

Proverbs Week #155 (14:18-19)

The naive inherit foolishness, but the sensible are crowned with knowledge. The evil will bow down before the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous. (Proverbs 14.18–19 NAS95)

As we consider this week's verses it is important to remember that proverbs are not simple promises. The words of the wise need to be understood before we can embrace and apply them. The Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge and part of the process is learning to understand the proverbs themselves.

To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles. (Proverbs 1.6 NAS95)

Our first verse speaks of an inheritance and a crown. We know from the Torah that God promised a specific land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This land was promised to them and was to be passed on to their children as an inheritance. In the Torah, specific guidelines were given by God that would allot portions of the land to the clans of Israel. The Levites were not given an inheritance in the land. Each tribe was to give the Levites cities and the land surrounding them for them to live in and tend their flocks. Yet their family did not have that land as an inheritance.

Crowns were placed on the head of rulers in the times of the Bible and in some countries even today. In the United States our rulers don't wear crowns. In our history as a people we made a distinct break from the idea of a sovereign. Throughout Europe and into ancient times rulers were seen as having a divine right to rule mainly because of a belief that the family line was royal.

The themes of our verses speak of inheritance and crowns in relationship to knowledge and foolishness (wisdom's opposite). In the first verse we see principles and in the second we see their outcome and applications. We need to understand God's perspectives to fully grasp the truth in these verses. The triumph of good over evil is a sure thing but needs to be understood from God's timelines. Sometimes it seems like those who are bad are the ones that are in charge (it's easy to apply this in relation to politicians but not as easy to see it in ourselves). Consider the following biblical passages and our need to focus on God's timelines and kingdom priorities.

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left." But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to Him, "We are able." He said to them, "My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father." And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20.20–28 NAS95)

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of the Messiah, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5.1–7 NAS95)