

Bible Recall: POINTS IN PROVERBS

PROVERBS 11 – The Recompense of Righteousness and Wickedness

KEY PASSAGE: Proverbs 11:31, "If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, How much more the ungodly and the sinner."

The dominant key features of chapter 11 are righteousness (what is just and upright) and wickedness (what is perverse and unfaithful).

A. THE BLESSINGS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Prov. 11:1-11)

Name the benefit associated with being upright or the trouble associated with wickedness.

1. A just weight brings delight to whom (11:1)? _____
2. What follows pride (11:2)? _____
3. The integrity of the upright does what (11:3)? _____
4. Righteous delivers from what (11:4)? _____
5. The righteousness of the blameless will do what (11:5)? _____
6. Where the unfaithful will be caught in their lust, what does righteousness do (11:6)?

7. What perishes with a wicked person's death (11:7)? _____
8. What will the righteous one be delivered from (11:8)? _____
9. By what can the righteous escape the destroying mouth of the hypocrite (11:9)?

10. Name two things that cause joy (11:10). _____
11. What is so powerful to overthrow a city (11:11)? _____

In the beginning of this chapter the two vices identified to source so much trouble are greed and pride (11:1, 2). Riches prove feckless in the day of wrath (11:4; cf. Lk. 6:24, 25; 12:16-21; 16:19-25). The wicked lose their *expectation* and *hope* at death because all their dreams were tied to the things of this life. The righteous have a glorious hope and expectation that extends beyond this life and is anchored in heaven itself (Col. 3:1ff; Heb. 6:19).

"...**godliness** is profitable for all things, having promise of the **life** that now is and of **that** which is to **come**." (1 Tim. 4:8).

B. LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR (Prov. 11:9-15)

This theme overlaps the previous section. The hypocrite destroys his neighbor (11:9). What he finds fault with he likely practices in another form. The one devoid of heart despises his neighbor while the righteous one holds his peace (11:12, 13; cf. Rom. 13:10).

C. SOWING AND REAPING (Prov. 11:16-31)

At the outset of this section is the contrast between a gracious woman (11:16) and a man of mercy (11:17) versus a ruthless and cruel man. In her compassion, she gains and retains honor, likely from others. However, the ruthless man's pursuit of gain and "cruel" schemes *troubles his own flesh* (11:17). He may be rich with wealth but is a pauper when it comes to friendship. Remember the story of Ebenezer Scrooge? Mercy and ruthlessness are different seeds that can be sown and each will bring forth their own unique field to be reaped.

A wicked man *does* (produces) deceptive *work* (translated *wages* in Leviticus 19:13). If you work deception, you will be deceived. The righteous, on the other hand, sow seeds of righteousness and have a *sure* (firm, reliable) *reward* or *wages* (11:18). One kind of seed leads to life and the other to a deceptive and destructive death (11:19).

There is also the teaching of sowing bountifully in Proverbs 11:24-26. People typically despise proud and selfish people. The irony is that greedy and stingy people eventually lose what they are so energetically hoarding while the generous receives more than he scatters or gives away.

Conclusion:

In the end, every person is sowing seeds of wickedness and deceit or seeds of righteousness and eternal life. One person will trouble his house by the decisions and goals he sets before him (11:29). Another person will build his house up.

"Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner" (Prov. 11:31).

What a conclusion to this chapter! If the righteous will be rewarded on earth, how much more the sinner? The apostle of our Lord also referenced this passage to show that judgment can come upon the house of God in this life through trials suffered. If a righteous man is permitted to face such persecution from the wicked, *what must the end of the ungodly be like* (1 Pet. 4:17, 18)? It's a sobering thought. Let us commit our souls to God as a faithful Creator in sowing good seed (1 Pet. 4:19; Prov. 11:19). The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who wins souls is wise (11:30)!

—Steven J. Wallace