

Ecclesiastes 7:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

Analysis

Wisdom is good with an inheritance (טוֹבָה חֹכְמָה עִם־נַחְלָה, tovah chokhmah im-nachalah)—The comparison links wisdom (chokhmah) with material inheritance (nachalah). The preposition im ('with') suggests combination: wisdom plus resources creates powerful advantage. Wealth without wisdom leads to waste (Proverbs 21:20); wisdom without resources limits impact.

And by it there is profit to them that see the sun (וְיֹתֵר לְרֵאִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, ve'yoter le'ro'ei hashemesh)—'Profit' (yoter) means 'advantage' or 'gain.' The phrase 'them that see the sun' idiomatically means 'the living' (see 6:5, 11:7). Wisdom applied to resources benefits oneself and others during earthly life. Yet the verse implies limitation—this advantage applies only 'under the sun,' not eternally. True wisdom ultimately points beyond material advantage to fearing God (12:13). Proverbs 3:13-18 celebrates wisdom as more precious than silver or gold, yet this verse acknowledges that wisdom combined with means accomplishes much good.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite inheritance laws (Numbers 27:8-11, Deuteronomy 21:15-17) preserved family wealth across generations. Inheritance provided economic security and social standing. Solomon himself inherited both great wealth and his father David's wisdom (1 Kings 3:3-14). The combination enabled him to build the temple, establish trade routes, and rule effectively—at least initially. Yet Israel's history shows many wealthy fools (the rich fool of Luke 12:16-21, wealthy

apostates like Amaziah) and wise poor (the widow's offering, Mark 12:41-44). The early church included both wealthy supporters (Lydia, Acts 16:14-15; Philemon) and poor believers, united in Christ. This verse offers practical wisdom: steward resources wisely, but recognize earthly advantage as temporary.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How are you using whatever 'inheritance' (resources, education, opportunities) you've received in combination with godly wisdom?
2. What 'profit' or lasting good are you producing 'under the sun' that serves others and honors God, not merely accumulates wealth?

Interlinear Text

טוֹבָה הַ	חָכְמָה הַ	עִם	נַחֲלָה הַ	וּבִיּוֹתָהּ
is good	Wisdom	H5973	with an inheritance	and by it there is profit
H2896	H2451		H5159	H3148
לָרְאֵה יְ	הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ:			
to them that see	the sun			
H7200	H8121			

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 11:7 (Parallel theme): Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:

Ecclesiastes 2:13 (Parallel theme): Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

