

Proverbs 21:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

Analysis

The wise person's household contains 'treasure and oil'—stored wealth and abundance from diligent work and prudent management. By contrast, the 'foolish man spendeth it up'—squandering resources through imprudence, self-indulgence, or laziness. Wisdom produces prosperity through hard work, planning, and frugality; folly produces poverty through waste and improvidence. This isn't promising wealth to all wise people but affirming general principles: disciplined stewardship usually produces abundance, while foolishness leads to want. The wise save for future needs; fools consume everything immediately. This economic wisdom reflects spiritual principles: stewarding God's gifts faithfully honors Him, while wastefulness despises His provision.

Historical Context

Storing oil, grain, and other provisions was essential in agrarian societies subject to crop failures and seasonal variations. Wise households maintained reserves; foolish ones lived hand-to-mouth.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Are you managing resources wisely with provision for the future, or living hand-to-mouth?
2. What specific areas of spending reveal foolishness that you need to address?

Interlinear Text

וְכֹסֶת יְלִדָּה אֲוֹצֶת רַחֲםָה נְחַמְּתָה תְּשַׁמְּתָה בְּתִי הַבָּיִת בְּתִי הַבָּיִת כְּבָשָׂר כְּבָשָׂר אֲבָל עַמְּדָה
There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise but a foolish
H214 H2530 H8081 H5116 H2450 H3684

מִן אָדָם יְבַלְּעֵנָה
man spendeth it up
H120 H1104

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 112:3 (Parallel theme): Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

Proverbs 10:22 (Parallel theme): The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Ecclesiastes 7:11 (Parallel theme): Wisdom is good with an inheritance: and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (Parallel theme): Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.

Psalms 23:5 (Parallel theme): Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Proverbs 15:6 (Parallel theme): In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

Job 20:18 (Parallel theme): That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.

Job 20:15 (Parallel theme): He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.

Jeremiah 41:8 (Parallel theme): But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.

Ecclesiastes 10:19 (Parallel theme): A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry: but money answereth all things.

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