

Proverbs 14:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.

Analysis

The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly. The Hebrew here is complex. Ateret chakhamim oshr am (עֹטֶרֶת חֲכָמִים עֲשָׂרָם, the crown of the wise is their wealth). For the wise, riches serve as a crown—an ornament that honors them when used wisely. Ivvelet kesilim ivvelet (אִבֵּלֶת כְּסִילִים אִבֵּלֶת, the folly of fools is folly). Fools' folly is merely folly—it leads nowhere, adorns nothing, accomplishes nothing. Wisdom transforms wealth into something glorious, while folly remains foolish regardless of circumstances.

Historical Context

Solomon, possessing both wisdom and wealth, understood their relationship. Wealth in wise hands advances God's kingdom, blesses others, and honors the Lord. In foolish hands, wealth corrupts and destroys. The proverb reflects covenant theology—blessings (including wealth) come through wisdom rooted in fearing the LORD.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How can you use whatever 'riches' (wealth, gifts, opportunities) you have as a crown that honors God?
2. In what ways does folly remain folly regardless of external circumstances or possessions?
3. What is the difference between wealth being your crown versus being your god (Matthew 6:24)?

Interlinear Text

עֹטְ רֹת	חֲכָמֵ יִם	עֲשָׂרָ ם	אֲלֹת:	כְּסִילֵ יִם
The crown	of the wise	is their riches	but the foolishness	of fools
H5850	H2450	H6239	H200	H3684

אֲלֹת:

but the foolishness

H200