

Proverbs Collection II: Solomon's Proverbs – Part 4 (c. 969t – 932t BC)

Proverbs 18–20

The Speech of Fools versus the Speech of the Wise

- 18:1 He who is selfish seeks a craving;
against all sound judgment he shows contempt.
- 2 A fool will not take pleasure in understanding,
but in expressing his heart.
- 3 With the coming of wickedness comes contempt also,
and with dishonor, disgrace.
- 4 Deep waters *are* words of the mouth of a man;
a gushing stream *is* a fountain of wisdom.
- 5 Being partial *to* faces of evil *is* not good,
nor to subvert the righteous at the judgment.
- 6 The lips of a fool will bring strife,
and his mouth calls out for a flogging.
- 7 The mouth of a fool *is* ruin to him,
and his lips *are* a snare to his soul.
- 8 The words of a whisper *are* like delicious morsels,
and they themselves go down *to* inner parts of the body.
- 9 Even he who is slack in his work,
he is brother to a master of destruction.
- 10 A tower of strength is the name of Yahweh;
into him the righteous will run and be safe.
- 11 The wealth of the rich *is* his strong city,
and like a wall, it is high in his imagination.
- 12 In the presence of destruction, the heart of a man will be haughty,
but in the presence of honor, humble.
- 13 He who returns a word before he will hear,
folly itself *belongs* to him as well as shame.
- 14 The spirit of a man will endure his sickness,
but a broken spirit, who may bear it?
- 15 An intelligent mind will acquire knowledge,
and the ear of the wise will seek knowledge.
- 16 The gift of a person will open doors for him,
and before the great, it gives him access.
- 17 The first in his dispute is *deemed* righteous,
but his neighbor will come and examine him.
- 18 The lot will put an end to disputes,
and between powerful contenders it will decide.
- 19 A brother who is offended *is worse* than a city of strength,
and quarrels *are* like the bars of a fortification.
- 20 From the fruit of a man's mouth, his stomach will be satisfied,
as for the yield of his lips, it will satisfy.
- 21 Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue,
and those who love her will eat of her fruit.

Wealth and Wisdom in the Court and in the Home

- 22 He who finds a wife finds good,
and he will obtain favor from Yahweh.
- 23 The poor may speak entreaties,
but the rich will answer roughly.
- 24 A man of *many* friends will come to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- 19:1 Better a poor person walking in integrity
than one who is perverse in his speech and is a fool.
- 2 Also, a life without knowledge is not good,
and he who moves quickly with *his* feet misses the mark.
- 3 As for the folly of humankind, its way leads to ruin,

- and against Yahweh his heart will rage.
- 4 Wealth adds many friends,
but the poor will be left by his friends.
- 5 A witness of falsehood will not go unpunished,
and he who breathes lies will not escape.
- 6 Many will seek favor before the generous,
and everyone *is* the friend of a man of gifts.
- 7 All the brothers of the poor, *if* they hate him,
how much more will his friends keep away from him.
He pursues *them with* words, *and* they are gone.
- 8 He who acquires wisdom loves himself;
he who guards understanding *loves* to find good.
- 9 A false witness will not go unpunished,
and he who breathes lies will perish.
- 10 For a fool living in luxury is not fitting,
any more than it is for a slave to rule over princes.
- 11 The understanding of a person makes him slow to his anger,
and his glory overlooks offense.
- 12 The rage of a king growls like a lion,
but his favor is like dew on the grass.
- 13 A foolish child is a ruin to his father,
and the quarreling of a woman is a continuous dripping.
- 14 A house and wealth *are* an inheritance *from* fathers,
but from Yahweh *comes* a woman who is prudent.
- 15 Laziness will bring on a deep sleep,
and a person of idleness will suffer hunger.
- 16 He who guards commandments guards his life;
he who is careless of his ways will be killed.
- 17 He who lends to Yahweh *is* he who is kind to the poor,
and his benefits he will repay to him.
- 18 Discipline your child, for there is hope,
but on his destruction do not set your desire.
- 19 A hot-tempered person pays a penalty;
if you rescue *him*, you will do *it* yet again.
- 20 Listen *to* advice and accept instruction
so that you will gain wisdom for your future.
- 21 Many plans *are* in the heart of a man,
but the purpose of Yahweh will be established.
- 22 The craving of a man *is* his steadfast loyalty,
and *it is* better *to be* poor than a liar.

The Pedagogue and Punishment of Fools

- 23 Fear of Yahweh *leads* to life;
he who is filled *with it* will rest—he will not suffer harm.
- 24 A lazy person buries his hand in the dish,
and even to his mouth he will not bring it back.
- 25 The scoffer you shall strike, and the simple, may they learn prudence,
and reprove the intelligent *and* he will gain knowledge.
- 26 He who does violence to a father, he who chases away a mother,
is a child who causes shame and brings reproach.
- 27 Cease to listen to instruction, my child,
and you will stray from sayings of knowledge.
- 28 A worthless witness will mock justice,
and the mouth of the wicked will devour iniquity.
- 29 Judgments are prepared for the scoffers,
and flogging for the back of fools.
- 20:1 Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink a brawler,
and any who go astray by it are not wise.

- 2 Roaring like the lion *is the* dreaded anger of a king;
he who provokes him forfeits his life.
- 3 *It is* honorable for the man to refrain from strife,
but every fool will be quick to quarrel.
- 4 The lazy person will not plow in season;
he will expect at the harvest, but there *will be* nothing.
- 5 Deep waters *are like* purpose in the heart of a man,
and a man of understanding will draw it out.
- 6 Many a person will proclaim his loyalty *for* himself,
but a man *who is* trustworthy, who can find?
- 7 He who walks in his integrity *is* righteous;
happy are his children who follow him.
- 8 A king who sits on *the* throne of judgment
winnows all evil with his eyes.
- 9 Who will say “I have made my heart clean;
I am pure from my sin”?
- 10 Stone and stone, measure and measure,
both of them *are* an abomination of Yahweh.
- 11 Even by his acts, a young man will make himself known,
whether his acts are pure and upright.

Speech and Commerce

- 12 The ear that hears and the eye that sees,
Yahweh has made them both.
- 13 Do not love sleep, lest you become poor;
open your eyes *and* have plenty bread.
- 14 “Bad, bad,” the buyer will say,
but *when* one goes to him, then he will boast.
- 15 There is gold and many costly stones,
but precious jewels are lips of knowledge.
- 16 Take his garment, for he has given security *to* a stranger,
and on behalf of a foreigner—take it as pledge.
- 17 Bread gained by deceit is sweet for the man,
but afterward, his mouth will be filled *with* gravel.
- 18 A plan will be established by advice,
and with guidance make war.
- 19 He reveals a secret, he who walks *about with* gossip,
and do not associate with a babbler’s lips.

Honoring Parents

- 20 He who curses his father and his mother,
his lamp will be extinguished in the midst of darkness.
- 21 An inheritance acquired *hastily* at the beginning
will not be blessed at its end.

Trust God to Avenge Wrong

- 22 Do not say “I will repay evil”;
wait for Yahweh and he will deliver you.
- 23 An abomination of Yahweh *is* a stone and a weight,
and scales of falsehood are not good.
- 24 *Away* from Yahweh are the steps of a strong man,
and how will humankind understand his ways?
- 25 *It is* a snare to humankind to say rashly “*It is* holy,”
and after vows, to scrutinize.

A Wise King

- 26 A wise king winnows the wicked,
and he will drive a wheel over them.

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| 27 | The lamp of Yahweh <i>is</i> the spirit of humankind, he who searches every innermost part. |
| 28 | Loyalty and faithfulness will preserve a king, and he is upheld with the righteousness of his throne. |
| 29 | The glory of young men <i>is</i> their strength, but the beauty of the aged <i>is</i> gray hair. |
| 30 | The blows of a wound will cleanse evil, as will beatings of the innermost part. |

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