

Proverbs 14:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

Analysis

The simple inherit folly: but the prudent are crowned with knowledge. This proverb contrasts the natural outcomes of simplicity versus prudence. Nachalu petaim ivvelet (נָחַלוּ פְּתָאִים אֹולָת, the simple inherit folly). Nachal (נָחַל, inherit, possess, receive as inheritance) shows folly comes to the simple as inherited property—naturally, inevitably. Va'arumim yaktiru da'at (בָּאָרָם יָקְטִירוּ דַּעַת, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge). Katar (קָטַר, crown, surround, encircle) depicts knowledge as a crown adorning the wise. The simple passively receive folly; the prudent actively acquire knowledge as royal honor.

Historical Context

Inheritance in ancient Israel passed property, status, and family identity to descendants. This proverb applies inheritance metaphor to character outcomes. The simple, lacking discernment, naturally accumulate folly through poor choices. The prudent, seeking wisdom, gain knowledge as honored possession.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What are you 'inheriting'—folly through carelessness or knowledge through diligent pursuit of wisdom?
2. How does viewing knowledge as a 'crown' elevate its value above worldly achievements?
3. In what ways can you actively pursue being 'crowned with knowledge' rather than passively receiving folly?

Interlinear Text

יְשֻׁתָּה	יָכַת	רוֹ	לְתַ	פָּתָאִ	מִ	נָכְלָה	אָוֶן	עָרֹם	יְמִ
with knowledge	are crowned	to	to	but the prudent	folly	the simple	inherit		
H1847	H3803		H6175	H200	H6612		H5157		

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 1:18 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

1 Peter 5:4 (Parallel theme): And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.