

Proverbs Notes

Wisdom literature

a native ancient near eastern genre

“international”

often courtly- speaking to those at court about proper manners. Reminds me of Confucianism a bit.

Wisdom of Amenemope & Proverbs 22

2:1 My son, if you accept my words And treasure up my commandments;

2:2 If you make your ear attentive to wisdom And your mind open to discernment;

2:3 If you call to understanding And cry aloud to discernment,

2:4 If you seek it as you do silver And search for it as for treasures,

2:5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD And attain knowledge of God.

2:6 For the LORD grants wisdom; Knowledge and discernment are by His decree.

2:7 He reserves ability for the upright And is a shield for those who live blamelessly,

2:8 Guarding the paths of justice, Protecting the way of those loyal to Him.

2:9 You will then understand what is right, just, And equitable -- every good course.

2:10 For wisdom will enter your mind And knowledge will delight you.

2:11 Foresight will protect you, And discernment will guard you.

2:12 It will save you from the way of evil men, From men who speak duplicity,

2:13 Who leave the paths of rectitude To follow the ways of darkness,

2:14 Who rejoice in doing evil And exult in the duplicity of evil men,

2:15 Men whose paths are crooked And who are devious in their course.

11:1 False scales are an abomination to the LORD; An honest weight pleases Him.

11:2 When arrogance appears, disgrace follows, But wisdom is with those who are unassuming.

11:3 The integrity of the upright guides them; The deviousness of the treacherous leads them to ruin.

11:4 Wealth is of no avail on the day of wrath, But righteousness saves from death.

11:5 The righteousness of the blameless man smooths his way, But the wicked man is felled by his wickedness.

11:6 The righteousness of the upright saves them, But the treacherous are trapped by their malice.

11:7 At death the hopes of a wicked man are doomed, And the ambition of evil men comes to nothing.

11:8 The righteous man is rescued from trouble And the wicked man takes his place.

11:9 The impious man destroys his neighbor through speech, But through their knowledge the righteous are rescued.

11:10 When the righteous prosper the city exults; When the wicked perish there are shouts of joy.

11:11 A city is built up by the blessing of the upright, But it is torn down by the speech of the wicked.

11:12 He who speaks contemptuously of his fellowman is devoid of sense; A prudent man keeps his peace.

11:13 A base fellow gives away secrets, But a trustworthy soul keeps a confidence.

25:1 These too are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of King Hezekiah of Judah copied:

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25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, And the glory of a king to plumb a matter.

25:3 Like the heavens in their height, like the earth in its depth, Is the mind of kings -- unfathomable.

25:4 The dross having been separated from the silver, A vessel emerged for the smith.

25:5 Remove the wicked from the king's presence, And his throne will be established in justice.

25:6 Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence; Do not stand in the place of nobles.

25:7 For it is better to be told, "Step up here," Than to be degraded in the presence of the great. Do not let what your eyes have seen

25:8 Be vented rashly in a quarrel; Think of what it will effect in the end, When your fellow puts you to shame.

25:9 Defend your right against your fellow, But do not give away the secrets of another,

25:10 Lest he who hears it reproach you, And your bad repute never end.

25:11 Like golden apples in silver showpieces Is a phrase well turned.

25:12 Like a ring of gold, a golden ornament, Is a wise man's reproof in a receptive ear.

25:13 Like the coldness of snow at harvesttime Is a trusty messenger to those who send him; He lifts his master's spirits.

25:14 Like clouds, wind -- but no rain -- Is one who boasts of gifts not given.

25:15 Through forbearance a ruler may be won over; A gentle tongue can break bones.

25:16 If you find honey, eat only what you need, Lest, surfeiting yourself, you throw it up.

25:17 Visit your neighbor sparingly, Lest he have his surfeit of you and loathe you.

25:18 Like a club, a sword, a sharpened arrow, Is a man who testifies falsely against his fellow.

25:19 Like a loose tooth and an unsteady leg, Is a treacherous support in time of trouble.

25:20 Disrobing on a chilly day, Like vinegar on natron, Is one who sings songs to a sorrowful soul.

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25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; If he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

25:22 You will be heaping live coals on his head, And the LORD will reward you.

25:23 A north wind produces rain, And whispered words, a glowering face.

25:24 Dwelling in the corner of a roof is better Than a contentious woman in a spacious house.

25:25 Like cold water to a parched throat Is good news from a distant land.

25:26 Like a muddied spring, a ruined fountain, Is a righteous man fallen before a wicked one.

25:27 It is not good to eat much honey, Nor is it honorable to search for honor.

25:28 Like an open city without walls Is a man whose temper is uncurbed.

23:29 Who cries, "Woe!" who, "Alas!"; Who has quarrels, who complaints; Who has wounds without cause; Who has bleary eyes?

23:30 Those whom wine keeps till the small hours, Those who gather to drain the cups.

23:31 Do not ogle that red wine As it lends its color to the cup, As it flows on smoothly;

23:32 In the end, it bites like a snake; It spits like a basilisk.

23:33 Your eyes will see strange sights; Your heart will speak distorted things.

23:34 You will be like one lying in bed on high seas, Like one lying on top of the rigging.

23:35 "They struck me, but I felt no hurt; They beat me, but I was unaware; As often as I wake, I go after it again."

The Legacy of Egypt", S. R. K. Glanville, contributor W. O. E Oesterley, p. 246-248, Oxford, 1942

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22:17 Incline your ear and listen to the words of the sages; Pay attention to my wisdom.

22:18 It is good that you store them inside you, And that all of them be constantly on your lips,

(Amenemope, ch. 1): "Give thine ear, and hear what I say, And apply thine heart to apprehend; It is good for thee to place them in thine heart, let them rest in the casket of thy belly; That they may act as a peg upon thy tongue"

22:22 Do not rob the wretched because he is wretched; Do not crush the poor man in the gate;

(Amenemope, ch. 2): "Beware of robbing the poor, and oppressing the afflicted."

22:24 Do not associate with an irascible man, Or go about with one who is hot-tempered,

22:25 Lest you learn his ways And find yourself ensnared.

(Amenemope, ch. 10): "Associate not with a passionate man, Nor approach him for conversation; Leap not to cleave to such an one; That terror carry thee not away."

22:29 See a man skilled at his work -- He shall attend upon kings; He shall not attend upon obscure men.

(Amenemope, ch. 30): "A scribe who is skillful in his business findeth worthy to be a courtier"

23:1 When you sit down to dine with a ruler, Consider well who is before you.

23:2 Thrust a knife into your gullet If you have a large appetite.

23:3 Do not crave for his dainties, For they are counterfeit food.

(Amenemope, ch. 23): "Eat not bread in the presence of a ruler, And lunge not forward(?) with thy mouth before a governor(?). When thou art replenished with that to which thou

has no right, It is only a delight to thy spittle. Look upon the dish that is before thee, And let that (alone) supply thy need."