

Proverbs Chapter 20 Continued

Proverbs 20:16 "Take his garment that is surety [for] a stranger: and take a pledge of him for a strange woman."

We see in this that this man has carelessly put up his garment for security on another's loan; and when the other man could not pay, they have taken his garment. His mistake was going on the note in the first place. It appears that he has learned a lesson the hard way; he lost his garment in the process.

Garments were common security for a loan but they always had to be returned by sundown. Anyone who foolishly has taken on the responsibility for the debt of a stranger will likely never be paid back, so he will never pay his creditor unless his own garment is taken as security.

The word that was translated "strange" describing this woman means foreign, non-relative, and adulterous. We see from this that the pledge (in the second part of verse 16), has to do with a woman other than his relative. Possibly, she is a woman of ill repute.

There is a story in the 38th chapter of Genesis where Tamar took pledge of her father-in-law, Judah. Read the whole 38th chapter to get the story. I believe this last half (of verse 16), is speaking of a pledge given to a harlot woman.

Proverbs 20:17 "Bread of deceit [is] sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel."

We see in this "bread of deceit" that he has nourished himself with the sins of the flesh. Hebrews calls sin a pleasure for a season:

Hebrews 11:25 "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;"

Sin seems to be pleasure, but the end is sorrow and regret. This statement "His mouth shall be filled with gravel" means that this sin leaves a bad taste in his mouth. Gravel indicates grating of teeth.

Proverbs 20:18 "[Every] purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war."

We see here again, good or wise counsel is a must. Only a terribly conceited person or a fool would refuse good counsel. War should certainly be gone into only after careful consideration. War is serious business and to jump into war unadvisedly could mean disaster.

Proverbs 20:19: "He that goeth about [as] a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips."

If a person talks about someone else to you (talebearer), they will talk about you when you are out of sight to someone else. A talebearer is to be avoided. They reveal secrets and stir up strife.

Those who love to spread secrets will flatter to learn them.

Proverbs 20:20 "Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness."

We see in this Scripture the opposite of "honor thy father, and thy days will be long upon the earth".

Our mother and father's love is probably more than anyone else's. To curse them is, in essence, to curse yourself. This grievous sin will result in spiritual death.

Proverbs 20:21 "An inheritance [may be] gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed."

This could imply an unjust method in gaining the inheritance, so that it will be lost by the same unjust ways or by punishment.

Usually, things that we do not earn don't last. It is the old saying, "easy come, easy go". An inheritance sometimes ruins the person receiving it.

I knew a family who were hard working people, and were just getting along fine. They received \$100,000 dollars unexpectedly and it ruined their lives. The husband quit his job and started drinking. In a year, all the money was gone; he had no job and his wife had left him. He lost his house in order to pay the taxes on the \$100,000. Their lives were ruined.

Unexpected inheritance can ruin you. Instead of it being a blessing, it winds up a curse many times, because we are not prepared to handle it. God knows just how much He can trust you with. Be content with what you have.

Proverbs 20:22 "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; [but] wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee."

Vengeance is mine saith the Lord. The thing a fleshly man would do is go and get even, but if we are believers, we are not allowed this. We are to do good to those who persecute us. We must plead our case with the Lord, and He will see us through. The Lord is our shield and our defense.

It is God and not man that avenges evil and delivers us from the wicked.

Proverbs 20:23 "Divers weights [are] an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance [is] not good."

We dealt with this earlier in these lessons. The Lord hates dishonesty of any kind and especially dishonesty and trickery associated with it.

Proverbs 20:24: "Man's goings [are] of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?"

This first man is taken from a word that means mighty man, and man in the second part means human creature. We see, then, that the man of God's goings are of the Lord. How then can a human creature understand his own way?

As we have said before, if Jesus is our Lord, everything that happens to us, good and bad, has to be okayed by Him. A man of the world does not understand his own way. A worldly man just gropes around trying one thing and another until he finds the Way, which is Jesus.

Since a man cannot comprehend the unfolding purposes of God's providence in his life, he has to walk in faith.

Proverbs 20:25 "[It is] a snare to the man [who] devoureth [that which is] holy, and after vows to make inquiry."

To declare something sacred, meaning to promise it to God in consecration as an offering, was irreversible, and therefore serious. Remember in Acts 5 beginning with verse one about Ananias and Sapphira?

When we promise something to the Lord, it is very important to keep the promise. If you were not able to keep the promise, you shouldn't have made the promise in the first place.

Proverbs 20:26 "A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them."

We see in this that the wise king is separating the bad from the good. In the wheel coming over the wicked here, we see the king conquering or perhaps even destroying these wicked.

Proverbs 20:27 "The spirit of man [is] the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly."

The spirit of man is the breath that the Lord breathed into man that gave him life. You could even call it our conscience. The candlestick was in the church shining to remove the shadows. The Light of Jesus shines within all believers and destroys darkness. It searches out all the hidden sins and brings them to light.

We are told by Jesus in Matthew:

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven".

God's Light shining within us separates us from the darkness of the world. The light that is within us is the Light of Jesus.

Proverbs 20:28 "Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy."

We see in this that if a king wants to continue to be a king he must not be cruel, he must be merciful. Just as we Americans say that George Washington was the father of our country, people living in countries that have kings, look on the king as the father of their country.

A king that rules with mercy and truth will be king for a long time.

Proverbs 20:29 "The glory of young men [is] their strength: and the beauty of old men [is] the grey head."

This is a very true statement of young men. They are proud that they are strong. Young men will pump iron or exercise to make them even stronger. Paul warns about putting too much emphasis on the bodily exercise.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself [rather] unto godliness." "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

The beautiful grey hair of an old man shows wisdom and experience. For a man to live long enough to have grey hair, God would have to have blessed him.

Proverbs 20:30 "The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so [do] stripes the inward parts of the belly."

Wise use of corporal punishment deters evil behavior.

These stripes in the belly indicate punishment that is felt with our inner most being. We are supposed to see in the bruises and in the stripes that correction has come for the sins in our lives.

Proverbs Chapter 20 Continued Questions

1. In verse 16, what has he put his garments up for?
2. What does the word that has been translated "strange" mean?
3. In the 38th chapter of Genesis, who took pledge of her father-in-law?
4. "Bread of deceit" means what?
5. What does "having my mouth full of gravel" mean?
6. Every purpose is established by what?
7. Who would refuse counsel?

8. What is a person that reveals secrets called?
9. What shall happen to a person who curses father and mother?
10. A hasty gotten inheritance sometimes ends how?
11. Sometimes sudden riches does what to a person?
12. If we are to recompense evil, what are we to do?
13. Who is our shield and defense?
14. The _____ goings are of the Lord.
15. It is a snare to a man that devoureth _____.
16. In verse 26, a wise king scattereth the wicked, what else does he do?
17. In verse 27, what is the candle of the lord?
18. In Matthew 5:16, what are the Christians told to do?
19. What two things preserve the king?
20. What is the glory of young men?
21. What is the beauty of the old man?
22. Blueness of a wound cleanseth away what?