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Woe To Those who Are Wise In Their Own Eyes

5: 21

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes DIG: Why was Isaiah prophesying this woe? What was the problem? Who was being affected? What was the result of their foolishness? How did it affect their relationship with God? Did they realize it? Why or why not? What do New Covenant believers have to help them in this battle that the righteous of the TaNaKh did not have?

REFLECT: Reflect back to a time when you were wise in your own eyes. What were your spiritual habits at that time? Were you in the Word? Were you in fellowship with other believers? How was your prayer life? Who were you associating with (First Corinthians 15:33)? These spiritual habits keep you grounded. How are you doing with these today? Are any missing? What do you need to do to get any of them back?



Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight (5:21). The fifth woe is against the pride of false wisdom, arrogance, and conceit. The Bible teaches us that the fear of ADONAI is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7a CJB). The phrase, the fear of the LORD, or the fear of ADONAI, occurs eleven times in Proverbs. Beginning is the Hebrew word *resit*, meaning *to start*. Thus, people cannot even start to gain spiritual knowledge if their journey begins at the wrong point, refusing to fear ADONAI. We need to recognize His holiness and respond by revering, trusting, worshiping, obeying and serving Him. *Resit* can also mean *the capstone or the essence*. So, the essence of true knowledge is fearing God. No matter what generation we live in, apart from Him a

person is ignorant of spiritual **knowledge**. **Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles (Romans 1:22-23).**

In contrast with those who **fear God** and have **knowledge**, **fools despise wisdom and discipline (Proverbs 1:7b CJB)**. **Despise** translates to the Hebrew word *buz*, meaning *to hold in contempt, to belittle or ridicule (Numbers 15:31)*. *Buz* is also used seven other times in **Proverbs 6:30, 11:12, 13:13, 14:21, 23:9 and 22, 30:17)**. Three Hebrew words are translated **fool** in **Proverbs**. One kind of **fool**, *ksil*, is pictured as having a dull or closed mind. This person is thickheaded and stubborn. This word occurs 49 times in **Proverbs**, more than the other two words combined. This kind of a **fool** rejects **knowledge** from others. Solomon would say about this know-it-all: **The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly (Proverbs 15:14).**

The second word for **fool** is *nabal*, and is used only three times (**Proverbs 17:7 and 21, 30:22**). This word refers to someone who lacks spiritual perception. Because these fools lack spiritual perception, everything is reduced to individual reaction and opinion.

The third kind of **fool** is arrogant, flippant, morally deficient, and hardened in his ways. That's a bad combination. The word *ewil*, is used 19 times in **Proverbs** and only 7 times elsewhere. What kind of a **fool** is he? **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;** however, these morally deficient **fools despise God and reject His wisdom and discipline (Proverbs 1:7)**. Two kinds of people are contrasted here. Those who humbly **fear ADONAI** and as a result gain true **knowledge**, and the arrogant **fools** who refuse to **fear God** and therefore despise true **wisdom** and spiritual **knowledge**. The fundamental principle of **wisdom** is **be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil (Proverbs 3:7)**. That is exactly what **Isaiah** was warning the nation against.

Today, New Covenant believers have the conviction of **the Spirit of God** to help guide us away from foolishness and being **wise**, or **clever in our own eyes**. The righteous of the TaNaKh looked forward to **Messiah**, today we look back to the cross. But because we have free will, we can choose to ignore **His** prompting to our conscience. We can say no to **God** and make it stick! Therefore, we shouldn't be too critical of these Judeans because we have the same fallen nature.

Talent is God given. Be humble.
Fame is man-given. Be grateful.
Conceit is self-given. Be careful.