

PROVERBS ON THE KING & LEADERSHIP

June-July 2021

Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

About Being King

14:28 — In a multitude of people is the glory of a king, but without people a prince is ruined.

20:28 — Steadfast love and faithfulness preserve the king, and by steadfast love his throne is upheld.

25:2 — It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out.

25:3 — As the heavens for height, and the earth for depth, so the heart of kings is unsearchable.

25:4-5 — Take away the dross from the silver, and the smith has material for a vessel; take away the wicked from the presence of the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness.

The King's Character

17:7 — Fine speech is not becoming to a fool; still less is false speech to a prince.

19:10 — It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes.

28:2 — When a land transgresses, it has many rulers, but with a man of understanding and knowledge, its stability will long continue.

28:15 — Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people.

28:16 — A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.

29:2 — When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.

29:12 — If a ruler listens to falsehood, all his officials will be wicked.

The King's Need for Wisdom

8:12-21 — "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield better than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries."

- *What character trait in particular does Wisdom claim to produce in kings, princes, and nobles?*

The King as Judge

20:8 — A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes.

20:26 — A wise king winnows the wicked and drives the wheel over them.

29:4 — By justice a king builds up the land, but he who exacts gifts tears it down.

29:14 — If a king faithfully judges the poor, his throne will be established forever.

29:26 — Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the Lord that a man gets justice.

Wisdom from King Lemuel's Mother

31:1-9 — The words of King Lemuel. An oracle that his mother taught him:

What are you doing, my son? What are you doing, son of my womb? What are you doing, son of my vows? Do not give your strength to women, your ways to those who destroy kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to take strong drink, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted. Give strong drink to the one who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress; let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Pleasing (or Displeasing) the King

14:35 — A servant who deals wisely has the king's favor, but his wrath falls on one who acts shamefully.

16:10 — An oracle is on the lips of a king; his mouth does not sin in judgment.

16:11 — A just balance and scales are the Lord's; all the weights in the bag are his work.

16:12 — It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness.

16:13 — Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right.

16:14 — A king's wrath is a messenger of death, and a wise man will appease it.

16:15 — In the light of a king's face there is life, and his favor is like the clouds that bring the spring rain.

- *What theme(s) do you see in these verses?*
- *What does verse 11 have to do with verses 10 & 12-15?*

19:12 — A king's wrath is like the growling of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.

20:2 — The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; whoever provokes him to anger forfeits his life.

22:11 — He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend.

24:21-22 — My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise, for disaster will arise suddenly from them, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?

More on Dealing with the King

22:29 — Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

23:1-3 — When you sit down to eat with a ruler, observe carefully what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.

25:6-7 — Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great, for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of a noble.

25:15 — With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.

The King and God

21:1 — The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.