

PROVERBS:
WAY OF THE WICKED

Tuesday, April 28

Reading: Proverbs 21:9-19

Proverbs 21:12 The Righteous One takes note of the house of the wicked and brings the wicked to ruin.

Proverbs 21 continues with negative pictures of those who willfully “refuse to do what is right (21:7). This section is bookended by statements about “the quarrelsome wife” (21:9, 19). The proverbs between these sayings give us a picture of the relations the unrighteous have in the family and society.

UNCOOPERATIVE IN THE HOME (21:9, 19) – The Hebrew word is the same in both of these verses and refers to a wife. She is described as “quarrelsome” – a Hebrew word used to refer to quarrels that cannot be stopped once they start (17:14) or to an argument that creates barriers between people (18:19). She is also “nagging” – the Hebrew word for agitation and grief. It is synonymous with anger. In Proverbs 19:13, a quarrelsome wife is pictured as irritating as a leaky roof! It has now gotten worse as her husband would prefer to live on the roof (21:9). Finally, it has gotten so bad that he wants to flee the house all together (21:19). The home should be a safe place of encouragement and security. Conflict in the home is a killer, whether it is the fault of the wife or the husband! They need to work together under God’s authority to build a strong family that is honoring to God. In her commentary on Proverbs, Kathleen Nielson gives some good questions for spouses to ask themselves. “Is there bubbling inside me some resentment...that breaks out in quarrelsome words?...Am I honest with my husband [or wife]? Do I turn his [her] thoughts to the Lord? How could I better contribute to making our home a place of peace?”¹

UNCARING TO OTHERS (21:10, 13, 17) – The wicked are addicted to evil. They do not care about others because they are focused on fulfilling their own wants and desires. “The wicked person makes a terrible neighbor. He has a craving for evil. He is so absorbed by his own evil passions that, at best, he neglects his neighbor; at worst, he abuses him. But in neither case does he love his neighbor.”² ‘What goes around comes around.’ Those who “shut their ears to the cry of the poor” will not be heard when they are in need – either by other people or by the Lord (14:31; 19:17). Those who live for pleasure will end up in poverty – spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

UNJUST IN SOCIETY (21:11-18) – The wicked use bribes and deception to make things go their way. However, this ‘favor’ does not last! When true “justice is done’ they will get what they deserve and the righteous which they oppress will rejoice (21:14-15). Their punishment will help others to “gain wisdom” and seek out God’s truth (21:11). God knows their wickedness and will bring them to ruin (21:12) because they have strayed from the right path (21:16). The Lord will ‘turn the tables’ on the wicked and the evil they planned for the righteous will return on their own heads (21:18).

Does it bother you when the selfish and wicked people of the world prosper while godly people struggle and suffer? Take heart! The Lord sees and the Lord will make it right – if not in this lifetime than in eternity. We must keep our eyes on Him and follow the way of wisdom He has laid out before us.

¹ Kathleen Nielson Proverbs For You, p. 165

² David Finkbeiner. The Moody Bible Commentary – Proverbs, p. 940