

TEXT — 24:1-12

1. Be not thou envious against evil men;
Neither desire to be with them:
2. For their heart studieth oppression,
And their lips talk of mischief.
3. Through wisdom is a house builded;
And by understanding it is established;
4. And by knowledge are the chambers filled
With all precious and pleasant riches.
5. A wise man is strong;
Yes, a man of knowledge increaseth might.
6. For by wise guidance thou shalt make thy war;
And in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.
7. Wisdom is too high for a fool:
He openeth not his mouth in the gate.
8. He that deviseth to do evil,
Men shall call him a mischief-maker.
9. The thought of foolishness is sin;
And the scoffer is an abomination to men.
10. If thou faint in the day of adversity,
Thy strength is small.
11. Deliver them that are carried away unto death,
And those that are ready to be slain see that thou
hold back.
12. If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this;
Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it?
And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?
And shall not he render to every man according to his
work?

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 24:1-12

1. Paraphrase the two statements in v. 1.
2. What kind of "evil men" is v. 2 talking about?
3. What is meant by "house" here (v. 3)?
4. Comment upon the two adjectives in v. 4.
5. According to v. 5 wisdom is
6. What kind of counselors did ancient kings rely
upon (v. 6)?
7. Where did a "fool" not belong (v. 7)?
8. V. 8 might remind one of people "calling a spade a
.....".

9. What is meant by the "thought of foolishness" in v. 9?
10. What percentage of people "faint" when adversity comes (v. 10)?
11. What is meant by "see that thou hold back" in v. 11?
12. What is the implication of the statement in v. 12 that "we knew not this"?

PARAPHRASE OF 24:1-12

- 1,2. Don't envy godless men; don't even enjoy their company. For they spend their days plotting violence and cheating.
- 3,4. Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.
5. A wise man is mightier than a strong man. Wisdom is mightier than strength.
6. Don't go to war without wise guidance; there is safety in many counselors.
7. Wisdom is too much for a rebel. He'll not be chosen as a counselor!
8. To plan evil is as wrong as doing it.
9. The rebel's schemes are sinful, and the mocker is the scourge of all mankind.
10. You are a poor specimen if you can't stand the pressure of adversity.
- 11,12. Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to death; don't stand back and let them die. Don't try to disclaim responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God, who knows all hearts, knows yours, and He knows you knew! And he will reward everyone according to his deeds.

COMMENTS ON 24:1-12

V. 1. Two prohibitions: don't desire to be like evil men and don't desire to run with them. If one doesn't envy them, he won't run with them, and if one doesn't run with them, he will not become like them. Other passages about not envying such: V. 19; Psa. 37:1; 73:3; Prov. 3:31; 23:17. Another passage about not desiring to be with evil people: Prov. 1:15.

V. 2. In Proverbs the expression "evil woman" usually is

referring to an adulterous woman and a "evil man" to oppressors (as in this verse). These evil men have their "heart" involved in their sin, and they "study" how to be successful in their wickedness. II Tim. 2:15 shows that the righteous should study to show themselves approved unto God.

V. 3. After two verses on the destructive way of the wicked, it is refreshing to come to two verses on building a house through wisdom, honesty, and diligence (vs. 3,4). Notice that "wisdom" is with the builder, not the destroyer. Oppressors who take the sword will perish by the sword (Matt. 26:52), not living out half of their days (Psa. 55:23). While these will be "cut off", the righteous will live on in the earth (Psa. 37:9).

V. 4. There is really a close relationship between "wisdom", "understanding," and "knowledge". Verse 5 says the first two build and establish the house while this verse says the last mentioned fills its chambers with riches. It is obvious that these verses are dealing with the house of the wealthy. Notice the two adjectives describing riches: "precious" and "pleasant". This is godly wealth, gained in the proper way and not by oppression. This makes such wealth "precious" to the possessor and "pleasant" also.

V. 5. The thought of wisdom is continued in this verse, this time stating that its possession makes one a strong man. Grammatically the verse is Hebrew parallelism in which the second statement is a restatement of the first. Other passages on the "might" of wisdom: Prov. 21:22; Eccl. 9:16. The section in which the last mentioned verse is found tells, "There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city" (Eccl. 9:14,15).

V. 6. The strength referred to in v. 5 was evidently military strength as this verse shows. The first statement of this verse is found in Prov. 20:18, and its last statement is found in Prov. 11:14. Prov. 15:22 is similar to the last statement. Kings kept courts of wise men to counsel them in time of war. David (and later Absalom) had Ahithophel (II Sam. 16:23), and Ahab had his prophets (I Kings 22:6).

V. 7. A fool does not have wisdom, or he would not be a fool, for the two are considered opposites (Prov. 11:29; 14:16; 17:24; 29:11). The "gate" was the place of official and legal business where wise men presided (Prov. 31:23). Because he does

not have wisdom, the fool will not be one of the elders of his city.

V. 8 The evil and wickedness that are in the world stem from the devil, but he works through human beings to bring them about; thus, there are those who devise evil. Such a one shall soon be known, and his persistence in such behavior will give him a reputation. Others may be slow in recognizing worth in an individual or in praising him, but they will not fail to notice his evil and in telling others about it. He will not fool them: "Men shall call him a mischiefmaker."

V. 9. We know that the act of foolishness is sin (IISam. 24:10); here we are told that even the thought (whether expressed in act or not) is likewise sin. By "thoughts" adultery is committed in the heart (Matt. 5:27,28). By "Thoughts" one who hates is guilty of murder before God (I John 3:15). A "scoffer" is one who not only rejects that which he should believe but who laughs at, makes fun at, that which he should believe and at those who do believe. He is also called a "mocker", which he is: "In the last days mockers shall come...saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (II Pet. 3:3). Such will not only lose out with God, but they have already lost out with them ("The scoffer is an abomination to men").

V. 10. Adversity (Opposition, trials, reverses) test one's strength (faith, courage, emotional composure). Some can stand more adversity than others. We should all strive to be "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Eph. 6:10). No man should be content to remain weak, yet there are those who "faint" (lose heart, fall apart, give up) when hardships come. Such lack depth: "He hath not root in himself...when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth" (Matt. 13:21). Here is where determination and depth of character are important. One cannot be an overcomer without them. The world is divided into two classes: the "overcomers" and the "overcome".

V. 11. These are people who need delivering and who are evidently worthy. Those addressed also have the power to deliver them. Ability with opportunity represent responsibility to do so. "Hold back" those who would otherwise be slain. Sometimes people fail to save others for fear of getting themselves into troubles. But Christians will do their duty even if it involves laying down their lives (Gal. 6:2; Heb. 13:3; I John 3:16). Other passages to consult: Psa. 82:4; Isa. 58:6,7.

V. 12. People sometimes try to cover the reality of their

failures (to deliver people as in v. 11) by excusing themselves as if ignorant of the need. But this lie but adds another sin to the great sin of irresponsibility already committed. God knows the truth; He knows (weighs) the heart (Prov. 21:2). And He will someday punish a person for his neglect of duty. Other passages; Job 34:11; Psa. 62:12; Jer. 32:19; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 2:23; 22:12.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 24:1-12

1. What two prohibitions are contained in v. 1?
2. The expression "evil men" usually refers to what kind of men in Proverbs (v. 1)?
3. What three words in vs. 3,4 are closely related to each other?
4. What two things do vs. 3,4 say will be accomplished by the informed person?
5. What quality is extolled in v. 5?
6. According to v. 6 where in is safety?
7. What about a fool and the "gate" (v. 7)?
8. What name is given to the one devising evil (v. 8)?
9. Show how "thoughts" and "sin" go together (v. 9).
10. What does the Bible say about us if we faint amid trials (v. 10)?
11. What class of people are we to help (v. 11)?
12. Suppose that helping others would endanger ourselves (v. 11).
13. Instead of saying, "I have sinned," what do more people say about their failures (v. 12)?

TEXT — 24:13-22

13. My son, eat thou honey, for it is good;
And the droppings of the honeycomb, which are sweet
to thy taste:
14. So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul;
If thou hast found it, then shall there be a reward,
And thy hope shall not be cut off.
15. Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the habitation of
the righteous;
Destroy not his resting-place.
16. For a righteous man falleth seven times, and
riseth up again;
But the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

17. Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
And let not thy heart be glad when he is overthrown;
18. Lest Jehovah see it, and it displease him,
And he turn away his wrath from him.
19. Fret not thyself because of evildoers;
Neither be thou envious at the wicked:
20. For there shall be no reward to the evil man;
The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.
21. My son, fear thou Jehovah and the king;
And company not with them that are given to change:
22. For their calamity shall rise suddenly;
And the destruction from them both, who knoweth it?

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 24:13-22

1. Why give this instruction (v. 13)?
2. Is v. 14 connected with v. 13?
3. Is the righteous aware at the first of such lying in wait for him (v. 15)?
4. Does "down" necessarily mean "out" for the righteous man (v. 16)?
5. How was David a good example of v. 17?
6. What all does God see (v. 18)?
7. What previous verse in this chapter is similar to v. 19?
8. What are the prospects for the evil man (v. 20)?
9. What two sovereigns are mentioned in v. 21?
10. What kind of "change" does v. 21 have in mind?
11. What is the meaning of the second clause in v. 22?

PARAPHRASE OF 24:13-22

- 13,14. My son, honey whets the appetite, and so does wisdom! When you enjoy becoming wise, there is hope for you! A bright future lies ahead!
- 15,1 O evil man, leave the upright man alone, and quit trying to cheat him out of his rights. Don't you know that this good man, though you trip him up seven times, will each time rise again? But one calamity is enough to lay you low.
- 17,18. Do not rejoice when your enemy meets trouble. Let there be no gladness when he falls--for the Lord may be displeased with you and stop punishing him!
- 19,20. Don't envy the wicked. Don't covet his riches. For the

evil man has no future; his light will be snuffed out.

- 21,22. My son, watch your step before the Lord and the king, and don't associate with radicals. For you will go down with them to sudden disaster, and who knows where it all will end?

COMMENTS ON 24:13-22

V. 13. The people of that day depended upon honey for their sweetening, and a good sweetener it was! Its properties are still highly acclaimed by health-people. Palestine was a land with an abundance of natural honey (Exo. 3:8).

V. 14. The father would urge his son to seek, find, and know wisdom with the same eagerness with which he enjoyed the sweetness of honey. The sweetness of the wisdom found in the Word of God is compared with the sweetness of honey: Psa. 19:10; 119:103. The ending of this verse is much like Prov. 23:18. It shows the great reward and the hopeful life that wisdom brings to its possessor.

V. 15. The wicked are described as lying in wait for the righteous, seeking his ruination (Psa. 37:32). Whoever does this qualifies for the title "wicked man" used here. Every persecutor of the righteous would be included in what is said here.

V. 16. The righteous will have many trials, but he will prevail through the special help of God. Notice these interesting verses: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But Jehovah delivereth him out of them all" (Psa. 34:19); "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For Jehovah upholdeth him with his hand" (Psa. 37:24); "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, Jehovah will be a light unto me" (Mic. 7:8); "He will deliver thee in six troubles; Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" (Job. 5:19). In other words, as our expressions go, "you can't keep a good man down;" he may be "down", but he isn't "out". But notice that when the wicked fall, he is not promised to come back, for he has no personal God to whom to look for restoration.

V. 17. The natural man has a tendency to rejoice over his enemy's troubles (Psa. 35:15). Oba. 12 told Edom not to rejoice over Israel's fall. David prayed that his enemies would not be given the chance to rejoice over his calamities (Psa. 35:19). Job said he had not erred in this field (Job. 31:29). And David was a good example of one who did not rejoice over his enemies'

misfortunes: see him as he weeps over the death of Saul (II Sam. 1:11) and over the death of the revolting Absalom (II Sam. 18:33).

V. 18. God sees everything that takes place on the earth. He saw Adam and Eve's sin in the beginning, and He has seen every sin since. Rejoicing over an enemy's troubles or fall is displeasing to God to the point that in some way He will deal mercifully with him in the future as a result.

V. 19. Here we go again with the same instruction that must be more needful that we would realize (see v. 1 and Psa. 37:1 and Prov. 23:17). Psa. 73:3 shows the tendency toward doing this: "I was envious at the arrogant, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked."

V. 20. Really there is nothing about the prosperous wicked to envy when we consider their end (no reward and his lamp put out). Both Bildad ("Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, And the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tent, And his lamp above him shall be put out" (Job 18:5,6) and Job ("How oft is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out?" Job 21:17) realized that God would deal with the wicked. Other passages on the light of the wicked going out: Prov. 13:9; 20:20. The Psalmist in 73:3-16 quit envying the wicked when he went into the sanctuary and considered their "latter end" (v. 17;.

V. 21. Man is to respect both God's government and that government that is over him: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21). I Pet. 2:17 also says, "Fear God. Honor the king." We are to fear God because He possesses primary authority, and we are to fear the king because He possesses delegated authority from God: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers...the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God" (Rom. 13:1,2). Those "given to change" are anarchists, revolutionists, who instead of being in subjection to the established power are found guilty of resisting it to the extent of trying to overthrow it.

V. 22. Whoever resists God, and whoever resists the government will ultimately be brought face to face with those whom they are resisting. And, oh, the severity of the ruin that will come as punishments from God and from civil authority! Who can describe it when it cannot be fully known?

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 24:13-22

1. Comment upon honey as food, both then and now (v. 13).
2. How pleasant, how desirable, was wisdom to be to the son (vs. 13,14)?
3. What is a persecutor of the righteous called in v. 15?
4. Comment upon the righteous prevailing over trials (v. 16).
5. What natural tendency toward an enemy is one not to give in to (v. 17)?
6. What might happen if one rejoices over his enemy's calamity (v. 18)?
7. V. 19 warns against envying what class?
8. Why is it foolish to envy the wicked (v. 20)?
9. We are to fear God because he possesses authority and the king because he has authority (v. 21).
10. What is the end of those who revolt against properly constituted authority (v. 22)?

TEXT — 24:23-34

23. These also are sayings of the wise.
To have respect of persons in judgment is not good.
24. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous,
Peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him;
25. But to them that rebuke him shall be delight,
And a good blessing shall come upon them.
26. He kisseth the lips
Who giveth a right answer.
27. Prepare thy work without,
And make it ready for thee in the field;
And afterwards build thy house.
28. Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause;
And deceive not with thy lips.
29. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me;
I will render to the man according to his work.
30. I went by the field of the sluggard,
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;
31. And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
The face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
32. Then I beheld, and considered well;
I saw, and received instruction:

33. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep;
34. So shall thy poverty come as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 24:23-34

1. Does the opening statement of v. 23 indicate some kind of change of authorship or material?
2. What did the law of Moses say concerning respect of persons (v. 23)?
3. Have people sometimes been more righteous than their leaders (v. 24)?
4. What would be the problem of their rebuking a ruler (v. 25)?
5. Kisses whose lips (v. 26)?
6. Prepare what "work" without (v. 27)?
7. In v. 28 don't deceive whom?
8. Should we do to others as they have done to us (v. 29)?
9. Does v. 30 imply that a sluggard is void of understanding?
10. What two things reflected his laziness (v. 31)?
11. V. 32 shows we can learn by the avenue of
12. What does a sluggard enjoy doing (v. 33)?
13. Is it a shame to be poor under these conditions (v. 34)?

PARAPHRASE OF 24:23-34

- 23-25. It is wrong to sentence the poor, and let the rich go free. He who says to the wicked, "You are innocent," shall be cursed by many people of many nations; but blessings shall be showered on those who rebuke sin fearlessly.
26. It is an honor to receive a frank reply.
27. Develop your business first before building your house.
- 28,29. Don't testify spitefully against an innocent neighbor. Why lie about him? Don't say, "Now I can pay him back for all his meanness to me!"
- 30-32. I walked by the field of a certain lazy fellow and saw that it was overgrown with thorns, and covered with weeds; and its walls were broken down. Then, as I looked, I learned this lesson:
- 33,34. "A little extra sleep, A little more slumber, A little

folding of the hands to rest"--means that poverty will break in upon you suddenly like a robber, and violently like a bandit.

COMMENTS ON 24:23-34

V. 23. The opening statement indicates that the following verses form some kind of a section or collection of sayings included by Inspiration. We do not know to whom they belong as we do later groupings in Proverbs (See Prov. 25:1) 30:1; 31:1). The Bible has much to say about conducting court: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, not honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor" (Lev. 19:15); "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike" (Deut. 1:17); "Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe" (Deut. 16:19). See Prov. 18:5; 28:21 also.

V. 24. Vs. 24-26 are also talking of court cases. Through bribes, through respect of persons, through friendships and alliances, etc., justice sometimes gets perverted, and the guilty are freed. This verse says, "Peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him." Isa. 5:22,23 says, "Woe unto them...that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!" And Prov. 17:15 says, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to Jehovah."

V. 25. People can usually tell when a judge is "bought off" and when he deals straightforwardly with a guilty case. They want him to rebuke the wicked, for he has it coming, and only by this means can crime be held in check in society. It is evident that the people were glad when the priest Jehoiada put down the wicked usurper Athaliah: "All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet" (II Chron. 23:21).

V. 26. A judge giving a proper sentence to the wicked is so "in stride" with the thoughts and feelings of the people as one who kisses another.

V. 27. The Scriptures show that there is preparatory work to be done before the actual construction begins: "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it?" (Luke 14:28); "And the king commanded, and they hewed out great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with wrought

stone. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites did fashion them, and prepared the timber and the stones to build the house" (I Kings 5:17,18).

V. 28. To do this would make one a "false witness", one who "lies". The 9th Commandment forbid this ("Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," Exo. 20:16) as does Eph. 4:25 ("Putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor"). Oh, how wicked to use one's lips purposely to deceive others, who will believe what is being said and which will result in needless grief, sorrow, and loss to the one being lied about! God did not give man the gift of speech for this purpose.

V. 29. Far too many people when wronged respond with an immediate desire to "get even"; they can think only of retaliation. But the Bible brings out that God, the Judge, will bring any retaliation that is to be brought; consequently, He commands us not to take vengeance ourselves: "Say not thou, I will recompense evil: Wait for Jehovah, and he will save thee" (Prov. 20:22); "Render to no man evil for evil...Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:17-19). Instead, Jesus' rule was: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. 7:12).

V. 30. There has always been, and there will probably always be, a certain percentage of lazy people. They are also said to be "void of understanding"; in other words, one with good understanding will not be a sluggard. Such a person has a "field" (for wheat or some other crop) or a "vineyard" (of grapes) not because he wants to farm, not to take care of, etc. He may have come into possession of such by inheritance rather than by purchase.

V. 31. The sluggard did not plant a crop: thorns and nettles grew up and took over, and the stone wall around the vineyard to protect the vineyard was broken down here and there and had not been kept in a state of repair. Oh, the way that some people can neglect a place and let it run down! This condition existed because of a man's laziness.

V. 32. Who could keep from noticing the sad condition of both field and wall? The writer says he looked on the situation, pondered over it, and learned from it. Observation is one of wise people's greatest teachers!

V. 33. What did the onlooker learn? That a lazy person

loves to sleep too much.

V. 34. And he learned that such over-sleeping would result in a man's poverty. "Robbers" (armed men) usually had nothing, for they did not work, and what they got from robbing did not last them too long. Prov. 6:10,11 contains the same material as vs. 33,34. It is a shame to be poor because of one's refusal to work.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 24:23-34

1. What are some other passages on showing respect of persons (v. 23)?
2. Why would anybody pronounce the wicked as righteous (v. 24)?
3. What is the people's attitude toward a judge who lets a wicked man go free (v. 25)?
4. What about his giving a right verdict (v. 26)?
5. Give a Biblical example of v. 27.
6. Cite a Bible statement about telling a lie on another person. (V. 28).
7. What does the Bible say about our taking vengeance on others (v. 29)?
8. Why might a sluggard even have a field or a vineyard (vs. 30,31)?
9. What is evidence that the sluggard had not even bothered to plant a crop (v. 31)?
10. What is evidence that we cannot keep people from noticing our failures (v. 32)?
11. What did the sluggard do instead of work (v. 33)?
12. What other passage contains the same material as vs. 33,34?

NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 24

"Wisdom"--

"Through wisdom is a house builded; And by understanding it is established; And by knowledge are the chambers filled. With all precious and pleasant riches" (vs. 3,4).

"A wise man is strong; Yea, a man of knowledge increaseth might" (v. 5).

"By wise guidance thou shalt make thy war" (v. 6).

"Wisdom is too high for a fool" (v. 7).

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

“So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul” (v. 14).

“*Mischief*”--

“Their lips talk of mischief” (v. 2).

“He that deviseth to do evil, Men shall call him a mischief-maker” (v. 8).

“*Envious*”--

“Be not thou envious against evil men” (v. 1).

“Neither be thou envious at the wicked” (v. 19).

“*Wicked*”--

“Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the habitation of the righteous” (v. 15).

“The wicked are overthrown by calamity” (V. 16).

“Neither be thou envious at the wicked” (v. 19).

“The lamp of the wicked shall be put out” (20).

“He that saith unto the wicked, “Thou art righteous, Peoples shall curse him” (v. 24).

“*Heart*”--

“Their heart studieth oppression” (v. 2).

“Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it?” (v. 12).

“Let not thy heart be glad when he is overthrown” (v. 17).

“*Tongue*”--

“He openeth not his mouth in the gate” (v. 7).

“The scoffer is an abomination to men” (v. 9).

“He kisseth the lips Who giveth a right answer” (v. 26).

“Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause” (v. 28).

“Deceive not with thy lips” (v. 28).

“*Fool*”--

“Wisdom is too high for a fool” (v. 7).

“The thought of foolishness is sin” (v. 9).

“I went by the...vineyard of the man void of understanding” (v. 30).

“*Jehovah*”--

“Lest Jehovah see it, and it displease him” (v. 18).

“Fear thou Jehovah” (v. 21).

“*Abhor*”--

“The scoffer is an abomination to men” (v. 9).

“Nations shall abhor him” (v. 24).

CHAPTER 24

"Don't"--

- "Be not thou envious against evil men" (v. 1).
- "Lay not wait...against the habitation of the righteous" (v. 15).
- "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth" (v. 17).
- "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers" (v. 19).
- "Company not with them that are given to change" (v. 21).
- "Be not a witness against thy neighbor without cause" (v. 28).
- "Deceive not with thy lips" (v. 28).
- "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me" (v. 29).

"Commands"--

- "Deliver them that are carried away unto death" (v. 11).
- "Eat thou honey, for it is good" (v. 13).
- "Fear thou Jehovah and the king" (v. 21).
- "Prepare thy work without, And make it ready for thee in the field" (v. 27).

LAZY PEOPLE

I recall hearing the story of a man who grew lazier and lazier with the passing of time. His family could get him to do nothing. Things finally got so bad that the two grown sons finally decided to take him out and shoot him. They loaded him in the wagon and put a tarpaulin over him as they started away. As they drove down the road, they met a neighbor who asked what they had under the tarpaulin. They told him. The neighbor said he hated to see them do that and he would help get their father back on his feet. He said, "Here's a bushel of corn that I will give him." From under the cover came the voice of the father, "Is it shelled?" It wasn't. The old man said, "Drive on."

It is hard for us to imagine anyone that lazy, yet the book of Proverbs says substantially the same thing, "A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom (Revised Version says, "burieth his hand in the dish"), and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again" (19:24).

"Sloth" (from which we get "slothful") and "slug" (from which we get "sluggard") are roots that come to us from Middle

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

English, both meaning "slow". That slow moving, lifeless animal in the zoo that spends his days hanging from branches upside down we call a "sloth", and that slow moving, snail-like worm we call a "slug" because they are so slow. And the book of Proverbs repeatedly speaks of certain people as "slothful" and as "sluggards" because of their lack of ambition, because they are so extremely and needlessly slow. In fact, Proverbs has much to say upon the subject.

LAZY PEOPLE'S PLACES SHOW IT

Some people are builders and improvers where ever they go. Others merely occupy while everything goes to wrack and ruin. Some build up the soil while they reap greater profits from their land while others farm the ground to death or neglect it altogether.

Solomon tells of stopping to look at the place of a slothful man. He said, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down" (24:30,31). It takes work to work a field. It takes work to tend a vineyard. The way thorns and nettles took over was a testimony to every considering passerby that such a field belonged to a lazy man. It took too much work to keep the fence up, so they had fallen apart.

Such indolence and its effect on one's place reminds one that this same Solomon said in another book (Ecclesiastes) that because of slothfulness a building rots and because of idleness a house falls in.

What a shame when people are too lazy to keep their places up, to keep things repaired and fixed, and to have things growing and green.