

Proverbs 9:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

Analysis

The simple don't know that the dead are there, her guests in death's depths. The Hebrew 'rapha' (dead/departed spirits) and 'sheowl' (grave/death/underworld) describe folly's destination. What appears attractive leads to death. The simple, lacking discernment, don't recognize danger. They see attractive invitation, miss deadly outcome. Wisdom looks beyond immediate appeal to ultimate consequence. Folly sees only present pleasure, ignoring future destruction.

Historical Context

Throughout Proverbs, the way of the wicked leads to death (2:18-19, 5:5, 7:27). Sheol represents final destruction. While Old Testament theology of afterlife develops progressively, consistent principle holds: sin leads to death. Romans 6:23 universalizes: 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Folly promises life, delivers death; wisdom promises hardship, delivers life.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What apparently attractive invitations might be leading toward 'death' (spiritual, relational, physical)?
2. How can you develop discernment that sees ultimate consequences beyond immediate appeals?
3. What would wisdom require you to reject despite its current attractiveness?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא יְדֹעַ יְדֹעַ בְּשָׁאַל בְּעַמְקַדְּבָה

H3808 But he knoweth H3588 not that the dead H8033 are in the depths H7585 of hell

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Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 7:27 (Parallel theme): Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Proverbs 5:5 (Parallel theme): Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

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