

Proverbs 13:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Analysis

This proverb celebrates wisdom's life-giving power. "The law of the wise is a fountain of life" presents teaching as living water. *Torat chakham meqor chayyim* (תורת חכם מ מקור חיים, instruction of the wise—fountain of life). *Torah* (תורה) means instruction, teaching, law. From the wise flows *meqor* (מקור, fountain, spring, source) of *chayyim* (חיה, life). Wisdom's teaching isn't stagnant doctrine but flowing, refreshing, life-sustaining truth.

"To depart from the snares of death" explains the purpose. *Lasur mimmoqeshey mavet* (לסור ממוֹקֵשׁ מְתָת, to turn from snares of death). Wisdom's fountain provides power *lasur* (לסור, to turn aside, depart from) *moqeshim* (מוֹקֵשׁ, snares, traps) of *mavet* (מוֹת, death). Death sets traps throughout life—temptations, false philosophies, destructive relationships. Wisdom provides escape.

The fountain metaphor recalls Jeremiah 2:13's indictment: Israel forsook God, "the fountain of living waters," for broken cisterns. Jesus promised living water: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Christ is wisdom incarnate (1 Corinthians 1:30), the source of eternal life (John 14:6). His teaching is the fountain that delivers from death's snares and grants everlasting life (John 5:24).

Historical Context

In arid Palestine, springs and fountains meant survival. Desert travelers could die without water sources. Cities were built near springs (Jerusalem's Gihon Spring). The fountain of life metaphor would resonate powerfully—wisdom provides what's essential for survival. Death's snares included not only physical dangers but spiritual ones: idolatry, covenant-breaking, false wisdom from neighboring cultures. True wisdom—rooted in fearing the LORD—was Israel's fountain of life.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. From what sources are you drawing 'water'—wisdom from God's Word or broken cisterns of worldly philosophy?
2. What specific 'snares of death' are you facing, and how can God's wisdom help you avoid them?
3. How does Jesus as the fountain of living water (John 4:14) satisfy your deepest needs and lead to eternal life?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| תֹּוֹךְ תְּ | מִקְרָב | וְרָ | מִקְרָב | מִיְּם | לִסְעָר | מִמְּקָשִׁי | מִמְּ |
| The law | of the wise | is a fountain | of life | to depart | from the snares | of death | |
| H8451 | H2450 | H4726 | H2416 | H5493 | H4170 | H4194 | |

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 18:5 (Parallel theme): The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

Proverbs 10:11 (Parallel theme): The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

Proverbs 14:27 (Parallel theme): The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Psalms 116:3 (Parallel theme): The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

Proverbs 16:17 (Parallel theme): The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org