

WISDOM

PROVERBS 17-23
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Reading Exegetically



- Literary construction:
- Author & Audience: Who is this proverb for?
- What themes arise?
- What are the context clues?
- What does the original language offer?
- What have previous generations contributed?

bring wealth and honor and life.

⁵In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them.

⁶Train⁶ a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

⁷The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

⁸He who sows wickedness

Proverbs 22:6

At first glance...

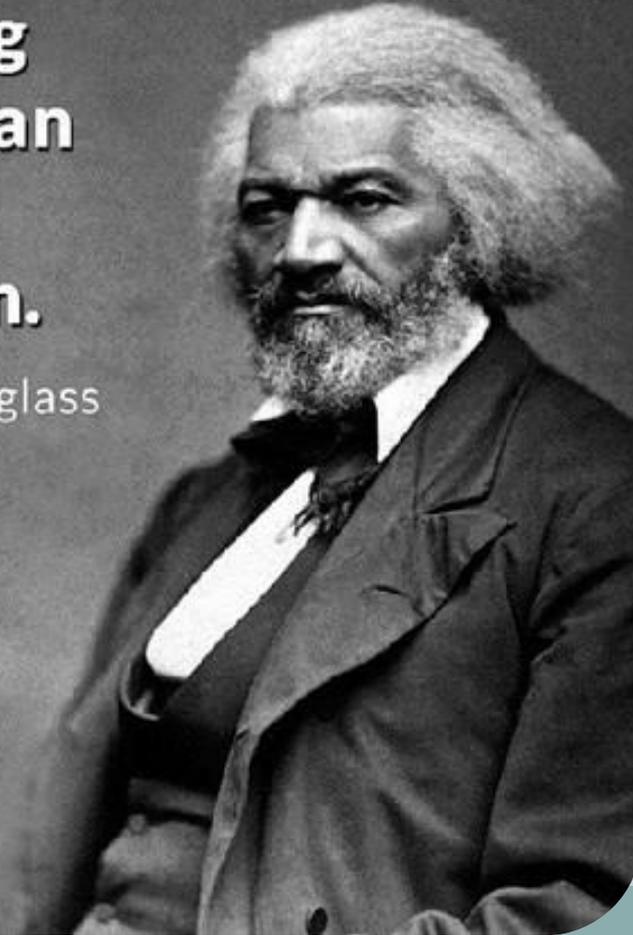


- *Sounds* like a wonderful promise to parents—exactly what every God-fearing parent would love to have as a promise from the Creator
- Christian parents possess an unquenchable hope that their children will remain with the faith in which they are reared
- if their child departs for a while, the parents cling to the belief that the child will return
- Often times this results in massive guilt (why?)
- It is often construed as a “promise of God”

Guide to Godly Parenting

**It is easier to
build strong
children than
to repair
broken men.**

- Frederick Douglass



Consider the child



- “Some modern writers suggest that the phrase “in the way that he should go” includes the understanding of learning styles.” – Cecil Maranville
- **Original Language:** “I think this should really be translated, “Train up a child according to his way,” which means, find out what is in a child and bring him up so that what God has hidden in him may be developed and brought out. And when he is old he will not depart from that.” -Ray Stedman
- Cultural context of tribes, classes, positions (Levitical order of priests, eventual dynastic houses, etc.)
 - Closest comparison to our culture is blue collar/white collar trajectories

Good interpretation then, might be...



- Help a child to identify and cultivate *their* God-given abilities, passions, and propensity in order to succeed, and when they are older they will have the tools necessary to lead *their* life.

Original Language



- “Train up” (hb. *chanak* {khaw-nak} to initiate or discipline; to dedicate (Dt. 20:5; 1 Ki 8:63)
- Verb form is derived from the word *chinmuch* which means, education.
- We must also consider the cultural context of Hebrew education

Shema Yisrael



- 4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 **You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.**
- Foundational to Jewish society
 - Relationship to God; parents; family; community; society; the world

Education in the Monarchial Period



- Transition from nomadic tribalism and celebrity-like judgeship
- Increasing unification into nationalistic pride
 - "This increasing political unification was accompanied by a religious consciousness which became ultimately the most remarkable product of the national development" (Ames)
- Organization of strong tribal leagues – resulting in kingship
- Establishment of prophetic schools in Gilgal, Jericho, and Bethel (2 Kings 2:3; 4:38) (origins of what looks like the rabbinic tradition of Jesus' day)

New Religious Symbolism Developed



- Yahweh was thought of as a king in whose hands actually lay the supreme guidance of the state
- "Accordingly the organization of the state included provision for consulting His will and obtaining His direction in all weighty matters" (W. R. Smith, RS, 30).
- Under the teaching of the prophets:
 - The ideal of personal and civic righteousness was moved to the very forefront of Hebrew religious thought
 - The prophetic ideal of the future was that of a time when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9), when all "from the least of them unto the greatest of them" shall know him (Jer 31:34).

What does God Promise?



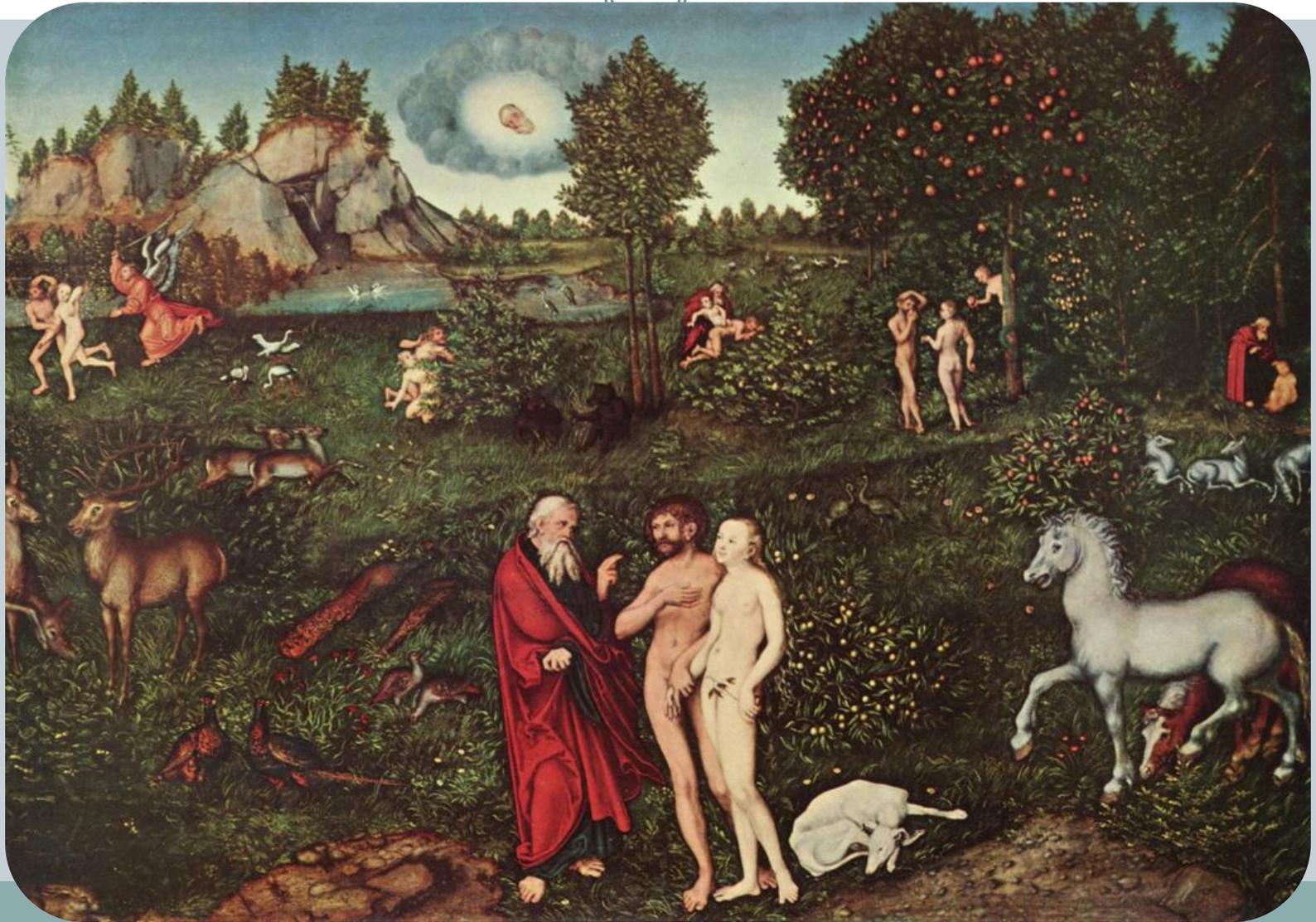
- Promises of God include numerous benefits for keeping His Word
- They do not include a “guarantee to parents” that children reared in faith will keep the faith as adults
- John 3:16 – “whosoever”
 - “Fundamental to Christian understanding is the knowledge that God has given every person the freedom to choose whether he will submit himself to God’s way of life. “Submit” is the correct word, for this choice includes recognizing God as one’s sovereign and looking to Him as the authority to define **right from wrong.**” -Cecil Maranville

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil



Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden

Lucas Cranach the Elder (1530)



A better interpretation might then be...



- **1st Order:** Teach a child to discern the difference between right and wrong – which is ultimately submission to God’s sovereignty – and when they are older, they will possess the conscientious guide as the lead *their* life. But to possess the ability to choose right has never precluded a person from failing to do so.
- **2nd Order:** Help a child to identify and cultivate *their* God-given abilities, passions, and propensity in order to succeed, and when they are older they will have the tools necessary to lead *their* life.

Modern Christian Education



- Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”
- God, the Holy One, has blessed us with a direct revelation of Himself through the Word and since knowledge and understanding are indissoluble from the purposes of Christian Education, the Bible becomes the primary source for **all learning**.
- Biblical principles as the foundation for all truth may be drawn upon as a trusted guide into every subject area of life.
 - **Gaining an understanding into the history, context, and languages of the original texts as well as process by which the Scripture was canonized leaves the learner with the undeniable sense of the timelessness and eternal relevance of Biblical truth.**

