

Proverbs 21:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.

Analysis

This verse repeats the principle from 19:25: different people learn through different means. When the scorner is punished, the 'simple' (naive, inexperienced) becomes wise by observing consequences. The scorner himself rarely learns, but his judgment educates others. Alternatively, when the wise person receives instruction directly, he gains knowledge without needing to witness punishment. This validates multiple pedagogical approaches: public justice teaches the uncommitted; private instruction suffices for the teachable. The truly wise learn from words; the simple from observation; the scoffer not at all. This also affirms the evangelistic value of divine judgment—God's justice demonstrates His character and warns sinners.

Historical Context

Public executions and punishments in ancient Israel served both justice and education. The community witnessed consequences of sin, learning to fear God and avoid evil.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Do you learn from instruction, or do you require personal suffering to change?
2. How can you cultivate wisdom that responds to teaching rather than requiring painful experience?

Interlinear Text

בָּעֵנֶשׁ	לִזְ	יְחִיכָּם	פָּתַי	וּבְהַשְּׁכָּךְ יְלִ
is punished	When the scorner	is made wise	the simple	is instructed
H6064	H3887	H2449	H6612	H7919
לִזְכָּרְנָה	נִזְקָן!	פָּתַחַת:		
and when the wise	he receiveth	knowledge		
H2450	H3947	H1847		

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 19:25 (Parallel theme): Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.

Proverbs 18:15 (Parallel theme): The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.

Acts 5:5 (Parallel theme): And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

Proverbs 18:1 (Parallel theme): Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

Proverbs 9:9 (Parallel theme): Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

