

Proverbs Chapter 21

Proverbs 21:1 "The king's heart [is] in the hand of the LORD, [as] the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

The Lord is the one, in the final analysis, who will be King.

The Lord sovereignly controls political powers. Note the examples of the divine hand of God in the cases of Artaxerxes (Ez. 7:21-23); Tiglath-pileser (Isa. 10:5-7); Cyrus (Isa. 45:1-4), and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:34).

Just as the Lord through Moses ruled over the Pharaoh in Egypt and finally caused Pharaoh to let the people go. No one is so great (not even a king), that he is not under the rule of the Lord. Sometimes, God just places a thought in their head and rules them that way. For sure, kings and rulers are ruled over by the Lord. The Lord Jesus is King of all kings and Lord of all Lords. The rivers flow because God ordained it.

In Colossians we read:

Colossians 1:16-17 "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

Proverbs 21:2 "Every way of a man [is] right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts."

This is speaking of a false security that man has. While man can be self-deceived, God determines his true motives.

The evil the Israelites were guilty of over and over was doing what was right in their own sight. This, as we have said before, tends toward pleasing the flesh which is sin. God judges the intents of the heart. The heart is the center of our being, and actually controls what we are. It is either desperately wicked, or it is pure. There is no in between. God looks on the heart. The source of what we are.

Proverbs 21:3 "To do justice and judgment [is] more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."

External acts of worship, though according to biblical prescription, are repulsive to God when the heart of the worshiper is wicked.

God wants us to love Him so much that we will do justly and judge righteously: not from being compelled to do so, but because we love Him. It was very important to keep the sacrifices until

Jesus became the perfect Lamb sacrifice and did away with all sin, for all time, to those who would accept Him.

Proverbs 21:4 "A high look, and a proud heart, [and] the plowing of the wicked, [is] sin."

This is speaking of a conceited person so filled up with self that their heart is even stayed on themselves. Pride is a very bad sin.

This plowing of the wicked translates to "Lamp" of the wicked. "Lamp" is used as a symbol for the eyes, which conveys their pride.

Verses 5-7 address the evils of ill-gotten gain. They show 3 major defects in the way this gain is acquired:

- (1) Hastily, verse 5;
- (2) Deceitfully, verse 6;
- (3) Violently, verse 7.

Proverbs 21:5 "The thoughts of the diligent [tend] only to plenteousness; but of every one [that is] hasty only to want."

This is speaking of a diligent worker who thinks constantly of working toward having plenty. People who do not consistently work and try to have something; wind up with nothing but want.

Proverbs 21:6 "The getting of treasures by a lying tongue [is] a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death."

We have been talking all through Proverbs about how bad a lying tongue is. When a lying tongue is coupled with cheating, we see a terrible sin. Whether they are seeking death or not, that is what they will get by living treacherous or deceitful lives. All of this is caused by thinking too highly of self and feeling that the world owes you something. The Lord will save the humble.

Proverbs 21:7 "The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them; because they refuse to do judgment."

Here again, we see the robber wanting something that does not belong to him. Little does he know that the one he is destroying is himself. They have no intention of doing what is right (just). They are only thinking of self.

As we learned in Proverbs;

Proverbs 1:18-19 "But they lie in wait for their own blood;" "They ambush their own lives. So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; it takes away the life of its possessors."

Proverbs 21:8 "The way of man [is] froward and strange: but [as for] the pure, his work [is] right."

We see that the evil man is crooked and perverse. He does not walk upright. He is pushy (froward). Strange has a meaning of being alien. In this instance, a stranger to God. The pure in heart does what he believes would be right in God's sight. "The way of man" means the way of the worldly man.

Proverbs 21:9 "[It is] better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

We discussed in an earlier lesson how our homes need to be a place of rest and a refuge from the problems of the world. If our only place of rest is a battleground, then we are constantly in turmoil. It really doesn't matter how small the house is, if there is love there; but you cannot get a house big enough to be happy in, if there is continual fighting.

Since roofs were open like patios, a small arbor or enclosure in the corner of a flat roof was a very inconvenient place to live (see verse 19).

Proverbs 21:10 "The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbor findeth no favor in his eyes."

We see that the wicked have no mercy for anyone, not even their neighbor. They will destroy anyone or anything to get what they want. We see, here, that this evil one is evil through and through. His desires are all for self.

So strongly does he seek to do evil that he will not even spare his neighbor if he gets in his way.

Proverbs 21:11 "When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge."

We talked in an earlier lesson how the scorner has gone so far that even punishment does not change his evil ways. His punishment is in payment of his evil doings. The only one helped by the scorner's punishment is the simple one here. He sees what could happen to him if he doesn't change, and he changes and becomes wise.

The wise are eager to learn and receive more and more knowledge. You remember from an earlier lesson that knowledge is accumulated learning.

So there are three classes of people spoken of here. Scoffers are rebuked for learning nothing; Naïve people are warned by observing the rebuke of the scoffer; and the understanding deepen their wisdom from any reproof.

Proverbs 21:12 "The righteous [man] wisely considereth the house of the wicked: [but God] overthroweth the wicked for [their] wickedness."

We see the righteous man considers what the wicked is doing. The wise man has no desire to get involved in the wicked's life style. The wise man knows where the final place of the wicked will be. He knows that in the end, the wicked will be overthrown and sent to hell.

Proverbs 21:13 "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard."

This is the reverse of "give and it shall be given unto you". If you do not have mercy, no mercy will be shown you.

In Luke 6:38 we read, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

As we read (in Prov. 14:31). it offends the Creator when one neglects the poor, who are part of His creation.

Proverbs 21:14 "A gift in secret pacifieth anger: and a reward in the bosom strong wrath."

When you give anything, it should not be broadcast so that you can get a reward. This first part could also mean a bribe.

This "reward in the bosom" means, to me, given from the heart. When you give a gift from the heart, it certainly will stop anger and hurt and wrath.

Proverbs 21:15 "[It is] joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction [shall be] to the workers of iniquity."

The person that does fairly (just), by others find pleasure in doing what is right. We see that the just (right doers), find real peace and satisfaction in knowing that they are pleasing God.

Terror and torment face those who work iniquity. They are afraid someone will find out how evil they really are. They are headed for destruction. No reward awaits them, only destruction.

Proverbs 21:16 "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead."

I see here, a man who has been upright and walking in the path of righteousness. He has suddenly gotten off the straight and narrow path and is wandering. He understood, but now he doubts. Faith keeps us on the path to heaven. Doubt brings eternal condemnation. It would have been better for him if he had never known God's ways, than to have known God's ways and turned from them.

This is proven in the account of the simple man who was seduced as we read about (in 2:18, 7:22-23; 9:18).

Proverbs Chapter 21 Questions

1. The king's heart is in the hands of Whom?
2. The Lord (through Moses), ruled over what Egyptian?
3. Why and where do the rivers flow?
4. In Colossians 1:16, we find that all things were made by whom?
5. Every way of man is right where?
6. The Lord pondereth what?
7. What was the evil the Israelites were guilty of over and over?
8. What does God judge?
9. What is the source of what we are in our body?
10. What is more acceptable to God than sacrifice?
11. What other 2 things, besides a high look, are sin in verse 4?
12. What does plowing of the wicked mean?
13. The thoughts of the diligent tend only to _____.
14. Getting treasures by a lying tongue leads to what?
15. What shall the wicked do to destroy themselves in verse 7?
16. In verse 8, two words describe the way of fleshly man, what are they?
17. It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than with whom in a wide house?
18. What is our home supposed to be?
19. The soul of the wicked desireth_____.
20. When the scorner is punished, who is made wise?
21. What is knowledge?
22. If you stop your ears to the poor, what will happen to you?

23. A gift in secret does what?

24. What is meant by reward in the bosom?

25. What shall be to the workers of iniquity?

26. What is meant by wandering out of the way of understanding?