

Proverbs 26:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.

Analysis

Sending a message by a fool's hand cuts off feet and drinks damage. The Hebrew 'qarats raglayim' (cut off feet) and 'shathah chamas' (drink violence) create bizarre imagery emphasizing self-harm. Using fools as messengers is self-defeating - like amputating your own feet or drinking poison. Foolish messengers garble messages, represent poorly, create problems rather than solving them. Wisdom requires entrusting important tasks to competent people, not fools.

Historical Context

Ancient communication depended on messengers' reliability (see 25:13). Proverbs 10:26 says: 'As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.' Employing foolish or lazy messengers guaranteed failure. Modern organizations still suffer when incompetent people fill crucial positions. Wisdom demands matching people to roles appropriately - don't assign important tasks to those unable to handle them.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What important tasks have you assigned to incompetent people, ensuring failure?
2. How can you better evaluate others' competence before entrusting them with responsibility?
3. What tasks might you be 'the fool' for - assignments beyond your competence that harm those who trusted you?

Interlinear Text

חָקַץ הַ	בְּגָלִים	חָמָס	שֶׁתֵּה	שֶׁלֹּהֶם	דִּבָּר יָם
cutteth off	the feet	damage	and drinketh	He that sendeth	a message
H7096	H7272	H2555	H8354	H7971	H1697
בְּיָד	כְּסִיל:				
by the hand	of a fool				
H3027	H3684				

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 25:13 (Parallel theme): As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

Proverbs 10:26 (Parallel theme): As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.

Proverbs 13:17 (Parallel theme): A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.