law to protect a guilty family member or a friend. This is a gross sin before God for the following two reasons: -

1. In many cases it will mean that an innocent person will be punished and suffer for the crime while the guilty person is set free to continue in their wrong-doing.
2. Honest justice is one of the great pillars of God's throne He is the great Judge of the universe and shows bias to no one, but judges' righteous judgment.

In contrast to false witnesses those who speak the truth no matter what the cost to them or their family and their friends will be favoured by God and raised to eternal life and everlasting happiness in glory.

Proverbs 21:29 ----- 29 A wicked man puts on a bold face, but the upright gives thought to his ways.

This verse carries the idea that a wicked person will not only put on a false front to cover up the wickedness in their heart, but also flatterers, charms and compliments others to win their favour and give the appearance of being a good person. But those who have wisdom and do what is good and right are not deceived by their flattering words, because they take notice of their outward behaviour, actions and lifestyle.

Proverbs 21:30 ----- 30 No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the LORD.

As amazing as human wisdom, understanding and counsel is today they are all grossly lacking when they are brought before the LORD'S wisdom and knowledge. The following verses shine a brilliant light upon the truth that man's wisdom, understanding, and counsel cannot find out God's ways upon the earth: -

- God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes. 3:11).

- Man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. (Eccles. 8:17).
- The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. ¹²For man does not know his time. Like fish that are taken in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so the children of man are snared at an evil time, when it suddenly falls upon them. (Eccles. 9:11-12)

This means that no man can find out the works of God upon the earth. The LORD has designed the universe this way so that no human whether righteous or wicked can find out their future or know what will happen to them tomorrow. The writer of Ecclesiastes concludes with the following two statements: -

1. Without God all is vanity (meaning brief, passing and meaningless) because the righteous and the wicked, the wise and the foolish all end up in the grave and are forgotten. (Eccles. 3:11).
2. The end of all wisdom is to fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man, because God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Eccles. 12:13-14).

Proverbs 21:31 ----- ³¹The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.

Nations, governments, armies and soldiers may prepare for war and battle, but God, controls the victory.

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.

End.