

Proverbs 17:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

Analysis

Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. The discerning keep wisdom neged (נֶגֶד, before, in front of)—constantly in view, readily accessible, guiding all actions. Ve'eyney khesil biqtseh-erets (וְעֵינֵי כְסִיל בַּקְצָה-אֶרֶץ), but the eyes of a fool at the ends of the earth). Fools are distracted, chasing distant fantasies rather than present wisdom. They lack focus, always looking elsewhere for answers readily available. Believers should fix eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2), not chasing worldly distractions. Wisdom in Christ is immediately accessible (Colossians 2:3), not distant.

Historical Context

Ancient life offered fewer distractions than modern existence, yet fools still chased distant dreams rather than present duties. They planned elaborate schemes instead of fearing God and keeping commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). They sought wisdom in foreign philosophies rather than Torah. The wise kept God's commands before their eyes constantly (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Proverbs 3:1-4). Focus versus distraction determined wise versus foolish living.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. Are your eyes fixed on Jesus and biblical wisdom, or distracted by worldly pursuits at 'the ends of the earth'?
2. What distractions prevent you from keeping wisdom 'before you' as constant guide?
3. How can you cultivate focused attention on Christ and His Word rather than chasing distant fantasies?

Interlinear Text

אַתָּה

H854

is before him that hath understanding

H6440

פָּנָים

סָכָט הַמִּבְּנִים

H995

Wisdom

H2451

עֵינִים

but the eyes

H5869

אַל כִּי

H3684

בְּקָצָה

H7097

אֶלָּא

H776

Additional Cross-References

Ecclesiastes 2:14 (Parallel theme): The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.

Ecclesiastes 8:1 (Parallel theme): Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed.

Proverbs 14:6 (Parallel theme): A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

1 John 2:16 (Parallel theme): For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Ecclesiastes 6:9 (Parallel theme): Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.

