

Proverbs 18:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.

Analysis

A person's words can be 'deep waters' and 'a flowing brook' of wisdom. The Hebrew 'mayim amaq' (deep waters) suggests profundity and hidden resources. The 'wellspring of wisdom' (Hebrew 'maqor chokmah') flows forth as a brook (Hebrew 'nachal'—stream/torrent). This describes speech rich with insight, nourishing to hearers. Jesus promised that believers would have rivers of living water flowing from within (John 7:38-39)—the Holy Spirit producing wisdom. Reformed theology emphasizes Word and Spirit working together to produce wise speech that edifies the church.

Historical Context

In arid Palestine, springs and flowing brooks were precious resources providing life. Using this imagery for wise speech emphasizes its life-giving, refreshing, essential nature in the community.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Do your words provide 'deep waters' that refresh and nourish others?
2. How can you cultivate the kind of wisdom that flows naturally from your speech?
3. What is the relationship between being filled with the Spirit and speaking words of wisdom?

Interlinear Text

נִבְעָם	גָּתָל	אִישׁ	פִּי	דְּבָרִים	אֶת מִקְרָם	מִים
waters	are as deep	The words	mouth	of a man's	brook	as a flowing
H4325	H6013	H1697	H6310	H376	H5158	H5042

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 20:5 (Parallel theme): Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

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

Colossians 4:6 (Parallel theme): Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Proverbs 13:14 (Word): The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

John 4:14 (Parallel theme): But 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.

Colossians 3:16 (Word): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Psalms 78:2 (Parallel theme): I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

Matthew 12:34 (Parallel theme): O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

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