

Proverbs 27:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

A prudent man foreseeeth the evil—The Hebrew ‘ārûm (עָרוּם, prudent) means shrewd or sensible, one who perceives danger before it arrives. **Hideth himself** (sātar, סָתַר) means to take protective action, not cowardice but wisdom. Contrast **the simple** (pētā’îm, פְּתָאִים)—the naive, gullible ones who **pass on** obliviously and **are punished** (‘ānash, עָנַשׁ, suffer consequences).

This proverb appears nearly verbatim in 22:3, emphasizing its importance. The Christian application extends beyond physical danger to spiritual discernment—foreseeing temptation's consequences and fleeing (1 Corinthians 6:18, 10:14). Joseph exemplified this by fleeing Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:12).

Historical Context

Ancient Israel faced dangers from wild animals, bandits, and military threats. Reading signs of approaching danger—storm clouds, armed groups, suspicious strangers—was essential for survival. This everyday wisdom principle applies to moral and spiritual threats in any era.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What recurring temptations or 'evil' do you need to foresee and actively avoid rather than test your resistance?
2. How can you develop spiritual prudence to recognize moral danger before you're caught in it?
3. Are there situations where you've been 'simple,' ignoring obvious warning signs, and what were the consequences?

Interlinear Text

אָר וּמִן	רָאָה	רָעָה	וְהִסְתֵּר	פָּתָא! מִ	עָבַר וְ
A prudent	man foreseeth	the evil	and hideth	himself but the simple	pass on
H6175	H7200	H7451	H5641	H6612	H5674

וְנִפְּנָשׁוּ:
and are punished
H6064

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 22:3 (Evil): A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

Proverbs 18:10 (Parallel theme): The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

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.

