

Proverbs 22:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Analysis

The 'prudent' (Hebrew 'arum'—shrewd, sensible) foresees danger and hides, while the 'simple' (Hebrew 'pethi'—naive) pass on and are punished. Wisdom involves anticipating consequences and taking preventive action. The simple lack foresight and suffer accordingly. Reformed theology values prudence as a virtue—using God-given reason to assess risks and act accordingly. This isn't fatalism but stewardship. While trusting God's sovereignty, we're responsible to exercise wisdom in avoiding foreseeable harm.

Historical Context

In ancient times, failure to prepare for known dangers (approaching armies, storms, wild animals) could be fatal. Prudence distinguished the wise from the foolish and often meant the difference between survival and death.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Do you exercise prudent foresight in financial, relational, and spiritual matters?
2. In what areas might you be 'simple,' ignoring warning signs and heading toward punishment?
3. How do you balance trusting God's providence with exercising personal prudence?

Interlinear Text

עָרֹם	רָאָה	רָעָה	וַיִּסְתֵּר	וּפְתִי יָמָיו	עָבְרוּ
A prudent	man foreseeth	the evil	and hideth	himself but the simple	pass on
H6175	H7200	H7451	H5641	H6612	H5674

וְנִפְּשׁוּ:

and are punished

H6064

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 27:12 (Evil): A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Proverbs 14:16 (Evil): A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Proverbs 29:1 (Parallel theme): He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

Hebrews 11:7 (Parallel theme): By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Proverbs 7:7 (Parallel theme): And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,

Hebrews 6:18 (Parallel theme): That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

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